

# **Developing Lifelong Leisure Skills for Individuals with Multiple Disabilities: Switches & Other AT in the Classroom**

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# Why are leisure skills so important?

- Individuals with multiple disabilities are often entertained and leisure activities are done TO them, as they watch, rather than them engaging in them independently.
- These children are often not able to independently explore their environment, choose their own toys and activities, or interact with things not pre-chosen by a caregiver.
- Every person has down time and needs the ability to entertain themselves with preferred activities, rather than relying on others to entertain them.
- Leisure skill development needs to begin early and needs to be taught purposely and regularly in order to develop independence.

# Environmental Control Units (ECU)

- ECUs allow individuals to use a switch to control electronics, lights, and powered equipment in their environment.
- 4Types of ECUs:
  1. AC power
  2. Infrared
  3. Radio Control
  4. Ultrasound
- AbleNet PowerLink:  
<https://www.ablenetinc.com/technology/connected-home/powerlink-4-north-america-parent>



# Switch-Accessibilizing The Home

(Of course “Accessibilizing” is a word!)

- Ablenet Primo touchscreen ECU:  
<https://www.ablenetinc.com/technology/connected-home/primo-environmental-control-unit>
- Ablenet Pilot voice-activated ECU:  
<https://www.ablenetinc.com/technology/connected-home/pilot-pro#Description>
- Ablenet Insteon kit:  
<https://www.ablenetinc.com/technology/connected-home/insteon-kit>
- Enabling Devices Sensory Zone Controller:  
[https://enablingdevices.com/catalog/useful-devices/appliance\\_control\\_units/basic-appliance-controls-sensory-zone-controller](https://enablingdevices.com/catalog/useful-devices/appliance_control_units/basic-appliance-controls-sensory-zone-controller)



# Battery Interrupters



- Ablenet battery interrupters:  
<https://www.ablenetinc.com/technology/product-accessories/battery-device-adapter-c-d-size>
- Buy/make twice as many AA/AAA interrupters as C/D interrupters - more devices run off AA/AAA batteries and the smaller size is more fragile, so you want to rotate them more often & have more on hand when one breaks.

## Making Your Own Battery Interrupters:

- Instructables: <http://www.instructables.com/id/No-Solder-Battery-Interrupter/>
- PrAACtical AAC:  
<http://praacticalaac.org/practical/make-it-practical-make-your-own-battery-interrupters-without-soldering/>
- SMA Support: [http://www.smasupport.com/making\\_a\\_switchadapted\\_toy.htm](http://www.smasupport.com/making_a_switchadapted_toy.htm)
- AT Access: <http://www.ataccess.org/pdf/Adaptingtoy.pdf>

## Hardwiring a Battery Interrupter for Switch-Accessible Toy (for “squeeze” toys):

- SMA Support: <http://www.smasupport.com/hardwiring-toys.htm>
- Let's Play Project: <http://letsplay.buffalo.edu/products/Switches.pdf>

# Types of Switches

- Pressure - requires pressure by pressing, pushing, pulling (most switches fit this category)
- Touch-Sensitive - requires very light touch (sometimes called a plate switch) - typically do not give auditory feedback or “click” when activated
- Air Pressure - examples are the pneumatic grip switch or sip-and-puff switch
- Muscle Sensor - respond to tiny voluntary muscle movements like the finger, eyebrow, or cheek moving
- Infrared - responds to movement in the beam or “field of vision” from the switch
- Sound-Activated - activated by sounds or specific volume in the environment



# DIY Switches

- The Oklahoma Assistive Technology Center turned tap lights into switches: <http://www.theoatc.org/resources/lightswitch.asp>
- You can follow the same steps to turn the Staples' "Easy button" into a switch.



# Novelty & DIY Switches

- Companies like Enabling Devices have a LOT of novelty switches to interest students.
- Be careful when using novelty switches that you aren't making the switch the focus, rather than the activity.
- The goal is not to “hit the switch,” but to use the switch as a method to activate something. ***The switch should serve the same purpose to your student as a light switch does for you. It turns things on and off.***
- Ablenet switches:  
<https://www.ablenetinc.com/technology/switches>
- Enabling Devices switches:  
[https://enablingdevices.com/catalog/capability\\_switches](https://enablingdevices.com/catalog/capability_switches)





# Now Let's Have Some Fun!

## Basic Fun for One:

- Ablenet Switch-Accessible Toys: <https://www.ablenetinc.com/technology/accessible-toys>
- Enabling Devices Switch-Accessible Toys: [https://enablingdevices.com/catalog/toys\\_for\\_disabled\\_children/action-toys](https://enablingdevices.com/catalog/toys_for_disabled_children/action-toys)
- Skoog Music: <http://www.skoogmusic.com/>
- Beamz Interactive Music: <http://www.thebeamz.com/>

## Bubble Machine:

<https://www.ablenetinc.com/technology/accessible-toys/bubble-machine>



# Switching Up The Fun As a Group

- Photography:  
<http://www.spectronics.com.au/blog/apps-and-mobile-learning/everybody-say-cheese-using-a-switch-to-take-a-photo-or-video-on-the-ipad/>
- Cooking:  
<http://www.instructables.com/id/Homemade-Switch-Activated-Pouring-Measuring-Cup-In/>
- Racing Switch-Operated Toys
- Knock down blocks with walking toys
- Race remote-control cars:  
<http://www.especialneeds.com/switch-rewards-adapted-buggy-race-car.html>
- Blow-dryer air hockey, ping-pong ball races, or ball-painting.



