

# Teacher Tech

A Publication of The West Virginia Assistive Technology System



## Switch It Up!

Switches have a variety of uses. They can turn an individual's world from one of observation to one of active participation. Computers, toys, communication devices and environmental controls are a few areas that can be accessed with switches.

There is a common misconception that there is only one type of switch, a button switch, and it is accessed only by pushing it with the hand. There is in fact a variety of switches and they can be accessed by any part of the body. The array of switch options allows nearly anyone access to switch accessible activities and devices. The following is list of popular switches:

- Big and small button switches
- Thumb switch
- Finger switch
- Foot switch
- Toggle switch
- Sip and puff switches
- Pull switches

To find the best 'switch site' for a student, the teacher and occupational therapist need to observe the student. A switch site is a body part and movement that the student has consistent and meaningful control over. This could be a finger, foot, knee or other body part.

It is best to find a site that requires the least amount of energy to activate the switch. If the student has to 'wind up' to activate a switch, they are probably using an excessive amount of energy. This could lead to the student becoming tired. The student may also choose not to participate if the activity is not worth the effort to activate the switch.

When exploring the options of switch access, it is important to try different options to find what works best for the individual. There is a variety of switches available for loan on the WVATS Virtual Loan Library, [vll.cedwvu.org](http://vll.cedwvu.org). For more information, visit [wvats.cedwvu.org](http://wvats.cedwvu.org) or call 800-841-8436.



# Try It Out!

These items are available for loan on the WVATS Virtual Loan Library. WVATS offers a 30 day device loan. This provides parents, professionals and assistive technology users the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of a device for an individual before purchasing the device. To learn more about the WVATS Virtual Loan Library or check out a device, visit [vll.cedwvu.org](http://vll.cedwvu.org) or call 800-841-8436.

## New for Loan

### Marble Run

Users can create their own Marble Run with this construction set. By activating the yellow switch, included with the set, the user can listen to two upbeat musical tunes while watching the marbles shoot down and around bridges, columns, spinning wheels and funnels. The Marble Run is motorized so the marbles automatically return to the top.



### Thumb Switch

The switch has a yellow cylindrical base that is gripped in the user's hand. The user then presses the red button with their thumb to activate the attached device.

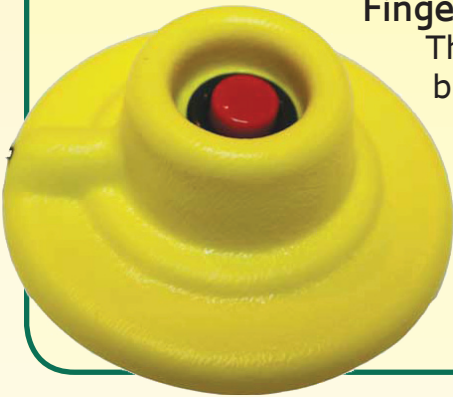
### Bubble Mania

The machine is activated with a capability switch. When the switch is pressed, the machine comes to life and sends bubbles out into the air. This can be a fun way to increase visual tracking skills.



### Finger isolation button

The recessed button encourages isolated touch and is designed to help the child gain their motor skills.



### Bubba Buffalo

Bubba Buffalo is a switch adapted, animated stuffed animal. He moves and wags his tail while barking. He can be used with any capability switch.



## Celebrating Connections Conference!

The 2013 Celebrating Connections Conference will be held February 19-22 at the Charleston Civic Center in Charleston, WV. The annual conference is sponsored by several state programs including WV Department of Education's Office of Special Programs and the Birth to Three program. The conference strives to build relationships among groups

and individuals working to support young children and families in WV. While highlighting state and local programs that demonstrate promising practices, Celebrating Connections attempts to recognize the benefits of prevention and early intervention and enhance the quality of early childhood services.

# Assistive Technology for Transition: From School to Work



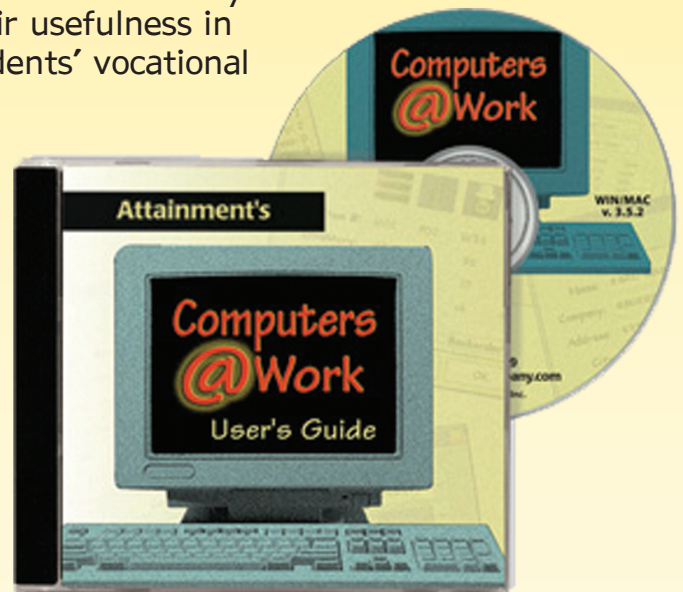
The 2012-13 Assistive Technology for Transition: From School to Work projects have been awarded. This year's recipients are:

Sandy Furbee, North Marion High School  
Rickey Meade, Mingo Central High School  
Justin Slonaker, Martinsburg High School

These teachers received the AT for Transition: From School to Work Toolkit. The toolkit included the Computers at Work Software program and five pre-vocational kits. The teachers will use these tools in their classrooms this year and assess their usefulness in increasing students' vocational outcomes.

All items in the AT for Transition: From School to Work Toolkit are available in the WVATS Virtual Loan Library. To access these items visit

[vll.cedwvu.org](http://vll.cedwvu.org). For more information on this project call 800-841-8436.



For more information on the Celebrating Connections Conference visit [www.wvearlychildhood.org](http://www.wvearlychildhood.org) or contact Alyson Edwards at 888-983-2827 or [aedwards@rvcds.org](mailto:aedwards@rvcds.org).



# Teaching Tools

## Reading Rockets

Reading rockets is a national multimedia literacy initiative. It offers information and resources on how young kids learn to read, why so many struggle, and how caring teachers and parents can help these students. The website shares research-based techniques and strategies to help students achieve their reading goals.

The Reading Rockets website provides numerous resources for reading and writing, including thoughts on assistive technology, learning disabilities and special education.



Other resources include free professional development webinars, classroom strategies, and tips to help struggling readers. For more information on Reading rockets, visit [www.readingrockets.org](http://www.readingrockets.org).

# Teacher Tech Online

Teacher Tech is going green and moving to an online newsletter! Copies of past editions of the newsletter can be found at [www.wvats.cedwvu.org/teachertech](http://www.wvats.cedwvu.org/teachertech). New editions of Teacher Tech will be published in the spring and fall of each year and posted on the website. Print copies can be requested by contacting WVATS at 800-841-8436.

[www.wvats.cedwvu.org](http://www.wvats.cedwvu.org)

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