



The Champion Centre
TAMARIKI TOIORA

The Dublin Street Trust

Computer Supported Learning Program

Term 1 2014

This term, 35 children have participated in the computer supported learning programme. The youngest was three years old and the oldest was six. The service was provided by three different specialists each working with the same children each week.

Benjamin's story

Ben¹ has a fairly rare syndrome that affects all aspects of his functioning, but particularly his cognitive skills and his ability to stay focussed on a task. He processes the world slowly but reacts quickly to sounds and sights even though he finds it hard to make sense of them. He easily becomes confused and overwhelmed, and in this state he cannot learn and remember. This term Ben has been preparing to transition to school and the end of this term marks the end of his time attending the Champion Centre.

Here is an extract from Ben's transition to school report prepared for his new teachers and for his parents:

Ben started using the computer at The Champion Centre in May 2013. The computer programmes have been structured to extend Ben's ability to attend to the screen and to verbal instruction, and to encourage the understanding of cause and effect. This has taken the form of tracking colourful, simple pictures across the screen, to attend to the visual image or music until it either stops or disappears and then to ask for more either verbally or with the use of a single press of the big switch. Ben is able to track moving objects and really enjoys sound, especially music. He still finds it difficult to wait, although this has greatly improved and he is now able to wait for about 4 repetitions.

The computer has been a powerful learning tool for Ben. He tends to be easily distracted by auditory and visual stimuli as well as by the movement of others, so the low stimulus, quiet environment of the computer room has assisted with keeping him on task. The computer provides instant visual and auditory

¹ Not his real name

feedback which both reward efforts on his part and also give the impetus to persevere. Ben's ability to remain on task has improved as has his ability to wait. This has been a big step for him. Ben's ability to remain well regulated tends to fluctuate with his health and levels of anxiety. When well regulated and engaged, he is able to maintain focus until the end of an activity (about 5 minutes) and is even starting to ask for more.

A special baking story

Jack has trouble with understanding how to sequence events so that they make sense: with a beginning, a middle, and an end. So his computer supported learning specialist took some photos while he was engaged in a baking activity with his early intervention teacher. She entered them into a programme called "special stories" and created an activity where he had to look at the pictures and put them in the right order. The screenshot below shows he succeeded!



This activity reflected Jack's own lived experience. He had made the buns and it was his own experience that was reflected back to him through the photos. At the same time he could practice the language that went with each step, and learn how the words of that language looked on the screen, helping him begin to read. And because the programme comes with a voice, once he had the order right, he could click on the 'listen to story' button and hear his own experience reflected back as a story he could click on and listen to as often as he wanted.

We use this programme with lots of children and they both enjoy it and learn from it.

Respectfully submitted by Dr. Susan Foster-Cohen, Director on behalf of the computer supported learning team: Hilary, Leanne and Penny.