App Ratings: October 2012
These comments were provided by participants at the presentation: There’s an app for that by Lu-Anne McFarlane at the Alberta College of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists Annual Conference, Calgary AB.
These comments were provided after a short opportunity to explore the app. As apps undergo frequent updates, some of the comments may not be current.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>App</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
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</table>
| **Alphatots: by Spinlight** | Evaluation:  
- Fun and engaging  
- Like how vowels give both sounds  
- Uses blends rather than single sounds (x2)  
- Nice appropriate vocab  
- Good action demonstration (x2)  
- Like how it goes beyond sound-letter awareness by providing word and action  
- Good reinforcement that relates to activity (x2)  
- Great sound letter correspondence with a great activity associated with it | Developer Recommendations:  
- Would like more examples of words with each letter (x2)  
- Would like to able to choose your own letter (not necessarily go in order)  
- Would be nice to be given examples of words with short and long vowels  
- Turn taking |
| **Articulation IV: by Learning Fundamentals** | Evaluation:  
- Beautiful pictures, however it is often not intuitive what the target word is  
- Language level becomes too advanced  
- More control needed over sound position to practice  
- This app is bad  
- Not a functional or valid therapy tool  
- At least it was real photos, but it had the wrong sounds in the sound group (e.g., ‘f’ coming up in ‘s’ category) (x4)  
- Targets depicted would be inappropriate for children  
- Not recommended  
- Target wasn’t always clear from the picture (x2)  
- Single word stage should match sound selection  
- Horrible pictures  
- Not intuitive  
- Pictures didn’t match target goals | Recommendations: |
| **Articulate It!: by Smarty Ears Apps** | **Evaluation:**
- Took a long time to get into it
- Great to use real pictures (x4)
- Like the control over sounds to practice and position
- Like how you can select target words in the phoneme section
- Good selection of words
- Like that you can choose words, phrase option
- Love rotate option
- Would take a long time to set up for individual person
- Why do you need a birthdate?
- Vocab too high for young kids
- Kind of boring
- Like that it includes phonological processes (x4)
- Difficult to organize for students
- Feedback was nice
- Recording was easy to do and sound quality was good (x2)
- No different than a picture book as far as engagement
- Like that you can use with more than one client at a time
- Only effective if the child has someone giving feedback in the moment

**Recommendations:**
- Good for SLP to probe

| **BB Magic#1: by Learning Touch** | **Developer Recommendations:**
- For pronunciation audio, you should do onset + rhyme (e.g., ‘m’ + ‘at’, not ‘m’ + ‘a’ + ‘t’) |

