

iPads and Autism: A Tool For Success



Mark Mautone has over 18 years experience in special education and is a lead teacher for a New Jersey school district in their Applied Behavior Analysis Program for children with autism. His vast years of experience includes but limited to teaching children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), developmental delays, Down Syndrome, Angelman Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy and Multiple Disabilities. He holds a BA in Teacher of the Handicapped (TOH) with a TOH certification and P-3. Mark also has a MA in Applied Behavior Analysis.

Minta: Hi. Welcome back again. We are still with the fourth annual online Mom's Fighting Autism Conference and I am so very excited to have with us Mark Mautone. So many people have asked me about iPad apps for autism. It's such a big buzz, and I'm so happy to have Mark here with us tonight. Welcome Mark, thank you so much for agreeing to be on the show tonight.

Mark: Thank you for having me.

Minta: Thank you. So, you are autism apps specialist, can you tell me a little bit about what you do?

Mark: What I do is, well currently, outside of being involved in technology, I'm the lead teacher at ABA Autism Program in Hoboken, New Jersey. I also have a start-up technology company that specializes in using iPads with children with autism from any age. I work with children who are three years old, right up until their late 20's. In part with that, I also do app development. A lot of the stuff I do work on feeds my design and my development for apps. That's about it, in a nutshell.

Minta: That sounds great. Can you please tell us a little bit more about your involvement? And what, I think, what a lot of people want to know about is what's available out there. I'm going to turn over to the audience, and please, enlighten us.

Mark: Tonight, what I really quickly want to first mention is that the slides that you're going looking on, not all of them are up on

the webinar. If you want, you can go to my website at www.itpadd.com and under MFA, in the bar at the top, click on that link and it has three formats of the presentation. Feel free to download them as I get to the slides that aren't in here.

iPad is a very big deal. Since its launch in 2010, it's quickly become one of the more preferred tools for educators and parents, as well as other professionals in the field. As we know, it's been very focused on using it with individuals with autism. One thing I do want to stress is that, although we may read a lot about it, we may see it on TV, we see a lot of great things that happen, but sometimes when parents go to apply and do it themselves, they hit a lot of different obstacles, things just aren't working. They want to know what the best app is to use, they want to know what the best device is, how we can use this to expand to the community, into different areas you may not think it's appropriate for. We may discuss a lot of this tonight.

I just want to stress that the iPad does not replace any formal therapy, it does not replace any instruction. It will enhance and support, and it can introduce new skill acquisition. Let's just get started. I have a bunch of slides, and I know there's a lot of questions because I've already got some right in front of me.

What I want to do first is quickly go over the research involved in using iPads. I know many of you want to go into the apps, but this is extremely important, especially to educators, that we need to know this. As we start seeing more iPads introduced be introduced into classrooms, and we see a lot of funds going into buying apps, we just want to make sure there is some research behind it, because we don't want to go into an area that we're not familiar with just yet. I'm going to very briefly, it's going to take no less than a couple of minutes to go through this, because this isn't what tonight is going to be focused on.

There's a few studies that I will personally look at. These are the three online. One is by Dr. [inaudible 00:04:05] out of New

Zealand, and what she did was a study using the iPad for using pages, which is a word document for the Apple computer. What she was able to do was use the iPad displaying a video model of how to use spell correction. In return, this produced results for children to increase their spelling words when they were writing. This was only for two children. What I want to take out of that is that she uses her video modelling to teach a skill. I'm just going to break it down for you, because that's how I have to break it down. I'm going to make it very simple for parents and educators. [Inaudible 00:04:44], you can break that down into a more complex explanation. For tonight, I'm going to make it as simple as possible.

The second one is by Dr. Flores. What they did, was in many questions, in fact, I have some of the questions in front of me - What is the difference between using an iPad and using one of those laminated picture-based systems? According to this study and probably more that will eventually come out, I think they are finding that there are similar results. One over the other doesn't make a difference. Depending on the child too, it may depend on the child, and it may vary the results of that. You just want to be careful, but according to this study it's doesn't really matter which system you're going to use. It produces very similar results.

The third study, and this is extremely new, I think this one of the more... They're all important, but this is the one a lot of people were looking at, because they're all used to the traditional materials, and I know a lot parents get frustrated, saying that their child doesn't learn that way. Why can't we use the iPad and maybe go back? Why can't we do some of the instruction on the iPad, and then do some in a traditional matter? This study, by Leslie Neely, out of Texas A&M University, what they did was compare academic instruction delivered on an iPad to the instruction delivered through traditional for two students with autism spectrum disorder, who engaged in [Inaudible 00:06:09] challenging behavior. What this did, I'll summarize it very quickly, both participants displayed lower levels of challenging behavior and higher levels of academic engagement when using the iPad. When they did not use

the iPad, they engaged in higher levels of challenging behavior and lower levels of academic engagement. That's a very brief summary.

When the research wasn't there, any educator would base it on their best practices. It's a method or technique that has consistently shown results superior from those achieved in others. They often become better as of prudence or discovery. Why am I saying this to any of you? Does it really make difference? It does, because there's a lot of schools and districts out there that are hesitant to use these devices. Unless we use them, we're not going to know the effects that they're going to have. I advocate practice, practice, practice, use best practices, and use it in systematic way, which we are going to go over today.

We're going to move forward now. I want everybody to understand that the iPad is a tool, this isn't just something you're going to throw in front of a child and expect them to keep busy during downtime. There's teaching to this. It's like anything, but I think sometimes we read so much and we have so much built in that we want this work, and may it work, but it may take a little time. Remember, it's a tool and it's only going to function as good as the user. Who is the user? The user is going to be you as a parent, you as an educator or professional, and the child. It's like, "I'm going to download a great app, and I'm going to put it in front of them and they're automatically going to learn it." We can't make that assumption, we have to teach them. We have to teach them where the home button is, how to turn it off, what if the volume is too low. There's children I know who absolutely hated apps, but it wasn't the app, it was because they couldn't hear what was going on because the volume was too low. Simple things like that can make a difference. Remember through this, that the iPad is a tool, and it's going to function only as good as the user.

With that said, I want to go a little further into what the iPad can do. This is going to be a little further than what many of us would imagine. It provides a lot of opportunities. This isn't just a device that I want to see sitting at desk, or sitting at

a child, at home, watching YouTube or watching something. They could be using it more productively. For older children, it can expand employment opportunities. What do I mean by that? Well, it can be used in a very multi-functional way. First of all, if a child doesn't have a very well developed repertoire or skills, and they're still learning some basic functions, but they are in an employment environment. Let's say they're learning some stuff to do in a restaurant, but they may need some picture sequencing activities or visual aids to help them. You can use this to provide video modeling, provide picture sequences, some sort of activity book, task juggling book. Not only that, there are so many cool apps that are on the market that we can teach the children to do invoicing in small businesses, that can do data collection, that can input information into simple, preset templates.

