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Dear IDEC Members,

At this time of year, gardens full of flowers and vegetables are fulfilling their promise and the hard work of weeding, watering, and fertilizing pays off. During my year as IDEC President I've seen so much hard work go into projects at the state and national levels, and it has born fruit. For example, the IDEC Sharing a Vision conference was a great success, and the newly revised *Recommended Practices* from DEC have been released (<http://www.dec-sped.org/recommendedpractices>). I hope you will join me in expressing your appreciation to the members on the state and national levels who have invested their time and effort to make these successful projects possible.

Please also join me in welcoming and supporting members who are stepping into new roles on our board: Amy Cocorikis, President; Amanda Quesenberry, President-Elect; and Denise Henry, Vice-President. Mary Wonderlick will continue as Secretary, and Elizabeth Cambray-Engstrom will continue as Treasurer.

I hope to see you at the National DEC Conference in St. Louis, October 7-9!

Best Wishes,
Sallee

The IDEC Newsletter is a quarterly publication. Please send inquiries, comments, and article submissions to:
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Using DEC Monographs in Personnel Prep

DEC's monograph series offers resources for use in coursework, training, technical assistance and other forms of professional development. Each monograph is organized around a current theme related to supporting young children of diverse abilities and their families. Each monograph has articles on evidence-based practices, individual perspectives, and new research, all followed by a section of high-quality, no/low cost resources (Resources Within Reason) on the same topic.

Here is an example of how any professional development provider could use resources found within a *Young Exceptional Children* Monograph to support knowledge acquisition and application in a course or presentation.

Read (e.g., Differentiating Language Difference versus Language Impairment in Young Dual Language Learners from Monograph Series #14). Go to <http://bookstore.dec-sped.org/category-s/1513.htm> to search for other Monographs from DEC.

Then discuss the article (in person or online)

1. What are three things that you learned?
2. What implications does this article have for working with children and/or classroom practices?
3. What is one thing you would like to do or change after reading this article?



Call For Submissions

Special Theme Issue: Early Childhood Social Studies

—Submitted by Robin Miller-Young

Social Studies Research and Practice is seeking manuscripts for a themed issue on Early Childhood Social Studies in November 2015.

Dr. Lynn Kelley is serving as guest editor. Inquiries and submissions can be sent to her at lkelly@uwa.edu. Please put SSRP Manuscript as the subject of the email.

The manuscript due date is: September 1, 2014. Submissions should include an abstract, brief biographies of the author(s), and must follow the journal's style. Go to www.socstrp.org for guidelines. Manuscripts will be peer reviewed.

Manuscripts in the following categories will be considered:

- Research
- Action Research
- Practice
- Features on Notable Trade Books, Social Justice, Technology Integration, and Interdisciplinary Education.

Sharing A Vision Conference

SAVE THE DATE!

September 28-30
2015 Crowne Plaza Hotel, Springfield IL



Approximately 75 breakout sessions, Exhibit Hall and Conversation Stations. Lunch is included. Remember the Early Bird is the best value. For all fee options, please see www.sharingavision.org.



Keynote – Jennifer Daniels | Jennifer Daniels, a performing songwriter out of Lookout Mountain, Georgia, is also an assistant to Eric Litwin, the author of the first four Pete the Cat picture books. A music and movement educator with a Masters in counseling and certification as an Autism Movement Therapist, Jennifer teaches at home and tours the country performing interactive concerts for kids and workshops for educators seeking to build this fun way of learning into their curriculum. Jenn's married to a guitar hero and they have five year old boy/girl twins.



Keynote – Robin McWilliam, PhD. | Director of the Siskin Center for Child and Family Research, The Siskin Endowed Chair of Research in Early Childhood Education, Development and Intervention. Robin McWilliam helps programs, states, and countries implement effective early intervention (0-5) practices. He is a researcher, implementation "purveyor," program developer and administrator, writer and editor, and teacher of professionals. He is known for his family-centered, functional, evidence-based approach – a no-nonsense model emphasizing support to the adults in a child's life.



