

Building keyboarding skills

Development of keyboarding skills

- Finger typing (QWERTY typing) can be a challenging fine motor and cognitive skill.
- Allow the student to use whichever fingers they want to initially so that they can become more comfortable and familiar with the location of letters on the keyboard.
- Encourage the use of 2 hands and focus on having the student start with using both index fingers.

Practical activities are best

- Practical activities are more enjoyable and functional for students to complete when learning keyboarding (games are easier to complete vs. copying random letter lines).
- Practicing daily or 3-4 times per week for 10-15 min. should result in greater familiarity with the location of keys.
- Offer exercises or games that encourage the QWERTY method of typing but do not insist on this. Students can gradually adopt this method as they practice schoolwork.

Activity examples for school and home

- **At School** – Start with keyboarding games to increase receptivity to using a computer. Use short writing tasks that involve copying so the student doesn't have to think about content of work and can focus on the location of keys. Gradually work on longer writing tasks once the student is more comfortable typing.
- **At Home** – try completing games, homework, letters/emails or simple copying exercises from a book or magazine to practice skills.

2 two-handed keyboarding skills

- Some strategies to help divide the keyboard into left and right sides include: using a pipe cleaner or string between the following letters: T-G-B and Y-H-N.
- Consider labelling the middle letters with coloured stickers. For example red stickers on the right letters and yellow stickers on the left.
- Remind students that typing is a skill that can be learned and they can improve with frequent practice. This will eventually be another option for them to use if they choose not to write.
- If two-handed typing is difficult have the student revert back to using one hand and focus on getting familiar with the location of keys then re-introduce the other hand starting with the index finger.

Some websites for practice:

- www.dancemattypingguide.com (QWERTY method of typing)
- www.tvokids.com (Search for Keyboard Climber to work on single letters. This game is a good starter for beginners)
- www.freetypinggame.net (click on games)
- www.typingtest.com (click on games)