There's a lot of different things out there. How do we take this and use this? You got to develop a plan. It can also have a lot of children actively participate in the home, the classroom, and the community. There's many things they can do in the home with this. In the classroom, that's going to depend on the teacher, how much they're engaged in the iPad and how much they're going to welcome it, and what is it that they're going to use in it. Are we going to use some programming? Could this be used for peer-to-peer interaction? Peer-to-peer play? There's a lot of great games out that require two peers to play with them, and even some games, when you have two iPads, when it's the other peer's turn, one iPad freezes up until the other child takes their turn, then it allows the child to take the turn. There is some control with that.

Community; one thing with the community, if you use an iPad in the community, you want to make sure that whatever you're using is a standalone application, because if you're using something that's web based you're going to have to make sure it's got internet access to it or it's not going to function.

It can also be used to teach new skills. As we go through this, I'm going to show you an evaluation I use. It's nothing great, it's nothing fantastic, it's a starting point on where to start

on how to use an iPad and how to pick the right goal to use, and target. You can use schedule following. You can teach new skills using schedule following. The photo on the left side is something called Choice Works. I basically replicates one of those systems I see a lot of people at home where they have the Velcro on the left side and the Velcro on the right side, and they complete the step, they move it to the right, they go from left to right and they move it. Same thing; it limits you to eight tasks or eight steps, but it's a great tool.

Communication; one thing I want to say about communication is - What is the best communication app? To be honest with you, I don't know. There are some good ones, but why I'm saying that is because each child has different communication needs. One thing I do want to stress is that if your child or you feel that they need some sort of communication device, please get them evaluated by an augmentative specialist. The only reason why I'm saying that is - You're right, it's easy to download and I'm sure it's going to be a fight with the district to try to get a lot of these different things, but remember, IBEA protects you from that. If you need any of the evaluations, request it. Please try to have a professional evaluate your child instead of just download all these apps that you see are listed for communication. While you may think one is right because another parent recommended it, because it works for their child, and now you download it for 100 and some odd dollars, and it's not working child, because it wasn't really appropriate for your child. A different app may be appropriate for your child. There's a lot out there, and it's really hard but they're very expensive too, so you want to take your time on picking a communication app.

Self-care skills; self-care skills, you can use video modeling, you can use schedules, you can use iPads in the shower. They have some great waterproof cases that you can, instead of putting a 30 step showering program that's Velcro that always peels apart and falls to the floor all the time, you can just put it right on the iPad. It sounds easy. It takes time, it takes training, it takes some troubleshooting for you yourself and how it's going to fit into your daily routine. These are

options, and I'm telling you how we're expanding these iPads. Video modeling for brushing teeth, you can even show them a live picture of them brushing their teeth, almost like a mirror image of them.

Academics; academics, you can start anywhere with that. Again, it's going to depend on exactly what you're targeting. Fine motor skills - You can't get a better device to use like the iPad, because it's a multi-touch device. You're going to have to tap, and swipe, and double-tap, and pinch, there's a lot of different things you can learn from using an iPad.

Access; the iPad gives us access to everything. Things that we've never really had access too. A lot of children may not go out on field trips a lot. Some children may not go on field trips. If they can't, they can bring that experience into the classroom. It's different from using a computer that a teacher is overseeing and directing themselves, because this child can choose what they want to go to. They have some really art apps of museums, you can just tap certain ones and it will take you to different simulated floors and 3D imaging of sculptures, and things like that. They have one from a rain forest. There's a lot of different things.

Enjoyment; don't forget about enjoyment. That's what these things are really for. Before all these apps came we loved music, we loved our videos. Make it enjoyable too. It's got to be fun. Don't forget about that. It's just that we want to regulate all of these different things. I get a lot of calls and a lot e-mails about parents that want to use the iPad, they have an iPad. The problem is, their child was using it for playing games, and now they're having a hard time introducing education. You want to make sure you balance all of that.

It promotes independence, again, following routine, completing tasks, socializing with peers, I'm not saying to use this iPad to teach socialization, you can use it to enhance it. You can teach it to introduce it, but I'm not going to use an app for it. I'm not going to use an inanimate figure to teach socialization. I'm not going to teach a cartoon character to

teach socialization. Some people may disagree with me and I respect that. However, I look for transferring that skill into the real world. My end goal is - How am I going to take this, going outside and bring to the real world? How are they going to generalize this from the iPad, to home, to school, to the community? You can use things like Face Time and Skype for socialization, peer interaction. If you're in a school and your child is in a self-contained class, there is a greater chance that they may see that child that they were Face Timing in another classroom, and maybe their peer buddy. There's a better chance at that than seeing some clip-art, animated guy walking down the hall.

Some of these conversation apps that do teach skills, there are prerequisites of reading and comprehension, so you'll have to make sure that your child has those skills too, before you even download those. It may say "conversations", but if you're the one that's reading it all the time. You want to make sure it's the best fit for your child and their capabilities.

Information; I'm not talking about just the internet. I'm talking about information for an adult. Any of the children can look up things on the internet, but more so, let's look a little further for the adults. If they're learning to live independently, what they're going to be able to do is find where the bus station is, where the local coffee place is, where the local theater is, what are playing, it gives them a map of how to get there, where the local park is. These are a lot of different things we have to start thinking about, and we need apps that are a little more user friendly for not just us, but for the individuals with autism as well.

Leisure skills; you can't forget about leisure skills. This is probably one of the most requested topics that I get to help the children learn on the iPad, as far as independent skills. There's a lot of games out there. One thing I do want to warn you about it - Some games are very conceptual. Sometimes there's a feeling, as they get complicated, and they get more progressive. Don't feel discouraged, there's some ways you can teach them to go through these games.

One thing I'm going to suggest is, if you're going to try a game, and it's a free version, and you know your child likes it, don't wait too long to buy the paid version. They only reason I'm telling you that, when I first started this a few years, I always got the free versions. I didn't really have the money to spend on all these apps. What I found is that after teaching the child for a month using this free version, I bought the paid version. What happened was, there was so many different features, the setup was different, the whole interface was different. The child no longer liked it because they could no longer access the program. If you have a child that has difficulty reading to start a program, there's apps that start with go. They use start, they use begin, they use one player with the number one, they use one with the letter O-N-E player, and sometimes they just use main menu and that starts it. Sometimes a lot of these children learn that by pressing a button, it's getting me somewhere. They may not be reading it, but they know it's cause and effect - I tap this and I play. When that game is over, that's where you got to start teaching them Do I want to play again? Do I need to exit out and start over, or does it go to the next level; which may have not been taught yet? Just some things to think about.

Social media; there's no reason that our children can't use Facebook, can't use Twitter, again, we're going to monitor it. I did a story not too long ago, about finding safe social media, and the only social media that's out there, and it's not on the iPad, but it's something you should take a look at, it's called Squag. I have no affiliation with them, but it's really the only one out there with a very safe social media platform for children with autism. It's what it was designed for. Video conferencing; why not video conferencing their cousins? Why wait until they come once or twice a year? Video conference with them, video conference peers, video conference grandma and grandpa. Use this...

