

Tip of the Month – Apps for sharing and schedules

In addition to having a robust AAC system there are some other useful supports for communication in the Apple app store including apps for sharing information and supports for understanding routines and tasks such as schedules.

The apps listed below are a small selection of the many that are available on the Apple App store. These apps are useful for both children and adults.

Sharing news and stories

Using an App to share news can be a more personal way to reflect on the day. It is a conversation starter and encourages social interaction. Photo stories can provide context to unfamiliar communication partners. Stories can be co-planned with an individual so that they can choose which photos to share and what they would like to say about them. These apps can also be used to show ways to interact with the individual and share information about how to communicate with them.

Our Story 2 – free



Our Story 2 is an easy to use app that allows creation of personal photo stories with text and voice recordings. These stories can be saved to share on the iPad, emailed or printed.

Book Creator – approx. cost \$9 NZD



Book Creator is a great tool to share news, create social stories and document those special activities that happen. Book Creator is available on the iPad and once a book is finished, it can be exported to share with others through PDF, or through E-Books.

Book Creator allows for photographs, videos, onscreen drawn pictures, and text to be included in the book. Each page is customisable, and the colour and text size can be changed as preferred.

Pictello – approx. \$35 NZD



Pictello allows the user to share fun, engaging stories and make visual timetables. Pictello is available on iPads and iPhones and allows photographs to be imported. You can either record your own speech or use the inbuilt text to speech voices to read back the story. There are also character voices to add some fun to your book. Pictello incorporates text highlighting, which highlights the word as it is read aloud.

Books created in Pictello can be exported to share with others in a PDF format.

Story Creator – free



Story Creator works in the same way as Book Creator and Pictello. You can add photos, videos and audio recordings to a page. Story Creator also highlights words as they are read aloud on the screen. Stories can be personalised using a drawing tool. Unlimited books can be created and shared using email, Dropbox and many more.

Scheduling

Visual timetables are useful as they prepare an individual to upcoming tasks, ease transitions and can reduce anxiety. For some individuals teaching them how to use the standard iOS calendar may be the support that is needed, but others may benefit from apps that also have symbol supports and custom notifications.

Chiceworks – approx. \$26 NZD



Chiceworks is a tool which helps individuals follow steps to complete tasks and routines and control their feelings and improve their waiting time. There is an inbuilt symbol library and when a Chiceworks symbol is pressed, the text is said aloud.

The schedule steps can be broken down to individual steps in a task. Each step can have a timer attached to keep the individual on task for a set time. Once the step is completed, it is moved to the 'All Done' column. When setting the task, the individual can choose an activity to do once the set task is completed.

Chiceworks allows for teams to work on waiting for an activity by having a timer and options for activities that can be completed while they are waiting. The timer can be adjusted to suit individual needs. There are also boards that allow for behaviour modification. They show an emotion, and suggestions that the individual can choose from when feeling the particular emotion.

There is also a small selection of social stories in the app which can be printed and talked through to develop coping strategies and emotional regulation.



Visual Schedule Planner – approx. \$26 NZD



Visual Schedule Planner is a fully customisable visual schedule app that is designed to give an individual visual and/or audio representation of their day. A video clip can be linked to the task as a model. Visual Schedule Planner allows events to be shown in daily, weekly or month formats. There are over 1500 supplied symbols, and photographs can be used. Audio recordings or text to speech can be added to a task for auditory modelling. Once a task is completed, it can be ticked off. A timer can be added to tasks to keep the user’s attention on task.

