



## SUNNY HILL HEALTH CENTRE FOR CHILDREN THERAPY DEPARTMENT OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR KEYBOARDING CURRICULUM

#### Did you know?

- Studies have shown that student's keyboarding speed improves significantly when they are involved in structured keyboard training.

#### Practice Suggestions:

- The recommended amount of practice ranges from 25 to 30 hours based on the student's needs and abilities. *For students with fine motor difficulties it can take even longer.*
- **It is recommend that student's practice keyboarding 3-5 times a week for 20 minutes at a time (Freeman, MacKinnon & Miller, 2005).** Please use the *Keyboarding Practice Chart*, each month, to help monitor frequency of practicing.
- If possible, teach either a traditional or modified "touch typing" style. Please discourage a "hunt and peck" approach. Please refer to *Websites and Programs for Keyboarding Skills* handout for suggested fun "touch typing" programs.

#### Practice Tips:

- Motivation is important; therefore it is best to choose a keyboarding website or program that the student enjoys. *More than one websites/program can be used during practice each week if this increases the student's interest in practicing.*
- Emphasize accuracy over speed. The goal of keyboarding is increased proficiency and independence in written output. Accuracy should be established first. Once correct letter location is learned, more emphasis can be put on increasing typing speed.

- If needed, use tactile markers to orient students to finger placement. A puffy sticker or felt dot could be used on the F and J keys to help orient the student.
- Provide a picture of the keyboard with color-coded finger placement to deter students from using a hunt and peck method. Most keyboarding programs offer this visual cue.
- Graph output and accuracy to provide a visual representation of progress.
- Ensure good positioning with feet flat on the floor and wrists well supported.

### **Additional Ideas:**

- Instruct students in basic word processing and text editing (inserting, deleting, cut and paste) as well as how to save, title, and file documents.
- Reinforce spelling using a spell checker.
- Use word prediction programs such as Co-writer for very slow typists. This software tends to max out at about 10-12-words/minute.
- Once the student's speed of keyboarding is functional, start with use of a keyboarding device, computer or laptop in one class and gradually increase to more classes as appropriate.

### References:

- Freeman, A., MacKinnon, J. & Miller, L. (2005) Keyboarding for Students with Handwriting Problems: A literature review. *Physical and Occupational Therapy in Paediatrics* 25(1/2), 119-146.
- N. Pollock & C. Missiuna, 2005 "To Write or to Type That is the Question! " CanChild Centre for Childhood Disability Research, McMaster University

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