Minta: Wonderful ideas, yes

Mark: Photos and videos; I'm not talking about having your child take

photos of random things. What I get a lot requests are, "Hey Mark, my memory is totally filled up and I don't know what happened." What happened is, sometimes the children they like... Some children that engage in some behaviors, whether they're (?) or non-productive or (?), whatever you want to phrase it, they'll take pictures of themselves maybe making different faces, maybe just snapping them. They'll take video, and that will fill up. Instead of just restricting them from that, teach them how to take pictures. When they take the pictures, bring it to the next step, maybe putting into Keynote, which is a like a PowerPoint, just something basic; or maybe putting in the schedule that they're going to use.

Teach them new skills, don't just restrict them all the time. What you're doing is, as you restrict different apps on this iPad, you're limiting the amount of function it's having. You may have to restrict initially, but then teach it. Don't just put it to the side and say that they're obsessed over it. If you teach inappropriately, at certain times, maybe it will be appropriate for them and can be used in many different ways.

Now with iPad, as far as using the iPad, I truly believe, of using the iPad with many kids and talking at so many trainings, there has to be a process. There simply has to be a process. Buying an iPad and just downloading the app and expecting it work, it may work for some people, but it's just not practical. It just wastes a lot of money, it wastes a lot of time, and one we thing we know with working with the children - We don't want to waste time, and we don't want to waste money. A lot of the therapy that we're paying for costs an arm and a leg right now, and the last thing you want to spend out is hundreds of dollars on app that just don't work.

This is just a simple process, that I've kind of - just a broad process. You want to identify, as far as the teacher, or even a parent who may one, or two, or three parents with autism, identify which child is going to use this iPad. Let's say our whole class is going to use it. I think you're jumping ahead of the game. Start small. Identify one child, we're going to evaluate them, and we're going to go through this quickly.

We're going to pick target skill, don't pick five or six or three, pick one. See if one works, if one doesn't work, there's no reason to pick two or three. Select a device, of course it's the iPad, but which model? Does it make a difference? Of course it does! If you're going to use a lot of video modeling, you're going to want a lot of memory. If you're going to use it in the community, you're going to need the 3G service. The process of the integration, the support, who's supporting you? Is your district supporting you? Do you have outside support? Do you have a private person to help support? Is there a resource that you can call and say, "Hey listen, I bought this iPad, I downloaded the app, and it's just not working." Even find out if that app has a high level of support.

I'm going to go into the apps in a little bit, but every app is required to have support. The level of support - Well that depends on the developer. It could just be a simple e-mail, it could just a tutorial on their webpage.

Training - Is this something you need to be trained on? I know Apple offers the 101 training for learning the function of the iPad itself, what if want to expand on using apps to ask specific questions on using them with your children and you're afraid need you need somebody that has more experience in the field, then maybe that's something you need to look into. I do want to warn you - Be careful about trainers that are just kind of jumping on the bandwagon with these iPads. I'm a huge advocate on it, and I'm not afraid to express my opinion about it because it costs a lot of money, some of these things are not cheap, and you want your questions answered while you're there.

What are we going to do? We're going to identify the learner. Do they have the prerequisite skills to use the iPad? If not, we're going to have to teach it to them. Is it possible that we can teach them on the iPad? Tapping, swiping, do they have those fine motor skills, or are they just merging? It doesn't mean that they can't use it, it means that that's what we need to work on right now. We're not doing focus on having them use it for a specific purpose, we just want them to learn how to turn

it on, to press the home button, to swipe, to access, that's all it could be right now. In fact, that's all some of my early programs are, just access to the iPad. There's not many children I've worked with that have not learned by themselves in a day or so. Not even within a day, within a few minutes of having the iPad.

What environment are you going to teach it in, home, school, community? We'd love to have them in all three, but that's not realistic. It's not because we don't want it realistic, it's because there's always red tape somewhere. You want to make sure that whatever environment you're going to say, you're going to maintain using that iPad in a way that you are going to implement it. Then, when you see success in that one environment, that's when you should put it in the other environments. Now you've seen the improvement, and you've seen the progress.

Limitations; are there going to be limitations to using the iPad? It could be as simple as a safety issue. It could be as simple as a motor issue, it could be as simple as the environment it's being used in. Is that mom and dad can't afford it, we know the school can, but they don't want to, that's a limitation of learning to use one. It may seem like it isn't one, but it is, because you can have a whole plan, you know ahead of time why you want it, you know what you want to teach on, but having access is a limitation of the iPad itself.

Accessibility options; do you need any accessibility options on the iPad? The iPad has one of the most comprehensive sets of accessibility options that I can't even imagine. Do you need guided access, where you can deactivate parts of the screen? Do you need to put speak-text on? Do you need to zoom certain text? There's so many different things you can use, it's going to depend... It's just you learning the iPad itself before you download apps. You need to learn the system.

Next, is an evaluation. I think this is a little difficult for some of you to see, if you want this, it's actually available on my website, it's on the top bar, it's called ASR. No, that's

something different. This is just an evaluation, it should still be up there, it's under that same topic, ASR, and you can download it. It really just goes over all those areas. What it explains is - The environment, what skill you're going to address - Let's say we want to teach scheduling. We want a child to engage in multiple activities, but use a schedule because they get caught on one, so we need them to move forward when they're finished with one. We'll use picture prompts to help them with that. Or is task completion? We need multiple pictures to complete a task. Do you need videos? Is it going to text-based? Is it going to be photo based? What type of app do you need? Do you need something that gives you the creation of everything that you need? Every little feature I can to make this happen? Or do you want something more direct, very point saying - This is a schedule app, they say it's a schedule app, they say it's good, it can't do this but it's Okay, I really wish it could do this, but someone else uses it and the see a lot of success. You want to make sure... That's going to be a whole other issue, is using the apps. Again, this evaluation will cover all of that. It will cover the accessibility options you need, any accessories.

Accessories, does it need a case? I can't tell you how many schools buy iPads and how many parents buy iPads and don't even buy cases. The more durable cases are expensive, but let me tell you - I buy the durable cases, and everyone that's ever seen me present, I would say 95% of the time, I bang my iPad on purpose to show how durable the case is. I pay for all my cases, I don't get cases sent to me for free. It would be nice, but I test them out because if I'm going to recommend them to a parent, I'd better make sure that if they bang it on the floor, it drops, it's not going to break. I'd rather use mine than have them break theirs. Sometimes, using some of these devices and you break them, and you don't have a case, and this was their communication system, the child just lost their voice, and you don't have a backup, because getting that iPad itself was hard enough, there's no way I was getting a second one. The least you could do is protect it. It's not going to protect the screen if you hit it in a corner. If you smack that right on the corner on the front screen, it's most likely going to crack. It can

protect everything else. I've seen a lot of drops are more on the edges, and that's what creates the crack in them. I know I'm going through this quickly, but if anybody wants more information, you can e-mail me, Okay? I'd be more than happy to get back to you and discuss a lot of this.

Now what I'm going to talk to you about are domain areas. These are basically some of the domain areas that are being used with the iPads. I'm going to try to go through this as quickly, but slowly just to understand this. People use it for language development. There's a lot of language apps out there. Which is the best? It's going to depend on what your target is. Even when you ask a speech therapist, and I do consult with them a lot, it's going to depend on how they do it, or how they were trained on teaching articulation. There are some people who practice it this way, and that's what you want to be careful on. If I practice it this way, they practice it that way.