# Switching Up The Fun As a Group

- Turn on massager on chair, stander, bed, or mat.
- Activate massager on someone else's chair and "scare" them! (Or activate any battery-powered scary noise-maker!)

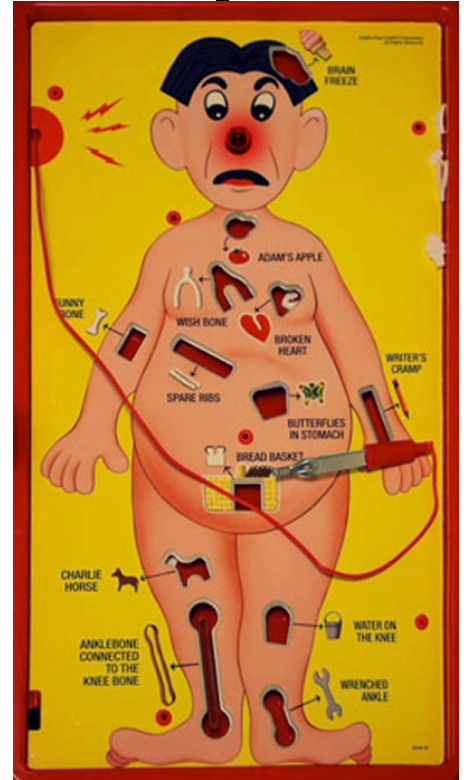
<http://www.especialneeds.com/speech-and-communication-switch-rewards-adapted-vibrating-pillow.html>

- Run red and green light to control class running or racing (or make them freeze!)
- Operate lights for haunted house, ball game, or school play.
- Race boats on water with switch-activated fans.
- Control the music for class or group activities.



# Switching Up The Fun As a Group

- Be in charge of the class battery/electric pencil sharpener.
- Control the “Operation” game - other students bribe to not make “buzz” during their turn!
- Activate the ‘loser’ BUZZ sound-effect when playing class games - activate when someone gets a wrong answer.
- Vacuum the classroom or house. Control the vacuum while someone else does the work! (My students LOVE making their moms yell when they keep turning off the vacuum!)



# Fun for the “Experienced” Switcher



- Nerf guns

<http://switchgaming.blogspot.co.uk/2012/07/diy-switch-adapted-nerf-thunderstorm.html>

<http://adapions4kidz.blogspot.com/2012/11/switch-adapted-foam-dart-gun.html>

- Guitar Hero

<http://rjcooper.com/guitar-hero/>

- Leaf Blower Air Hockey

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8CQpX1X1rk>

# Resources for Additional Ideas

- ***Switch Progression Roadmap*** MUST HAVE for anyone using switches! <http://www.inclusive.co.uk/articles/switch-progression-road-map>
- Pinterest! There are so many great ideas on Pinterest. Log in and start searching. Here's a link to my Pinterest boards (all boards titled with "C.O.T." in title are related to multiple disabilities): <https://www.pinterest.com/singoffpitch/>
- Kate Ahern's website ***Teaching Learners With Multiple Special Needs***: <http://teachinglearnerswithmultipleneeds.blogspot.com/>
- SENICT Software from Ian Bean: <http://www.senictsoftware.com/>

# Resources for Additional Ideas

- AT Access *We Can Play* booklet: <http://www.ataccess.org/pdf/WeCanPlay.pdf>
- iHelp Innovations: <http://ihelpinnovations.co.uk/>
- Instructables website:  
<http://www.instructables.com/tag/type-id/category-technology/keyword-assistive+technology/>
- Look through websites/catalogs like AbleNet, Enabling Devices, Don Johnston, S&S Therapy, etc. and get ideas for things you could make/use. Remember the end goal of lifelong use/skills.
- Assistive Technology Lending Libraries (state list):  
<http://www.resnaprojects.org/allcontacts/statewidecontacts.html>

# Questions?

Feel free to contact me with questions or to request additional info/resources!

- Email: [jodi.click@yahoo.com](mailto:jodi.click@yahoo.com)
- Twitter: [@singoffpitch](https://twitter.com/singoffpitch)
- Website (lots of resources related to individuals with multiple disabilities):  
<https://sites.google.com/site/missclicksclass/>