



Switch Play, Learning And Technology

# SPLAT Newsletter



## QUALITY! At SPLAT Toy Library

Our SPLAT (Switch Play Learning and Technology) Toy Library offers switch adapted toys to children with Special Needs 0-3 years old. Our main aim is to support access to play for children and their families to have fun at home. Up and running for 7 years and funded by Sure Start, we have an extensive range of fun and exciting toys to simulate children and promote switching and early communication skills. Our toys are available for a range of children with additional support needs, such as Cerebral Palsy, Development Delay,

Down's Syndrome and many more. We are very proud of our service and are always keen to find new ways to make it even better!

Recently, SPLAT Toy Library undertook and successfully completed Quality Play Matters, a quality assurance scheme run by NATLL (National Association of Toy and Leisure Libraries). The scheme included seven modules that required completion covering a range of different themes. This resulted in an action plan to improve the service over the next year. We were commended for: clear vision,

free service, flexible opening hours, safe clean toys, keeping families and professional upto date, extensive selection of accessible toys, extensive links with professionals and wider community.



## Story Bags Review

**We have now completed a review of all our story bags and have ensured all the original features have been kept:**

- Carefully chosen books with simple language.
- Relevant Sensory Prop—cuddly toy, hat, fairy wings!

- Individual Story bag guide
- Symbols
- Story Mat

**Plus we've added some new features:**

- Low Tech board—has 4 messages: turn the page, oh no, read it again, what's that?

- Generic Story bag Ideas
- Communication aid overlays—for Partner4, tech4, tech 8

**Story bags can be loaned for two months, then must be returned by the borrower**

## Sure Start City of Edinburgh

Number 6

Spring, 2009

### Special points of interest:

- ☉ Quality Play Matters Award
- ☉ What's available at SPLAT
- ☉ Improvements to the service
- ☉ Events for your diary
- ☉ Plasma Play Sessions
- ☉ Training Opportunities

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# Oh No!!! EMPTY SHELVES?

We are delighted that everyone is enjoying our toys so much and would like all our toys on loan, rather than sitting on the shelf not getting played with.....



However, a wee gentle reminder for you to get overdue toys back to us, so that we can:

- Have a good selection of toys available for children to be able find the right toy for them
- Ensure toys are exchanged regularly to keep switching motivating for our children
- Check our toys are clean and working as they should.

Please remember **toys are loaned for a two month period**. It is the borrowers responsibility to return the toys to SPLAT. You can return

toys by dropping them into Keycomm (please call first to check someone will be in the office), or phone to find out when a member of the team is in your area. Janet our secretary has a team diary so will be able to help you arrange a pick up.

Early communication aids can be loaned for 4 months.

Items that can be funded for individuals include:

Switches, Big Macks, Step by Steps, and Powerlinks (these must be trialled first before considered).

## Website

Have a look at our website. It explains what Keycomm and the SPLAT Toy Library offers and there are lots of interesting bits of information. There are downloads available such as referral forms, information sheets and some useful resources made using the Boardmaker programme. Specifically for the early years we have overlays that:

Help with choice making—choose snacks/ drinks, activities cards  
Support children with physical disabilities to access toys that they cannot hold or manipulate, by giving instructions to others (brick, Doll, water, sand and toy car play).  
Support shared reading—character overlays, physical access (turn the page, read it again, what's that), se-

quencing events, feelings, verbs, tags lines, symbol and picture matching.  
**We invite you to give us feedback though the website on the website or any other aspect of our service.**

Resources and information sheets are available to download from our website go to:  
[www.keycomm.aac.uk.org](http://www.keycomm.aac.uk.org)

## Plasma Play Session

Come along and try our Plasma screen play session!

The Plasma screen is a special touch sensitive screen that is attached to a computer. We have lots of simple sensory, cause and effect, and targeting software to



play with. The sessions aim to provide a new and fun experience, plus it's a great opportunity to exchange any SPLAT toys. Siblings are welcome too and the sessions run the second Friday of every month, though do phone to book a place as sometimes

the dates can change.

Next planned dates include:

8th May 2-4pm

12th June 2-4pm

10th July 2-4pm

Call our secretary Janet on 0131 311 7130 to book a place

## What's Available at SPLAT?

The Toy Library has lots of exciting resources and services available:

Loan bank of Switch adapted toys.



Variety of switches and gadgets to make switching accessible for all.

SPLAT Therapist to assess and review each child's needs as they grow and develop.

Story Bags to support access to

books and encourage participation in shared reading.



Switch on Software—cause and effect and switching skills games.

Early Communication Aids—Big Macks, Step by Steps, Partner 2/4, Tech 4 and Tech 8.

Information Sheets—we now have a range of information sheets available for download on our website on the different resources available

and ideas for encouraging communication and switching skills.



Website—Go to our Keycomm website and you will find a special section on our SPLAT Toy Library, we will keep adding to this as we complete different projects.

Plasma Play Session—available mostly on the second Friday of every month

## SPLAT Display Board

At Keycomm in our SPLAT corner, we now have a display board. SPLAT likes visual examples of what switch toys and the other services we offer can do for the children we work with. We would love to have some interesting materials on it for when families or other visitors want to find out about what SPLAT offers. SPLAT would like to invite families to send in fun pictures of their chil-

dren playing with switch toys, reading with our story bags or switching at the computer. If you send them in they will get printed out and put on our board, they won't be used for anything else, unless we ask you first.

If you have anything you would like to share with other families to do with switch toys, early communication or play groups, please send this

in too, the more information for our families the better!

We invite families to brighten our board with fun photos of their children playing with switch toys/ reading stories/ switching at their computer

## Family Fun Day, 25th April 2009

Come and join us at the Scottish Family Fun Technology Day! Run by specialist staff from different AAC centres across Scotland and funded by Augmentative Communication in Practice,. The day is a chance for families for children with additional support needs to try out and learn about the software, hardware and specialized communication technologies that might support them.

The day will include: time to chat

with experienced staff about technology and software; demonstrations; hands on time with computer toys; games; snacks; Smart Wheelchair rides; information; prizes and much, much more.

The day is free, to book your place, please call 0131 651 6235 with details of who will be coming and



11-4pm

ages of the children and any special requirements. Book early to be sure to get a space.

Venue for the fun day is: CALL Scotland University of Edinburgh Paterson's Land Holyrood Road Edinburgh, EH8 8AQ

## Sure Start City of Edinburgh

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### Switch Play Learning and Technology



The SPLAT Toy Library provides switch adapted toys to young children in Edinburgh.

Switch toys can motivate children to play with toys when:

- Physically they are not able to hold and play with ordinary toys
- They have difficulty attending to ordinary toys

Through play children can...

Learn about their world

Make things happen

Learn how to get on together and share activities

Learn to look and listen

Learn to give attention

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## Early Years, Play and AAC Course coming soon...

SPLAT are planning to run a course in autumn looking specifically at early years in terms of:

- Play—development, access to play, play ideas
- AAC—low and medium tech communication aids
- Early literacy—Story bags
- Early computer use—SOS Software

The aim of the course is for individuals to gain an understanding of why we use switch toys, story bags, SOS Software to support early communication and to look at the strategies one might employ to encourage switching and communication skills.

Anyone is welcome to attend, we welcome parents, carer's, child care workers and professionals. The mix of different experiences is often useful and only adds to insightful discussion.

Please call Samantha, SPLAT Therapist on 0131 311 7130 or e-mail: [Samantha.goodwin@ea.edin.sch.uk](mailto:Samantha.goodwin@ea.edin.sch.uk)

To get an idea of numbers, along with any particular areas you would like to be covered.