Attending behavior; there are some out there that do try to address eye contact, I've spoken about this lately at some of my presentations, because it's been coming up a lot at my presentation. I got a call last week about the same topic. My biggest thing is - I really feel that if you're going to look at eye contact, I like the more traditional method, just that real-to-real eye contact. Once you put an app into it, there's so many components to it. There's numbers in eyes, there's eyeballs, there's things popping up. You don't need that to look at the iPad. If you think just having a picture of a face there, you have to worry if they're going to generalize that to a human person, then on top of that a parent, or their brother or sister, or their teacher. Be careful when you use it for trying to teach eye contact. That's something that there is no research on right now. That's something that I would like to see, because it's one of those things that you teach eye contact, and they never take their eyes off that iPad.

Scheduling; that's used a lot. Text-based schedules, video-based schedules, photo-based schedules, self-care skills, imitation, academics, motivation systems, not just motivation that they can watch a video or play a game, if you're using a token board or a

motivation system, or a token economy system, there's a few apps out there that are, relatively, pretty good. You can use them for motor skills, you don't really need an app for that, you can just teach it using the device.

Behavior Reduction; they're used it to decrease behaviors. As that study showed before, just introducing materials on it reduced behavior, also following directions. Now, what I want to do is break down. I want to expand on these domains really quickly, because what I'm trying to do is open your mind up to why and how we use these iPads. Sometimes we just focus on communication, schedules, certain academic areas. I want to tell you how these areas get broken down. You hit the academic areas, and trust me, I'm going to hit apps, don't worry about that, because I know a lot of you are waiting for that.

Academic areas; you have all your academic areas, there's your math and your reading, etc., etc. You have you language areas, your sounds, your words, your phrases, more expressive language and perceptive language. Scheduling, you can use a schedule for a lot. It can be teaching play skills, it can be used transitions, managing leisure time, task completion, self-care, toileting, washing face, nail preparation, showering, attending behavior, tasks, engagement, eye contact.

Now I want to take it a step further. I'm going to take one of the academic areas, and I'm going to take math. As you can see, under each main domain area there is one. It's math, sounds, task completion, showering, and eye contact. Under each one of those, I've broken it down into additional components. You have to understand, when I use this iPad, I break it down like this. I want to see success, if I don't see it right at the surface, it's because I didn't break it down far enough and I didn't target those skills I needed to become successful. Let's just work with math, the first one.

Math; are we teaching rote counting? We're going to use rote counting. In the app, do we need predetermined numbers? Do we need some verbal imitation from this app? Do we need a specific layout? Do we need a drag-to-match? What I mean is that if

you're going to rote count, it's just going to be some one-to-one correspondence. You have to understand, the way some apps are designed, it isn't even how you teach some skills, I'm going to explain why that is in a few minutes. Do you want to limit the target numbers? Do you want to put the target numbers in there or are you Okay with things that are preset? Do you want data to be recorded on how many they get right or wrong, because they're just tapping away? Are apps out there like that? Are they customizable? I like the fully customizable ones. Most of the apps I like to use aren't even labeled in certain areas because I'm the one that's creating the content.

This is where, unfortunately, the slides would end on your screen. If you downloaded it off my website, we're going to continue on. It should be slide 17. We're going to talk about rote. We've finished with the rote counting, so you're going to want to learn how to do that. Again, you're going to break every skill down. Before you're touching the app, you are breaking the skill down.

Next, let's talk about app development. Before you look at an app, or that you find an app that you like that's going to target the skill - Remember, when you look for an app, you're not looking under "Autism", you're looking under a skill, that's what you're addressing. You're addressing a skill or a skill deficit that may be associated with autism. A lot of people use autism as a keyword because, once again, it's a flooded market and that's just what people do. They know it's an industry, and people are going to put that in and get the most hits. It's a marketing thing. It's not always going to give you the best results. I want the best results. I'm going to look up - If I want to look up, say, number identification, I'm going to look up numbers, I'm going to look up counting, I'm going to look up number ID, I'm going to label numbers, I'm going to look up all those different things, other than autism. Autism isn't going to take me to numbers. Just because I may have a son or daughter diagnosed with autism, that's not going to teach them numbers. I need an app that's going to give me the correct content to do it.

I just want to go over the developers real quick. I, this is me personally, as a developer myself and designing apps, these are the type of developers that I've seen that are on the market. If you have developer, a developer in general who is good at writing the programs and the code, he develops the apps. He wants to do it with well intent, or they're getting in on a market. What I've find is that they read a lot of reviews. What are the pros and what are the cons of certain apps. What they do is try to enhance those apps by making their own, by putting all of these components in. When you go to their website, and you ask them a question about their app, they can't give you any information because they don't know anything about autism, they don't know anything about the area they just developed, so be careful. Definitely do your research.

Parents; parents are a huge contributor to developing apps. They're directly affected, so that's motivated them. They can be indirectly affected, it could be their nephew or their niece, their best friend's son or daughter, but in the end, it's personal, so they're going to develop something, but remember this - When they're developing, they're developing it for something, maybe to their child. They may see something missing, and their child's not learning one way, then they're going to develop an app to address that, because no one else is helping. You want to be careful, because that's only targeting one group. You'll see a lot of reviews that say that my son or my daughter uses it. That's one child out of, I think it's up to a million children under 21 right now diagnosed with autism. I'm not sure how accurate those numbers are, but that's what I got the other day from the CEG. That's one child. You want more children.

Then, you have professionals, whether it's speech therapist, special education teacher, behavior analyst, physical therapist, whatever. Difference is, you want them to focus on their area of specialty. I'm not going to develop an app on physics, because it's not my specialty. If I did, and someone bought it, I can't tell you how valid it's going to be. I may have just gotten my content off the internet. You want to make sure that the person who developed that app has experience in the area that they're developing.

Then you have the advisory board; the advisory board, now that's something that seems more credible, you're going to see that some of those prices are a little escalated, because there's a lot of people. You'll have someone that finances the app, then you'll have maybe a teacher on there, you may have a parent on there. If it's something ABA related, they may have a behavior analyst on it. If it's something sensory based they may have an OT on it. If it's speech related, they may have a speech therapist, a teacher, a parent, and someone that finances it. One thing I want to explain - Why are some of these apps so expensive? A couple of reasons; first is that if you have advisory board, if you have multiple people that are part of app, they'll all want a percentage. Secondly, Apple takes 30% off of every app that's purchased. On top of that, if you have someone who finances, they're going to want a larger percentage than what you're getting anyway. Just be careful of all those different things.

How do I pick apps? Well, I own over 2400 or something like that. I own a lot. I developed a rubric, I call it the App Selection Rubric. It puts the developer part of it, the functionality of app - I've used that used apps that were targeted for educating a child with autism in a specific area, and it did not function in that manner. I've used apps that weren't even designed for this area that functioned very well. I look at rating, I don't look at reviews. Reviews are very subjective. I'll get more ratings than reviews. Even though ratings - There was an article that I just read - weren't that reliable. When you compare the reviews to the ratings, I personally think they're a little more reliable than the reviews. Then just the ease of use. If something is going to take me two days to learn, or it's going to take me training to learn, that may be a little more difficult for someone to use with their child immediately in the class room. We want to have immediate implementation.