| **Bobo and Light: by Game Collage** | **Evaluation:**
- Liked that videos were incorporated into the “text”
- Very interactive
- Humor included
- For higher level students
- Factual
- Some areas are quite visually busy (not for visually impaired |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cookie Doodle: by Shoe the Goose</td>
<td>So many ways to use this app, A nice social communication tool, Very flexible</td>
<td>Can use with small group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun with Directions: by Hamaguchi apps</td>
<td>Jumps in level of complexity (e.g., 1 direction to 3, back to 1), Choices in complexity aren’t discrete enough, More testing than teaching, Long instructions for simplistic concepts, Great use of colors, Limited target concepts (x4), Need good visual scanning (x2), Doesn’t really focus on what it says, Only 3 levels with large differences in difficulty, Some concepts are cause and effect, not really an understanding of the concept targeted (x2), Unclear regarding what type of response is required (e.g., touch, tap, drag…), Playback feature is fantastic, Lots of different activities</td>
<td>Would need external speakers or SmartBoard to use in group setting, It would be nice to choose different levels</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Phrases: by Hamaguchi apps</td>
<td>A bit difficult to involve a partner, We liked how individualized it is, with repetitions, sentence type…, No feedback regarding what the child says or whether it was right/wrong, Expressive task capabilities as well as receptive, Like the flexibility to incorporate turn taking and play partners, The recording portion had no visual cues and seemed disjointed</td>
<td>Developer Recommendations:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| First Words: by Hamaguchi apps | -A tool for sentence construction that would be boring quickly  
-Cannot use pronouns  
-It’s too vague for it’s expectations of the client (lack of interaction and reward)  
-Voice seems unnatural  
-Characters are nice  
Developer Recommendations:  
-It would be great to have the animation do something different if the child said it wrong  
-Could the words appear as the recording plays back? |
| --- | --- |
| Evaluation:  
-Efficient-if you’re using an app to teach vocab, it’s a pretty good one  
-Text on is a good feature  
-Busy screen  
-Basic vocabulary  
-Repetition  
-Very decontextualized (x2)  
-Not a great way to learn vocabulary  
-Voice may be difficult for hearing impaired kids  
-Like that you can customize to your voice  
-Need to have really accurate touch target  
-Hard to respond naturally  
-Need to focus on device  
-Can do lots of repetitions quickly  
-A lot of additional unneeded language  
-Multiple exemplars of each items (generalizing)  
-Similar to flashcards  
-Errors-no sound feedback (x2)  
-Not functional, no context  
-Liked that it asked a question  
-Brings us back to ‘flashcard’ therapy  
Developer Recommendations:  
-Should separate expressive and receptive task scores |
| Recommendations:  
-Turn off sound to make it able to integrate communication partner  
-Instead of repeating after touching ear, have it automatically repeat after 3 seconds  
-Would be more engaging if you had toys present  
-Explore app to see what it can do  
-You need to facilitate the interaction in order to make it a meaningful educational experience for a young child |
| Going Places: by Model Me Kids | Evaluation:  
-Didn’t follow convention of writing social stories  
-Boring and dull |
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| Linguisystem Phonology: by Linguisystems | - Doesn’t address emotional concerns children have in these situations  
- Good natural picture but couldn’t change anything (x2)  
- Less customizable than other apps doing similar things (x2)  
- Not as engaging  
- Sound would be nice  
- Nice that it has daily routines  
- Easy to use (x2)  
- Uses positive statements | - It would be good to have the same child pictured  
- Would love to see more scenarios (x2)  
- Would be nice to manipulate text and picture sequences |
| Linguisystem Phonology: by Linguisystems | Evaluation:  
- We like it, but expensive  
- Love the pinch in/out feature  
- Nice pictures  
- Confusing symbols on page, not intuitive  
- Like the scoring system (and that clinician scores it)  
- Like using own voice  
- Like minimal pairs function and receptive aspect (x2)  
- Like that you can skip words  
- It’s sort of individualized, but not enough  
- Like the amount of choice for words/options  
- User friendly for clinician and child (x2)  
- Common vocabulary  
- Cannot select targets (e.g., Fronting as a process with all sounds as examples, not just ‘k’ vs ‘t’) (x2)  
- Measures correct responses which could be emailed to SLP  
- Like auditory bombardment option | - It would be nice to pick the level (e.g., phrase, sentence)  
- Have photo option of real objects  
- Upload own pictures  
- Would like to see more ways to play with minimal pairs  
- Splitting the two pictures apart would be engaging |
| My Play Home | Evaluation:  
- Nice addition of rooms and different races represented  
- So many cool things you can do/work on with this app | Recommendations:  
- Could assign as home practice |
| Noodle Words: by Noodle Works Interactive | Evaluation:  
- Love the animation and flexibility of the words (e.g., the –ing |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Ending</strong></th>
<th><strong>Very fun</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multi-use (x2)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lots of movement and things to do that underscore the meaning of the word</strong></td>
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**Developer Recommendations:**
- Looking forward to new vocabulary (x3)
- Would be nice to choose your own words
- Clients can interact and do the actions

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<tr>
<th><strong>Pat the Cat:</strong> <em>by Brightside</em></th>
<th><strong>Evaluation:</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Uses predicting and inferential</td>
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<td>- Many examples</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Good visuals</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Good rate of speech</td>
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<td>- Nice descriptions of functions</td>
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<td>- Simple for early learners</td>
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**Recommendations:**

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<tr>
<th><strong>Peek A Boo Barn:</strong> <em>by Night &amp; Day Studios</em></th>
<th><strong>Evaluation:</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The adult would need to control/restrict access to create an interaction and prevent ‘whamming’</td>
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<td>- Simple, intuitive, quick to learn</td>
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<td>- Can use/target functional vocabulary (e.g., open/close)</td>
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<td>- Child voice: mispronunciation of ‘sheep’, an ESL parent may not recognize error and child may repeat inappropriately (x3)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Immediate reinforcement</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Okay for vocab development</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Fun</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Engaging format. Would need to modify to make it an interaction (e.g., mute app)</td>
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<td>- Not too overwhelming, cues child to touch</td>
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<td>- Liked the simplicity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Good cause/effect app (x3)</td>
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**Developer recommendations:**
- There should be no speech errors in verbal mode

**Recommendations:**
- Adult could individualize this with creativity and planning
- Turn volume off and include another communication partner to make the app more socially interactive
- Use actual photo of a barn to make it more naturalistic
- Therapist could adapt the language and level for the child

