Tech: Modified riding toy is about more than fun

At the University of Delaware's Early Learning Center, Brenden Bolen, 18 months, takes a spin in an adapted toy ride-on car. THE NEWS JOURNAL ROBERT CRAIG

Kids with limited movement often miss out on opportunities for social interaction.

sitting up in the toy and using both hands. He gets mad when the battery is turned off. "Wow, look what Brenden can do," instead of, "Poor Brenden,"” she said. "He’s really showing his potential to everyone.”

In the future, Galloway hopes to allow families to track their children's improvement. The hope is that they can learn more about how getting children moving impacts their development at bodies, minds and emotions — all while helping the youngsters.

iPad apps

While Galloway and Rahman are tracking the potential for the near future, some families are finding ways to make use of technology as well as their environment to open the world to children. Several have opened up a world of communication in recent years. Touchscreen tablets and apps also offer therapeutic potential, whether it’s a communication app on an iPad or a child with cerebral palsy working on improving fine motor skills with a game.

Kathleen DeNIGHT initially bought an iPad for herself, but when she read about the number of special education apps available, she became interested in how it might help her son, Jackson, diagnosed with a pervasive developmental delay. She discovered iRewards, an app that keeps track of the youngster’s behavior, such as not asking for candy in line at the grocery store, he earns a star. When he earns enough stars, he is rewarded positively, such as with time on the computer or the chance to watch a movie. The iRewards app, once of several apps that can be used for children with autism using a communication app on an iPad or a child with cerebral palsy working on improving fine motor skills with a game.

The Forgotten Decade of the Kennedy Half Dollars

Never Released into Circulation

Since 1964 the Kennedy Half Dollar has been one of America’s favorite coins — nearly 50 years and still going strong. Did you know the US Mint hasn’t released a Kennedy Half Dollar into circulation since 2001? It wasn’t meant to be a secret but it’s true. Even more confusing, they did make a Philadelphia and Denver Mint coin for each of the last 10 years, but few knew how to find them... until now.

The iRewards app helps other people hear the voice of that work, thanks to the Swank Foundation. The team of researchers, teachers or other caregivers can be a lot cheaper for a family to walk through some of these programs and games, and they may understand more about him.

While funding for assistive devices has improved in recent years, it’s still a challenge to get technological items covered by insurers because they also can be used by people without disabilities. But it can be a lot cheaper for a family to buy an iPad than other more expensive devices that essentially do the same thing.

“Sometimes he struggles with the words. The fluency in speaking isn’t there for him,” she said. “Nothing is going to take that place of a person, but there are programs such as iCommunicate that I think will help other kids to understand. It’s hard to see kids who are used to walking through some of these games and programs, they may understand more about him.”

While funding for assistive devices has improved in recent years, it’s still a challenge to get technological items covered by insurance companies, said Beth Mineo, director of the Center for Disabilities Studies at the University of Delaware. So far, devices like iPads haven’t traditionally been covered by insurers because they also can be used by people without disabilities. But it can be a lot cheaper for a family to buy an iPad than other more expensive devices that essentially do the same thing.

“It’s a small investment with major returns,” Mineo said.

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