Real quickly, when we look at different apps, the slide I'm looking at right now is slide number 20, what I have on here are a bunch of different interfaces of a bowling game. I had a child

who loved bowling. I bought one bowling game, and he knew exactly what button to press. It was like what I was talking about earlier, he doesn't have the prerequisite skill of reading, but he knew by tapping the first button that he was going to play bowling, when it was over he could restart if he wanted to. Very simple. Then I downloaded more bowling apps, and realized he didn't like it anymore, because he didn't know how to read, he didn't know how to activate certain ones, every bowling game was different in the way the interface was. It was real different. Sometimes all the bells and whistles aren't the best. You want to be careful.

Device selection; I touched on it a little earlier. Find out what you're going to use it for. If you're going to use it for video-based and picture-based target skills, you're going to want to get something that has a lot more space in it. As far as the iPad Mini vs the regular iPad, that's going to be a preference. I personally like the regular sized iPad.

When we select accessories, don't forget, there's a whole market of accessories. If a child has a hard time, and you want teach them keyboarding skills, you can use a Bluetooth keyboard. They have keyboards out there, and they're very difficult to get, but they're actually an overlay. It goes right over the onscreen keyboard and it's pressure sensitive. They actually have to tap for it to activate the screen. It's not like where if they put their fingers on without anything it's just going to activate. This is actually pressure sensitive, and it's a really difficult key guard to get, so if I do get a hold of some and someone is looking for one, I'd be more than happy to share.

Styluses; there's plenty of different styluses. Not just styluses to write, there's a great - I was actually just sent a product called the Nomad Brush. You may be familiar with it, it's a paint brush that's a stylus, but it's an amazing thing. You can pair that with different programs. If your children like painting a lot, but you may not have access to paints right away, maybe you can substitute it with the iPad.

Cases; cases are extremely important, something very durable.

The iPad is a big investment, not just the iPad itself, also the apps on it. Not only that, but think about what it's doing for that child. The iPad may be broken, but there is a lot more at stake than a five or six hundred dollar iPad. It's the child's education, it's their communication. To me, you can't put a price on that.

Stands; some children need stands. Right now I could tell you that I have a real hard time finding stands that mount to desks. That's something I'm really looking for. I've made some mock versions myself, but they're not that good. That's something you want to look for. Do they need a stand or is it good on a flat surface? It's going to depend on the child.

Headphone; Bluetooth headphones, wireless headphones, wired headphones. When you're in a classroom, you children may need this because it was disrupt others or they may need them to focus what they're learning on the screen.

A protective overlay; some of the more durable iPad cases do come with an overlay anyway, but just in case, you do want to protect the screen with a top layer that they call a digitizer.

Then there's support or training, webinars. You can start with webinars, most of them are free. That's going to need to be provided by the developer or see if some other person will provide a webinar for you, or training. E-mail support is important.

On-site; most don't come out on-site, but if you do have some that will come on-site, don't lose their number. It's the same thing with, going to the next one, their phone number. No one will give you their phone number, but if you get it, don't lose it. It's just a resource, it's networking. Video tutorials are important. They may not give you everything you're looking for in an app, but it's something.

Workshops; when you're going to workshops, you want to make sure

that the trainer, or the person giving the workshop has done it before, knows what they're doing and has worked in the field. Don't forget about also training your students as well.

Now we're going to go into the apps. I'm going to spend just a couple minutes on this, because I have a bunch of questions relating to apps that I will try to answer as best I can. I obviously can't answer them probably as accurately as I can, or maybe I'll give you best suggestion for certain apps only because I don't know your child. I'm very specific on what app goes with certain children. I don't believe that there's one app that fits all. If there was, we wouldn't have hundreds of thousands on the market, and somebody wouldn't always be competing, making another communication app, or another scheduling app, or another language-based app, or another math app. One app may offer something that others don't.

On slide 55, I only listed some of the more... There's only a handful here. I'm not going to lie, there's more, it's based on need and what I use frequently. I put one called DrawingPad. It's a nice little leisure skill, I use it with the Nomad Brush. They can use their finger, you don't have to spend money on the Nomad Brush if you don't have it. DrawingPad is a very good app. It can give you pictures, you can download things, it has pencils, markers, every tool you can imagine - Different colors, different paintbrushes. It's something that I really do like using and so do my students.

Everything I'm talking about isn't something I'm just talking about because I like. I will not talk about an app or talk about anything unless it's been applied with multiple children. I'm not going to get the same results as I get with one child as I get with another.

The Time Timer; the Time Timer is a the old kind of \$30 timer that has that visual red to tell you how much time has gone by, or it has left. You can't beat for \$3 or \$5 to put it on the iPad. On this, you can put four timers on there.

There's another timer app called Timer. It's \$0.99, it's more

digital, it can loop. If anyone is looking for a looping timer, it has the vibration capability going on an iPhone. It's something that loops, if someone needs to collect data and they can't stop the timer, if they're on bathroom timers. These are great things. If you just need a timer for, let's say, toilet training, you can just one that comes with the iPad, the timer on iPad, the timer app.

There's a lot of great apps built into the iPad. I definitely don't have enough time to go through how they can be used, but you won't have to have to buy a lot of apps for a lot of the purposes that we needed if you use a lot of the built in ones.

Candy Count; I like Candy Count because it's a simple count, it's sorting, it's identifying colors, it's counting. It really encompasses a lot of different skills in the app. It was designed for sorting colors, it was designed for comparing quantities, but there is a lot more you can use with this app as well.

Reminders is more a text based schedule. What I like about Reminders is that it's a built in app, it's free. You can pick different dates, and put certain things that are going to occur those dates - Field trips, a doctors appointment, not for young children, I'm talking about for the student. There's this whole student base. On the same thing they can put a text based schedule with a check mark. When they check it off, it disappears, it goes into a completed column. They can have multiple schedules, they can repeat schedules, they can have timers that will tell them when things are going on. What's nice about this is, if a parent has it synced with iCal, they'll be able to see, in real time, when things are completed. It's kind of neat.

Book Creator; book Creator, I got to tell you, is one of my favorite apps; in particular, because it was designed for illustrators. Red Jumper Studio did a really good job with this. What this is, is basically - I use it for scheduling, I use it for children that are learning to write, if children are using the camera, it becomes a photo collection for them. I use this

in a multipurpose manner. What's great about this is - It's got every tool I need in a book format. I can import videos from the camera roll, and import any photo. I can put audio recordings that I record out of my voice. I can take audio recording out of the iTunes library from the iPad on here. You can export this into iBooks. What's nice about that is in iBooks, I don't know if many of you know, you can create what they call collections. For my students, each child can have their own bookshelf, which is called a collection, of all their different schedules. Maybe there's one book for hand washing, or one book for self-care skills. There may be videos and pictures in there. Another one may just be one of their leisure skills of taking pictures, so it's a photo album of the pictures they've taken. There's a lot of different ways you can use that app. I'd say for \$4.99, trust me, it's worth it.