DEC Releases Revised Set of DEC Recommended Practices

After 18 months of work and dedication by leading practitioners, parents, educators and researchers, the Division for Early Childhood is excited to release its revised set of DEC Recommended Practices.

DEC Recommended Practices are designed to provide guidance to practitioners, families and administrators regarding the most effective ways to promote the development of young children from birth through five years of age who have or are at-risk for developmental delays or disabilities. They identify evidence-based strategies and interventions designed to facilitate the development of young children with special needs.

DEC's Recommended Practices Commission, with support from the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA) and the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), launched an extensive process which involved developing a new framework, identifying recommended practices with accompanying research base, and creating key working definitions and examples. The new set of Recommended Practices is comprised of 66 practices organized into eight topic areas including: Assessment, Environment, Family, Instruction, Interaction, Teaming and Collaboration, Transition and Leadership.

According to Mary McLean, Chair of the DEC Recommended Practices Commission, "The purpose of the practices is to help bridge the gap between research and practice by highlighting practices that have been found to be effective in providing early intervention and early childhood special education services. DEC offers the practices as a link to current research for practitioners, families and administrators as they plan, implement and evaluate intervention strategies for young children who have or are at-risk for developmental delays or disabilities."

DEC's goal is to improve outcomes for young children with disabilities and their families by improving the quality of their services. It is our aim that teachers, therapists, early intervention specialists, home visitors, family members, administrators, researchers, and those in personnel preparation will learn about the DEC Recommended Practices and put them into practice. A copy of the updated DEC Recommended Practices is available here www.dec-sped.org/recommendedpractices

SOFTWARE EVALUATION

Apps for Young Children: Interactive and Intentional Tools

--Submitted by Linda Robinson

Apps have become an almost mindless part of our everyday lives. You may have used an app before you had your first cup of coffee this morning or used one to access this publication. Apple has approved over 1,000,000 apps since it first started the App Store in 2008. And iTunes reports receiving over a billion downloads a month. Google is catching up quickly with the number of Android apps up to over 700,000. (About.com, March, 2014) A portion of these apps are being developed for children. So how do parents and teachers know which ones are the best for young children?

With the release in recent years of the position statement from the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media, we now have a guide for using the latest technology, such as iPads, with young children (NAEYC, 2012). One of the key messages states, *When used intentionally and appropriately, technology and interactive media are effective tools to support learning and development.* A second message focuses on the need for information and resources for early childhood teachers and administrators to be able to use technology intentionally with children.

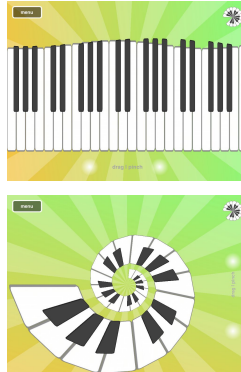
Best practice tells us that apps can be exciting learning tools for young children when content and use is developmentally appropriate. With literally thousands of apps for children, it is important to know how to evaluate the appropriateness of an app. The following characteristics and features serve as a guide for app evaluation.

First, the app should offer a **divergent path and choice-making opportunities**. Good examples of this can be found in any of the apps developed by Toca Boca. *Toca Hair Salon* is one of the favorite apps by experts in the field. The app is open-ended with many choices on each screen. The child sets her own goal. There are no preset rules. The child is in control of the path of the program and the outcome.



Another important feature is that the app is **open-ended and invites exploration in a non-threatening environment**. Touch Press' *X is for X-Ray* is one example in this category. The child chooses an object to explore and can turn objects 360 degrees with three-dimensional images. By moving a finger over the object the inner workings of the object are revealed. Children can explore a variety of animate and inanimate objects, including seeing the inside of a bug.

An app should be designed to **allow a child to be successful**. Examples include an open-ended music program, such as *Magic Piano* by Smule. Children can play a piano keyboard on their iPad. They can compose their own song or play a ready-made classic as they control the pace of the music. *Sound Shaker* by Tickle Tapp Apps is another fun, easy way to make sounds. The child chooses what type of sound to make and the rhythm and speed.



