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Introduction

Children are using computers at increasingly early ages and through the Internet have access to an expanding amount of information. This book provides parents with the information they need to successfully teach their children, prep to year six, about numerous technical concepts while also providing parents with many hands-on activities to teach their children about important technology skills, everything from keyboarding to Internet safety.

Throughout my 11 years of experience in working with children in various schools, I have discovered some interesting ideas and have developed new approaches to technology instruction in the schools. Now, as a parent of two children, I realise the importance of instilling the knowledge of appropriate technology use early in our children, because sometimes schools are not teaching them everything they need to know about computer use. We are ultimately responsible for our children, and this book provides parents with a tool to use at home in a safe learning environment. Even if schools are teaching computer skills to your child, this book will fill in any gaps as well as show your children that you feel these concepts are important and worth learning. It is better to train them to do the right things the first time when they are young, instead of waiting until they are older and retraining them.

As a parent, you can use this book with minimal computer knowledge. You will need a computer with Internet access for many, but not all, of the activities. If you don't have a computer, you can still use many of the activities, and then go to the library or another place to use a computer when it is needed for the activity. If you don't have Internet access, you could do the activities that require online access at the library or another location that has a computer connected to the Internet.

This book provides step-by-step activities that you can do with your child based on ISTE's (International Society for Technology in Education) National Educational Standards for Students (NETS•S; see Appendix B). The CD that comes with this book includes more than 100 supplemental files, including multimedia presentations, worksheets, quizzes, learning cards and other files used in the chapters.

The chapters in this book are a guide for your own ideas and concepts. Tap into your own personality and teaching style to enrich the chapters I have provided. Even more important than the curriculum in this book is the hidden curriculum, the manner in which the lessons are portrayed to your child. With the ideas in these activities and your own personal flair, you can empower children with technological information.

Your children will see your excitement and will experience technology as never before, as they engage in new and inspiring activities. Understanding technology has become a necessity in today's society, and children with a solid background in technology will have the foundation necessary to succeed in the future. This book gives parents with and without computer backgrounds the tools they need to effectively teach technology.

Organisation of This Book

The main section of this book is divided into 12 chapters. Each chapter has 10 activities that teach the chapter concepts in various ways, such as creating a book, performing Internet research, doing a website scavenger hunt or watching a slide show. The activities have three to six steps for parents to follow as they teach their children. Each chapter provides many enrichment activities and suggestions for varying the activities based on age and learning styles. The chapters are meant to be taught in order, because some skills taught earlier are used in later chapters. The activities in each chapter are also intended to be taught in order, because some of the work completed in an activity may be used in a later activity. However, you can certainly modify the order of chapters and activities, if needed for your particular requirements. A chart summarising the chapter objectives appears on the next page.

Compact Disc

There is a CD located on the cover of this book that includes all of the supplemental material for each chapter: worksheets, quizzes, answer keys, recording sheets, learning cards and other learning materials. The CD supplements are listed in the Materials section of each activity. The files can be opened by Windows, Mac and Linux computers and can be modified, if desired. Your child can type directly into the Word version of many worksheets and tests. Supplements in PDF format are also included on the CD for your convenience. The files on the CD are organised and named by chapter. To make locating and using these supplements faster and easier, it is recommended that you copy all files to your hard drive before beginning the lessons.

Activity 1

Computer Basics Slide Show



Easy to
Modify for
Younger Kids

Goal

Your child will recite the computer devices using a slide show presentation.

Materials

- Computer Basics Slide Show (CD Supplement 1A)
- computer

Steps

1. Prepare

Open the Computer Basics Slide Show (CD Supplement 1A).
Click on Slide Show > View Slide Show when you are ready to begin.

2. Assess

As your child watches the slide show, have him name any of the computer devices that he already knows. The slide show first shows a picture of the computer device, then the name of the computer device. This is a great way to assess what your child already knows about the computer devices in this chapter. You may be surprised!

3. Recite

Play the slide show again and have your child recite the computer devices as they appear on the screen. Tell your child to repeat after you if he needs help saying the name of the device. Replay the slide show a few times (if needed) to teach your child to correctly recite the names of all these parts.



Tips

During the presentation, discuss the difference between output and input devices. Add something new and interesting to the presentation such as music, animation or various slide backgrounds.

Activity 7

Greeting Card



Easy to
Modify for
Younger Kids

Goal

Your child will create a greeting card that includes a graphic.

Materials

- computer
- word processor (Microsoft Word or OpenOffice Writer)
- printer
- paper for printer
- project paper
- stapler, tape or glue
- textas, crayons, glitter, stickers, paint (optional)

Steps

1. Type

Have your child type “Happy Birthday”, “Get Well Soon” or another type of greeting to create a card to give to someone. Your child could modify the text size, colour and style.

2. Graphic or Picture

Next, your child should insert a graphic or a picture into the document. Show your child how to move the graphic and increase and decrease the size of the graphic. There are many ways to modify the graphic, so allow your child to explore the different options available on your word processor. For example, click on the graphic so a box appears around the graphic. Click and drag on the corners or sides to enlarge or shrink the graphic. For a list of more ways to change the graphic, right click directly on the graphic.

3. Border

Show your child how to insert a page border on the document.