Then there's Keynote that Apple has. Many of you are familiar with PowerPoint, I'm sure a lot of are, because every time I ask, a lot of people have developed things in PowerPoint. I think they're afraid, saying, "I have all this in PowerPoint, I don't know if I can create it on the iPad or on a Mac." Here's the thing about Keynote - Keynote will open up any PowerPoint. It will open it up and put it in Keynote format. Once you update it or you make some changes and you want to open it back up on your PC, you can export it out as a PowerPoint. You can export it out as a Keynote, a PowerPoint, or a PDF. The PowerPoint is what I find a lot of people use it for. In PowerPoint, you can't open a Keynote, so that's why they have this option. Anything you have, you can import it right into Keynote, and it will open it up, or export it and you'll be able to export it out as a PowerPoint and open it up as a Keynote. I do a lot of things in there. I make my own little games on there. I wish I could show you tonight, there's some fascinating things you're able to do using Keynote. I run programs, they look like apps I've designed, but they're in Keynote. I'm able to customize them. I can see whether that works or not. Once I know that it works in this format, then I need to go find an app and find out that it has all these different things I need to make it work.

As far as communication apps - I didn't want to tell you what

the best is, because it's going to depend on the child and what their current functioning level is at. Fine motor skills plays a part. Do they need key guards? Only certain apps sell key guards for. It becomes a complex than just telling me to tell you what my favorite app is. Can you make those boxes bigger? Can you make the fields bigger? Do they have to be this color? Do they have to be that color? Sometimes you need those when you go to assess a child for a communication system.

As we move forward using these iPads. Using it is a better practice, just thinking through it a little bit, and trust me you guys, on my site, that's my e-mail. It's not going to be anybody that I'm associated with, it's going to go right to me. If you have any questions on anything, never hesitate. It may take me a day or so, but I'll get back to you. Remember, just best practice. It may take a little time, but you'd rather do it right the first time than going back three or four times. I can't tell you how many times I've been called in on things that just went awry the first time and then I'm helping restructure it again.

Get iPad training, if there's some things you don't know you can always send an e-mail to somebody, and they may answer you back. Just check out a lot of the forums. Apple has a lot of forums. A lot of the special Ed communities have forums. Assess the apps, don't just take someone's word on it, know that they've actually used and applied it in multiple settings, maybe with multiple students.

And network, you can't get any better than that. You can start tonight; I'm giving you my e-mail address. This is the beginning of your network if you don't have anybody that uses iPad. Then what I did, I just launched a new website called myautismmaps.com, it's brand new. I'm literally going to be putting all the apps that I've owned or that I've seen up on there. Honestly review and comment. If you have any questions on apps, something you want to know, we're going to put it right up there. It's not going to be filtered through. It's not about marketing them, it's talking about an app on there, this person may love it, but this is the way it really works. I think the

parents and the educators deserve that much.

I'd like to thank everybody, and I think now we're going to take some questions. I'm sure I'm going to get a lot of app questions, so you're going to hear about a lot of apps as we go through this webinar.

Minta: Absolutely Mark, that was so interesting. I'm so glad that you'll be making that list of apps available to our listeners. We've got quite a lot of questions here, and not too much, so can I get a few quick hits here? There are so many parents here asking such good questions, some of these may be on the website, and if that app is on that list that you said, just tell me the title to title for the parent who asks where they can find that. Does that make sense to you?

Mark: Yeah.

Minta: Great. What Deb Higgins from Nashville wants to know what iPad apps are recommended for nonverbal autistic children to help them learn to communicate, either verbally via sign language or with pictures.

Mark: There's a lot of apps that will teach sign language. There's going to be a lot of apps that teach pictures. The question is - Which system are you going to choose to use? I don't want to just push this question off, but it's going to come down to evaluating the child. It's going to start narrowing down the most suitable app, because they're going to know whether they need pictures - Do they need cartoon pictures? Do they need clip art? If they're going to use pictures on a picture based app, do they need the auditory output? That auditory output - Is it Okay if it's synthesized or digitized? Or do they need somebody recording into it? Does the child have the prerequisite skills of doing picture-object identification and matching? Those are those kind of prerequisite, early learning skills. It's about assessing the right communication for the child. If she wants - Definitely e-mail me, and I can give you a list of some more high quality apps that do that. Make sure if you haven't had an evaluation done, to get it done, because there's going to be some skills

you want to make sure your child has before doing that. Sign language, to me would signal that they have some good fine motor skills and imitation skills, whereas picture matching would be that they can point or hand over pictures. There's a lot of different components to that, and I would want to make that clear before I give a couple apps out.

Minta: Spoken like a true educator, Mark.

Mark: I know that's not what you wanted. She can e-mail me, and I'll be more than happy to talk to her over the phone and guide her. It's no problem at all, because I think it's important. I think a lot of questions are like that. I get them all the time - What is the best app for this? I had someone e-mail the other day that they got a prescription from a doctor for an iPad. I can't help you with that. You have doctors writing prescriptions now, and it's unfortunate that insurance companies don't look at it as a medical necessity now for some children. If you want an iPad, or you want certain apps, the best way to do it is - The federal law is - To get an assistive technology evaluation and all com evaluation done. Based on that report is going to determine whether that district is going to have to buy you an app, or an iPad. I think that that would probably be the most successful way to acquire an iPad. I'm not telling everyone to run out to their district and get it, to ask them for evaluations, but remember, understand your rights. The parent as well. I work with a lot of early childhood parents and they're starting to learn them. This is where it fits in, it's that, look under assistive technology under the IDEA and about some evaluations. This is what it's going to be doing at that level, that's what using the communication systems are about. Definitely consult with a speech therapist.

Minta: Good advice. There's a lot of questions similar to that, so I'm going to try to, here's a very straightforward question - Deb Higgins for Nashville wants to know... Actually, it's the same speaker Can you recommend a sturdy iPad case for an autistic child that's not very coordinated and has been known to throw things often?

Mark: Yeah. There's a couple cases that I really like. When you get a sturdy case, there's going to be some added weight to it. That, I'm just going to preface, because it's important. I'll recommend a case and parents will say that it's kind of heavy and hard for their child to hold. What I've done is... The Gumdrop case is really good, it comes in a bunch of different colors for children, it's very nice. It's got a screen protector and it's got a rubbery cover, it's very nice. Also, they have the Griffin Armor Case, which I use. I literally bang it all over the place, and use that for my demonstration. The Griffin I like, also, I like using the Otter Box.

Minta: I love the Otter Box. That's what I've got.

Mark: Then you have, I would say in the \$60-\$90 that's what you have. Anything below, you have portfolio type cases. I inadvertently got into repairing iPad screens, because everyone would use the portfolio type cases, the ones that fold up, and the edges are exposed. If a kid drops it or bumps it into a corner, it's aluminum and sometimes it would tear, and sometimes it would crack the screen. Parents need the iPad back within 24-48 hours, they can't wait weeks. I would always suggest - Okay, I fixed your screen, can you just spend \$60 or \$70 on a good case? If it happens once, it's going to happen again. I think it's worth the investment. I would say that right now, those are the three I would recommend - The Gumdrop, the Griffin and the Otter Box. With the Otter Box, what I like about it is that you can purchase a utility strap for it that a child can hang over their neck or arm if they have to carry it around.