Other features of a good app include **stimulating a child's interest** and **encouraging active involvement**. Art programs, such as *Drawing Pad* by Darren Murtha Design, provide a blank slate for a child to create their own drawing using a variety of different art tools. *Draw & Tell HD*, by Duck Duck Moose, allows a child to record his voice as he draws on the screen. The recording is saved and can be enjoyed by children at any time.

Story creation is one type of app that encourages active involvement for children and uses the interactive elements of iPad technology as a tool. Children create their own meaningful content through pictures they have taken and words they have recorded. There are many different apps that help children do this, but one of the free ones is *Story Kit* by International Children Digital Library. Simple stories can be created and saved.



Other features that are important when evaluating apps include:

- The content reflects a diverse society.
- The content is developmentally appropriate.
- The feedback is effective and non-threatening.
- The responses to "incorrect" input are not demeaning.
- The program is easy to navigate.
- The program operates at an acceptable speed.
- The program is easy to exit.
- The instructions, if any, are clear and easy to follow.

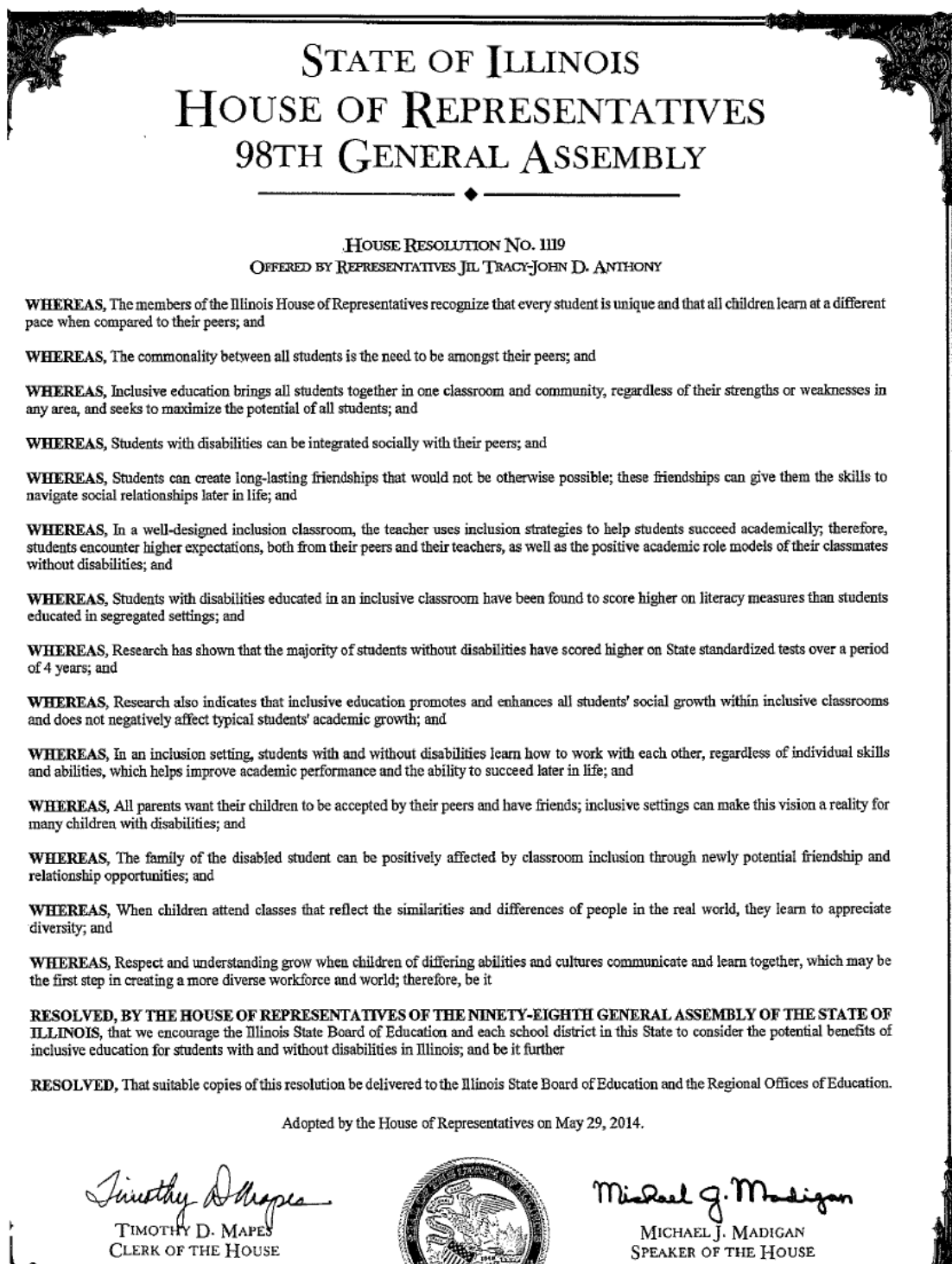
By carefully evaluating apps which are designed for young children, we can select ones which contain these features and have content that is developmentally appropriate. When technology is used in this way, it can be an interactive and intentional tool in the early childhood classroom. Besides the NAEYC website, the Technology in Early Childhood Center at Erikson Institute (www.teccenter.erikson.edu) is a good resource for information on using technology with young children.

