**Advice for Tablets in Youth Area**

Crystal,

My name is Caroline Salucci and I'm a Youth Librarian at Baldwin Public Library in Birmingham.

I wasn't involved in purchasing the tablets for our library, we got iPads, but I was involved in purchasing the apps. We were getting the iPads to replace our AWE computers and decided on finding 30 apps for children 5 and younger, relatively the same audience for our AWE computers.

I got some app suggestions from flyers at Bloomfield Township and School Library Journal does have app reviews. But I did a lot of the data gathering myself. I looked at how the games on our AWE computers were organized (by subject: Math & Problem Solving, Music & Art, Reading Words & Phonics, Science & Nature, Social & Nature, Writing & Computer Skills, Reference) and used that as a jumping off point for my search. I looked online for blogs that had apps that were well-reviewed and looked at Pinterest for ideas others collected as well. I also looked for apps with popular characters that I knew the kids would like, like Dora and the Sesame Street characters. I made a spreadsheet of all the games I was considering.

I then read the reviews in Apple to check pricing, see if the reviews mentioned anything about the necessity to shake the iPads during play, and tried to avoid apps that said they had in-app purchases. After buying the apps, I had to fill out a tax-exempt form and send it in to Apple. I've been told by our new IT guy that there may be a better way to purchase apps, but I have not gotten there yet.

I'd be happy to provide you with more information if you'd like. I still have my spreadsheets of all the apps I was considering.

The iPads have been a big success. Older kids have been using them too. I got one complaint from a parent that the games were too babyish (and she had little kids) but have gotten nothing but positive feedback otherwise. I'm looking into getting a few apps geared for slightly older kids at the moment too.

Let me know if I can help with anything and good luck in your own endeavor.

Caroline

Raz-Kids <https://www.raz-kids.com/main/Search/?searchTerms=login> is a good reading program with aps.  Not sure how much the program costs for the library to sponsor but the aps are free for the user if they have an account from the library/school.

Same for mathematics, from IXL <https://www.ixl.com/>.

If you identify what aps you may want, you can see if they are on all major platforms, such as Apple Vs. Android.  Then, no matter what kind of mobile device the library gets, the aps should work on patrons devices as well, if you are getting sponsored aps like the ones I mentioned.  If you just plan to get free aps or pay for aps on your library devices then maybe that doesn't matter.

-Steve Bowers

Hi, Crystal.

Genesee District Library has been using Playaway Launchpads for this purpose since last September.  They have been very popular with patrons.  More information is available at <http://playaway.com/launchpad/>.

Three things you should know before buying:

1.       Launchpads are cheap, in the sense that they are a great value, bringing outstanding apps to a functional platform at a low price.

2.       Launchpads are cheap, in the sense that they don’t hold up as well as we would like.  We have had about 20% of them broken in the seven months we have been circulating them.  But maybe that’s not too bad, considering what they are and how they are used.

3.       The company has been very, very good about replacing broken and defective units.  They have replaced every broken or defective unit for free—except for the one that fell in a bathtub.  And that one we were able to replace for about $50.

Keeping those 3 things in mind, I think I can recommend the Playaway Launchpads.  We will be buying more of them this year.

Darwin McGuire

Technical Services Manager

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Hi Crystal,

 We have iPads in the children's area.  They are mounted in a table so the children can't drop them or carry them around.  It works really well and the kids love them.

Cheryl Smith
Youth Services/Assistant Director
Timothy C. Hauenstein Reynolds Township Library
117 W. Williams St
Howard City, MI 49329
phone: 231-937-5575

Hello Crystal!

We have decided to respond to this need by purchasing a collection of launchpads from Playaway. They have great pricing on a start up collection and the replacement policy is satisfactory. We have started with 20. We also circulate this collection.

Have a beautiful day!

Kimberly Young

Library Director

Houghton Lake Public Library

Hello,

We have a couple NABIs [http://www.amazon.com/nabi-DreamTab-Tablet-Wi-Fi-Enabled/dp/B00KWDKNCA/ref=sr\_1\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1459198292&sr=8-1&keywords=nabis](http://www.amazon.com/nabi-DreamTab-Tablet-Wi-Fi-Enabled/dp/B00KWDKNCA/ref%3Dsr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1459198292&sr=8-1&keywords=nabis) and the kids have fun with them and can operate them easily.

We loaded all the free apps onto it that we could, and there are plenty available.

Best wishes on the project!

Pamela Withrow, Director

Forsyth Township Public Library

180 W. Flint St.

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Gwinn, MI 49841

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Hi Crystal,

We've had 3 iPads in our children's area for 2.5 years. We load both literacy games and commercial games the kids like (Frozen, Legos, etc.). They have worked out really well and we've received positive responses from both parents and kids. If you do get iPads vs. other tablets, I would highly recommend AppleCare. We have had a couple of hardware issues (biggest is that the headphone jacks are just not built for library usage) and they swap them out for us at no charge.

I utilize the restrictions available in the settings app to limit access to areas on the iPad we do not want kids to play with (iMessage, Safari for Internet, etc.). The one issue we started running into in the last year is the inability to restrict patrons from setting a passcode on the iPads and we got locked out of the device. For awhile I just dealt with resetting it to factory settings and set the device up again as if it was new. Once it became a frequent enough issue, we purchased a Mac Mini to replace a staff computer and now use Configurator to configure all the settings and apps on all the iPads. Configurator is the only way to remove the option to set a passcode and it is only available on Macs (it is free though).

I'd be happy to share anything else so just let me know if you have questions!