Minta: That's a great answer. Here's another fantastic question. Ann Marie from Danville want to know Where do I find the setting on my iPad, I hope you can answer this because I have the same question. Where do I find the setting on my iPad to possibly set a block on content? Is it possible for my teen, like the internet does? Can you block content on the iPad the way you block content on the internet?

Mark: Of course you can. This is going to go down to basic functions of the iPad. This is one of areas when I say that you have to learn the

system. The iPad is only as good as its user. The iPad is very powerful, it's got a lot of options. Under General Settings, after you tap Settings, you're going to go the left side where it says General. It's under Notifications. Tap that, and if you drag it to about the middle, you'll see a thing called Restrictions. If you tap on Restrictions, what it will do is give you Safari, the camera, Face Time. You can shut off and turn on Safari, the camera, Face Time, iTunes, the book store, installing apps, deleting apps, Siri, you can limit the rating content for all movies, TV shows, books, apps. You can disable in-app purchases. Something else I'm going to tell parents too is that it can require a password. It's defaulted to require a password only after 15 minutes. You can also require a password immediately from buying an app. If I buy an app, and I have it set for 15 minutes, and I give my iPad to a student, they go to the iPad store, and they download an app, they won't be prompted for my password because they have a 15 minute time frame before that expires. If you have a child or you've been in a situation where someone has bought a lot of apps, go under Require a Password and it's going to require to put a password in every time you purchase an app. You could change the privacy settings in here, you can allow changes, you can shut down the game center, the adding friends or multiplayer games, you can shut all that down. I think you'll find what you're looking for in Restrictions. If you're looking to lock down certain apps, you may not find that. Basically what you're doing is hiding these apps on the iPad. You can't do that to the apps that you're purchasing out of the App Store. You can only do it to the ones that are selected in restrictions.

Minta: I see. I want to remind the audience that if you're dialing in, you can ask Mark a question. You can pick this very intelligent man's brains. Dial in *2 and ask him a question yourself, please. Let's hear from the audience. Not to say that we don't have so many questions from our e-mail folks. There are so many great questions, but I'm an educator and here's an educator that asks, Catherine from Tuscon. Is there an app that will take a worksheet from a classroom and using the camera, take a picture, and then be able to type in the blanks?

Mark: You want to use like a PDF?

Minta: I'm not sure. It sounds like Catherine wants to...

Mark: Yeah, there's a couple out there. A couple that I like are uPad, there's bunch of PDF ones, because a lot of people like to type in on those. I know I'm going to have so many questions, but what I would need to know if we're talking a just plain document that you're going to type and just put text boxes in?

Minta: That's what it sounds like, she wants just download something and have the student type into something that's been prearranged. Like a filling-in-the-blanks kind of closed yellow EZE activity.

Mark: I like uPad. You could put photos in there, it's like taking notes, it's PDF annotating, you can hand write on it, you can type in it, you can export your work. I like that one, I think it's easier to use. It's used quite frequently. In fact, it was picked as an App of the Year by multiple outlets. You should try it, it's only \$4.99. If that person wants to e-mail me, I'd be more than happy to show them through a Skype call what it looks like before purchasing it.

Minta: That's very generous.

Mark: I like that one because it has a lot of different things in it.

Host uPad, sounds great. I'm sorry, go ahead.

Mark: No, go ahead.

Minta: Are you done, I don't want to cut you off. You're in New Jersey and I'm from New York, we both talk so fast. Trudy from Calgary-Alberta has a wonderful question. She says - like you stated earlier, you need to research the app to see if it's appropriate, I'm trying to find an app that's to be used as a communication device. I need to find an app which has switch and scanning accessibility, and one which can grow with the student. Do you have any experience using Talk Tablet app or Proloquo2go?

Mark: Talk Tablet, that has auditory scanning features on it. This is what it's going to come down to Proloquo2go is \$189, and Talk Tablet is like \$80. Sometimes it's unfortunate, but sometimes price conquers the functionality of some apps.

Minta: Do you think, Mark, that you get you what you pay for? Is one better than the other because it costs more?

Mark: Not always. I think that each one serves its own function. Because one offers scanning and others don't. It's funny that she brought that up because it's been a hot topic among some of the people that I work as far finding software that stands, because there's not that much out there. A lot of people are still using the Mac Book, but they do have... It's a speech scanning software. (?) a switch. You have to go with people who are dedicated to making a high quality app. What I like about it is - As far as their support center, as far as Talk Tablet, they have a good support center. They have a phone number, and like I was talking about, it's great to have a phone number. You're going to actually talk to the people who know the app, whereas everything else, Proloquo is a great program, I think when you're looking scanning software, look for someone that really specializes in it. It's like a lot of people asking me for a lot of the Bluetooth switches, a lot of the Bluetooth trackballs and things like that. I know that's for other children, maybe with more physical limitations, but it's the scanning software that people are looking for. If they need to use whatever accessory they need to do to access it, but they'll use it, but it's a scanning software that's just emerging. I think it's going to be a very competitive market very soon. I think I would probably, if you're looking for something scanning, I would probably stick with Talk Tablet. Here's the thing - it uses Symbol Sticks, the same library as Proloquo2go. Most communication applications - look at symbol system they're licensing Symbol Sticks, a lot of communication apps use that. Now that you know what libraries they're using, then you look at the functionality. One has scanning, one may not. One has this type of recording, the other doesn't, this one allows me to do this, this one doesn't. That's

what it's going to come down to. Then once you've figured all that out, you're going to say - Does that really make a difference? It is going to \$100 cheaper, is the scanning that's important to you? How much are those features worth to you? Not really worth to you, worth to the child? Talk Tablet I know is one of the few scanning communication device. I would go with them.

Minta: Okay, very good. Quick question from Gina from Petersburg. She's looking for a device for her young adult with ASD, he can use a regular computer. Would you still recommend an iPad over a regular computer?

Mark: It's going to depend on what they're doing on the computer. Is it for entertainment? Are they just watching videos? Are you going to be converting documents the child may be typing? Some of their work? To migrate information from a computer to an iPad isn't that difficult. You're just going to have to train the child on using the keyboard. Is it going to be an on screen keyboard? Is it going to be a Bluetooth keyboard? Most children that have done that, I use a stand with a Bluetooth keyboard, it's a little easier. What you have to teach them is that there's no mouse. It's touch. If you want to change something, you have to touch the screen. There's no mouse you're going to be able to manipulate to change and highlight certain areas. It depends on the purpose. I know a lot of people that have actually... If it's for game playing, a lot of people have gone to the iPad, because it's mobile and they can use it anywhere. Some of the games are of better quality on the iPad than they are on the computer these days.

Minta: Very good. Another Mark from LA would like to know, Is there some sort of online resource that lists executive functioning apps for high functioning teens? For that matter, where online can I see lists of apps with reviews that might be helpful?