References:

National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media. (2012). *Technology in early childhood programs serving children from birth through age 8*. Position Statement. <http://www.naeyc.org/content/technology-and-young-children>

The Illinois House of Representatives signed

House Resolution No. 1119 on May 29, 2014. This resolution encourages, “the Illinois State Board of Education and each school district in the State to consider the potential benefits of inclusive education for students with and without disability.”





SAVE^{the} DATE

ST. LOUIS, MO
OCTOBER 7-9, 2014

Division for Early Childhood's 30th Annual International Conference
on Young Children with Special Needs and their Families

Conference will be held in St. Louis at the
Renaissance St. Louis Grand Hotel
800 Washington Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63101

For additional information: www.dec-sped.org ★ dec@dec-sped.org ★ 310-428-7209

IDEC Wants YOU! (To Join Us!)



The Illinois DEC is a state subdivision of the Division of Early Childhood. The Division of Early Childhood (DEC) is an international membership organization for those who work with or on behalf of children with disabilities and other special needs. The mission of DEC is to promote policies and advance evidence-based practices to support the optimal development of young children with special needs.

To join the Illinois DEC, you must first join the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). Please visit the CEC website <http://www.cec.sped.org/Membership> to join online or download an application form. When you join, be sure to sign up for both CEC and the Division for Early Childhood (DEC).

When you become a DEC member you will receive both CEC and DEC benefits; an amazing package of journals, special discounts, resources, professional development, and networking opportunities.

We are always eager for committed and passionate individuals to join our community so become a member today!
<http://idec.crc.uiuc.edu/member.html>

Benefits of DEC membership:

- Journal of Early Intervention--4 times a year!
- *Young Exceptional Children* journal--4 times a year!
- \$100 off conference registration for DEC's Annual International Conference.
- Order DEC products online and save 20%.
- Save approximately \$25 on registration for DEC webinars and other professional development events.
- Children's Action Network connects DEC members to current policy.
- Special Interest Groups bring members together to share research, guide practice, and advance new ideas.
- Exclusive opportunities for leadership.

Benefits of CEC Membership

- Journals
 - *TEACHING Exceptional Children* — actionable and useful articles to teach and administer programs for children with disabilities and/or gifts and talents (6 issues/year).
 - *Exceptional Children* — original research on the education and development of children with disabilities and/or gifts and talents in practical terms that you can bring into your classroom (4 issues/year).
- Books and Resources
 - Members receive up to a 30% discount on CEC's publications!
 - Professional Development
 - CEC's continuing education programs, including the CEC Annual Convention
 - & Expo.
- Advocacy and Support
- Join one or more of the 17 CEC special interest divisions.
- Peer Networking and Leadership Opportunities
- CEC Online Community -- Coming soon
- Online Career Center
- Savings on Insurance