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<th><strong>Peek A Zoo:</strong> <em>by Duck</em></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Duck Moose</strong></td>
<td>-Only 1 level?</td>
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<td><strong>Recommendations:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Pictello: by AssistiveWare</strong></td>
<td>Evaluation:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Awesome—especially for functionality and adapting to your own clientele/setting</td>
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<td><strong>Recommendations:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sentence Builder: by Mobile Education</strong></td>
<td>Evaluation:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-Hard to modify/go back to settings when in app (x3)</td>
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<td>-Verbal reinforcement is nice</td>
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<td>-High literacy required (x3)</td>
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<td>-Focus is decoding rather than verbal production</td>
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<td>-It’s not effective/meaningful to teach tenses with still illustrations</td>
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<td>-Pictures are awful and not related to sentences (x3)</td>
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<td>-No feedback as to the error (x2)</td>
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<td>-Not visually engaging, small words</td>
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<td>-Cannot choose sentence parts to target (x3)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-Sentence not functional</td>
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<td>-Data is not specific other than right/wrong/# of attempts</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-Not recommended (x2)</td>
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<td>-Not appropriate for children with LD</td>
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<td>-Options overwhelming (would be better to work only one at a time i.e., is/are)</td>
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<td>-Sentence content not even practical… not funny, too silly</td>
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<td><strong>Developer Recommendations:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>-It would be nice the picture did what the sentence says (x2)</td>
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<td>-Would be better to select targets for language items (e.g., pronouns)</td>
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<td>-Bigger print</td>
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<td>-Show what part was right</td>
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<td>-Would be nice to have option to simplify or focus on one element (e.g., just the subject)</td>
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<td>-Text to speech help</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Speech With Milo: Sequencing</strong></td>
<td>Evaluation:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Can see this getting old quickly</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Multi-purpose</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Ease of use</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Don’t like artificial voice</td>
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<td><strong>Developer Recommendations:</strong></td>
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<td>-Would like to see different stages (2-5 steps)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-Add more interaction</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-Voice-prosody should be more natural</td>
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<td><strong>Sock Puppets: by Smithmicro Software</strong></td>
<td>Evaluation:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-Kids wouldn’t know what to say for a story task—higher level kids</td>
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<td>-Not focused, but could use for so many things (x3)</td>
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<td>-Relies on clinician input for applicability and setting parameters</td>
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| **Stories2Learn** | **Evaluation:**  
|                  | - Spelling errors in the text  
|                  | - Prefer short but grammatical phrases  
|                  | - Like the real pictures and simple ideas (x3)  
|                  | - Like the editing option (x2)  
|                  | - Excellent-dynamic  
|                  | - You can make your own story frames  
|                  | - Nice, quick way to create your own stories for specific clients (x2)  
|                  | - Great extension for parents  
|                  | - Eliminates need for time-consuming prep  
|                  | - Stores many stories  
|                  | - Facial expressions in some pictures don’t match the narrative  
|                  | - Versatile app  
|                  | - Dull photos  
| **Recommendations:** | - Would be great on a SmartBoard for the whole class  

| **StoryPatch: by Haywood Software** | **Evaluation:**  
|                                   | - Takes a little time figure it out (ie, how to enter pics) (x2)  
|                                   | - Fantastic and easy to use  
|                                   | - Fast and effective way to make up a story  
|                                   | - Can be sent home (great for carryover!)  
|                                   | - Great price!  
|                                   | - My favourite app  
|                                   | - Kids can be involved in story creating  
|                                   | - Potential for targeting lots of S-L goals  
|                                   | - Love the flexibility and ability to bring in real photos  
| **Recommendations:** | - Can use for kids who are not good at illustrating or writing  

| **You’re the Storyteller: The Surprise** | **Evaluation:**  
|                                         | - We really like it!  
|                                         | - Liked question prompts, that you can pause story, the writing area, and that you can speak and/or write  
|                                         | - Multi-purpose (vocab, fluency)  
|                                         | - Not modifiable  
|                                         | - Good for personal narratives/retell reading, body language, perspective talking  
|                                         | - Questions are at a high language level  
|                                         | - Cute, great pics, engaging  

| **Recommendations:** |  
|                     | - Great for auditory feedback (articulation)  
|                     | - Opportunity for social practice  
|                     | - Older kids could use in small groups independently  
|                     | - Would rather do this in real life  
|                     | - Encourages turn taking  

(x2)
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</table>
| Toca Tea Party: by Toca Boca | -We like it!  
- Lots of possibilities  
- Great for travelling SLPs  
- Requires communication partners or pretend toys | - Can use for asking/answering questions, first/next/last, choices, tensing, grammar (I am, is+verb-ing), same/different, requesting |
| Van Gogh and the Sunflowers: By Stories Alive | - Hard to know which age its for  
- Same concepts for brush width  
- Descriptive  
- Very animated and interactive  
- Creative  
- Can use imagination  
- Good for retelling  
- Good rate of speech | - Good for kid with poor hand grip to do actual art |
| Verbs News: by Virtual Speech Center | - Didn’t like same pictures for all tenses  
- The pictures did not match the verb tense (x3)  
- Too many instructions! Complex for younger students. (x3)  
- Love the video recording option  
- Don’t like the practice pictures  
- We were disengaged listening to the instructions (too long/too complex). instructions higher level than language level of kids  
- Only the video option is interactive, but don’t need an app for that  
- Parts of the app are more engaging/functional than others  
- Best part is the news function (don’t need app for that) (x2)  
- More likely to use personal news cast for things other than app target of verbs  
- Not enough examples | - More likely to use personal news cast for things other than app target of verbs  
- Not enough examples |
| **Five Little Monkeys Wash The Car: by Oceanhouse Media** | Evaluation:  
- Good cadence of storyteller  
Developer Recommendations:  
- Car parts should be labeled, not called “icky” or “sticky” |
| --- | --- |
| **Wheels on the Bus: by Duck Duck Moose** | Evaluation:  
- We like the cause effect activities and the ability to either take song off or record your own song  
- Multiple uses and ages  
Recommendations:  |