Mark: The one that I like is, well, there's a couple of them. As I was talking about - Organizational skills, concentration, and note

taking and study skills and things like that. One website that I came across and it highlights five awesome apps for executive functioning. It's called adayinourshoes.com. It will explain like, Dragon is on there, [inaudible 76:42] does it," Studypros" is on there, Course Notes. What you want to do - That's going to give you a baseline of executive functioning apps. If it's Course Notes, they'll tell you a description of it. Go look at the app, and if it's not something you think is a little complex, look for something else that has... Now you're in the right area, now you just need to look at an app that's more focused on what your son or daughter needs. They do address executive functioning apps. I would go with a website, that that's exactly what they focus on. I would go with "adayinourshoes", and they have five on there, but it's a starting point for you. You can also go to Education Apps for All, it's a blog. I know they update. I think they just had a blog, it's like A Collection of Apps for Flexible Thinking or something. Some of the apps are neat, some of them are a little off base. This is how you're going to decide. You're not only researching the developer, you're also researching blogs on how people write things. If you type in 'executive functioning apps,' you're going to pull up a ton of different websites. So it's like, this website says this is good, but why isn't it listed on this one? You want to be careful on where you're getting the list of you apps from. I would start there. Look at your focus of what executive is and start there. If you're going to cover organizational skills, look for organizational apps; type in those key words. Organization; type that in the keyboard and see what apps you're bringing up. Study skills, type that in. One of the areas that they call gaps is poor note taking skills, type in note taking. You'll find those apps. Don't always rely on... Let that be a starting point to find what you're looking for.

Minta: Absolutely. I'm getting a lot of questions like that, people are very anxious to pick your brains because, obviously, there's a lot there to pick. I'm going to ask you - you may have the same, similar kind of answer, but - Helen Meyers is from your hometown in New Jersey - My daughter needs a program like Dragon to type what she says and get used to her speech impediment. Can you

recommend something for her?

Mark: Dragon?

Minta: Dragon, voice recognition. It's one of the many voice recognition systems, it's on late night TV all the time. Dragon, you say it and it types it. The voice recognition systems have gone so far that it's probably old technology by now. Is there a program where she can talk and it would type?

Mark: You know they have Dragon dictation for the iPad?

Minta: Yes. For the iPad. I'm not sure if you can get that for iPad or not, but it's a program like Dragon, where - It's on the iPhone too, you can talk and it types, but there's still a lot of problems. My husband still gets very frustrated with when you say one thing and it types something else. Do you know of a good voice recognition system that can allow a child to talk, and it will type for her?

Mark: You're not looking for voice recognition, you're looking for dictation.

Minta: Yes.

Mark: It's the keyword. Here's the thing; Dragon only works when you have the internet. I don't know if many people know that. I thought at one point that it didn't, but when I don't have access to the internet, it doesn't work because their server's down. There's Dragon, there's another thing called Voice Dictation. Dragon's free, Voice Dictation is \$0.99. Some of the other ones are one called Paper Port Notes, and then there's Dictamus. Dictamus is pretty expensive, but it's very high-end app. Then, you look for now, it could be dictation, but then you're looking for... Sometimes they're dictating it, but you have to make sure it translated into text, some won't translate into text. I would probably go with Paper Port Notes, it's pretty good and it's free. It works just like Dragon, voice dictation, it's the same thing. You just have to be careful because sometimes some of these programs will only work in an e-mail or in notes, they

won't always work within Pages documents. You can always copy and paste it into other programs, but unfortunately too, unlike, the downside of it is that Dragon needs... I know I'm kind of getting a little scattered here, but I just had to double check something. Dragon and Voice Dictation both do need the internet. It's important, because I'm not going to suggest something for you to download, and then when you don't have the internet, it's not working anymore. Those require the internet, so you want to be careful. Maybe you should try Paper Port Notes. Try that, it's free, so it's not going to cost you anything.

Minta: She mentioned her daughter had a speech impediment, so it's hard for her to use dictation. Do you think it's going to be... Well, it's free, right? You can try it out.

Mark: It's free, but if it doesn't recognize her voice, she can e-mail me and we'll definitely look into some other different apps that may. It depends on the voice, it depends on the speech. If the impediment is what's maybe causing an issue for the dictation not to recognize that word and convert it to text; that may just be a big obstacle.

Minta: Mark, you're so great at answering rapid-fire questions. I've got a caller on the line, but before I move to that, Joan from Austin wants to know, can you please repeat your e-mail address and website, slowly? People have so many questions for you that we can't get to them all tonight. So, can you please repeat your e-mail address and website?

Mark: My e-mail address is mark@itpadd.com that's the direct one, right to me. My web address is www.itpadd.com or I have my other one myautismapps.com either one you can reach me at.

Minta: Fantastic. We just have time, I'll be contacting you for sure as well. We have time for just one more caller, this is a live call. We're going to try to wrap things up in about 2 or 3 minutes. Claude Matoyer [SP] from LA would like to ask you a question. Hold on. I'd like to get Claude on the line. Claude, are you with us?

Sherry: It's Sherry, it's under my husband's name.

Mark: Disguising yourself, ah.

Sherry: So I was on the computer, and I thought I'd just try calling in. My question is, and again, you've done wonderful and you just answered one of the questions I typed in about your address. With technical difficulties here, sometimes the voice was going in and out. My child has been diagnosed with ASD, and he is transitioning from 5th grade to 6th grade, and middle school on top of that with a magnet program. I'm looking to get his iPad ready with apps that would be more suitable for middle school and advanced studies, like with science and math, which are his two strongest areas. I was also going to ask , If I were to contact you, would you be able to help guide me on that?

Mark: Yes, definitely. I would like you to look into two. You may not always want apps; you may want textbooks now, too. Apple's textbooks are so, they're not even Apples, they're the top three publishing companies, their science and math textbooks are the most interactive things I've ever seen. They're cheap, for \$15 it's a textbook. We can go into that. In fact, if we had a Skype, I could show you, I have them. They're the most exciting things. You may not always want an app, you may be very happy looking at the textbooks too. Again, the textbooks take up a lot of space, but they're second to none. What's nice is that every time there's an update to it, you don't have to purchase it. It automatically updates the textbook, it's amazing.

Sherry: That would be wonderful.

Mark: Don't forget, all these text books are in line with the core, common standards, which is very important too. You don't see many apps saying that they meet core, common standards. Having your child in a magnet program, you're going to want that.

Sherry: That would be wonderful, I'll send you a link and set something up later. I don't want to tie up everyone else's time to speak with you.

Minta: Thank you, we are just about out of time Mark. There were so many calls I did not get to tonight, so if we did not get to your question you can e-mail Mark at, give us your e-mail address one more time.

Mark: mark@itpadd.com

Minta: Thank you so much Mark. I really enjoyed this so much. You are so great at answering rapid fire questions. Would you like to close with any statements? Thank you so much for being here, and I'm going to give the floor to you, thank you so much for being here. Please give us your closing comment.

Mark: First of all, I'd like to thank everybody for spending their Saturday evening listening. I think it's definitely a topic worth listening about. I just want to reiterate that it's important, although there's a lot of hope, and I know that's what a lot of parents are looking for when other things aren't working out as well as they'd hoped, they turn to the newest and latest things on the market.