



## Edition Two

# 'Special Apps for Very Special Learners'

June 2020

Flo Longhorn



If you would like the September edition, send me an email to [flopml@gmail.com](mailto:flopml@gmail.com)

## June 2020

### Message from Flo Longhorn:

Hello from Bredene am Zee, Belgium!



Here is the second edition of apps that may be suitable for very special learners who are working on early levels of accessing apps on iPads, tablets or mobile phones.

They have all been researched online and are currently available, both for iPads and (in many cases) Android tablets. Links to informative video clips on YouTube and a page on developing gestures for tablets are also included.



It is incredibly difficult to find any/current apps that fit the bill for very special learners. The few apps that are available are poorly made and the content is not good. For this reason, I do use apps that have the label 'baby or toddler'. This is not because I want to devalue the learner, but to recognise that these are useful despite the label. So, they are 'person appropriate' and not 'age appropriate'.

As I am now 74 years old and enjoy the apps myself, this means I can be held up as a valid example of a very aged special person who has all these apps on her iPad- and they are personally appropriate! You are not allowed to censor my choice!



This symbol flags up use of baby or toddler in the app description - person appropriate not age appropriate.



**Wash your hands! Now read on if you wish!**

## Basic Gestures Needed to Interact with an iPad, Tablet or iPhone

Apple list the following basic gestures required to control a tablet:

- \* Tap
- \* Touch
- \* Touch and hold
- \* Swipe
- \* Scroll
- \* Zoom

For very special users, it is more helpful to list some of the earliest gestures they need to build up a repertoire of useful skills. Alongside developing these simple gestures, do make sure that there are lots of sensory activities to encourage useful movement of fingers and hands. Don't forget HAPTIC TOUCH in the skin of the hands. This senses weight, volume, size, temperature, colour through special haptic receptors in the skin.

Also remember that this is not an orderly list to follow, as life is not like that! It just gives an indication of the ongoing complexity needed to use hands and fingers to operate a tablet.



## Hand and Finger Movements for Using an iPad/Tablet

Here is a range of movements that will enable the special learner to operate an iPad or tablet. Remember - it is not a tick list, but an opportunity to provide a 'next step' and a new skill.

- \* Unintentional swipe
- \* Intentional swipe - the most popular!
- \* Full hand bang
- \* Two hand bang
- \* Tap fingers
- \* Tap one finger, usually index
- \* Tap, stop, and lift
- \* Gentle press and stop
- \* Hard press and stop
- \* Drag one finger
- \* Two finger drag
- \* Slide
- \* Slow Flick
- \* Fast flick
- \* Finger spread, pinch, zoom in
- \* Finger spread, pinch, zoom out
- \* Two hand tilt
- \* Double tap stop
- \* and ... the unexpected genius hand or finger movement ... seen in clips below!



## Vintage Clips of iPads and Special Children



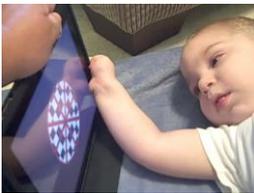
Look at this special learner using his own way of operating an app that expects him to crack an egg! Not a finger in sight...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MnzFGbrFgFA>



Watch this little one try to operate a magazine like an iPad! Excellent hand movements.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aXV-yaFmQNk>



A using an iPad for the first time. He is swiping with purpose and intent, full of engaged attention and sheer delight.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZjUQsQKfYSQ>



Tyler (autism) showing creative expression with his iPad and trampoline.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ueEAeiX1vpQ>

## Communication Using the iPad/Tablet



A toddler with apraxia taps and uses his iPad to ask for cheese and crackers.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tp2ROyyyqjo>



Making choices with a swipe 'Yes/No' app.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0EulS1MTqDo>

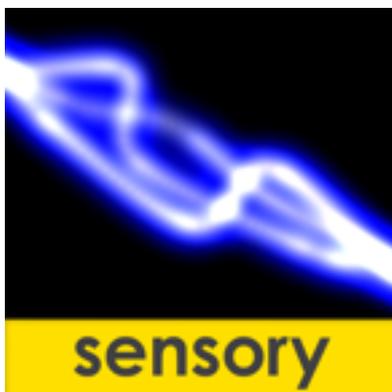
**Sensory House Apps** (mostly free) - sheer fun, enjoyment and concentration.

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/dev?id=5641176063778113127&hl=en>

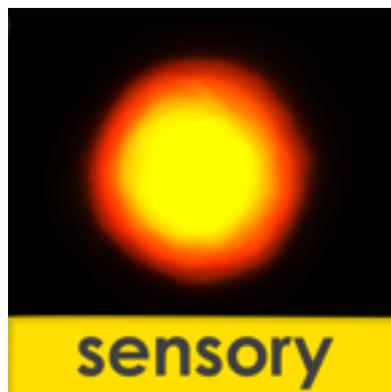
At the App Store, put in 'Sensory House Ltd' and they should all appear for you to browse.

A pat on the back to the producers of the following set of excellent visual apps for very special learners. They have been in circulation for several years and still add new ones. The company is 'Sensory App House Ltd' based in London. Put the name of any one of them in the App Store and they will come up mostly free.

This month the top grossing app was 'Speak Up Too' and the most downloaded was 'Sensory Magma'.



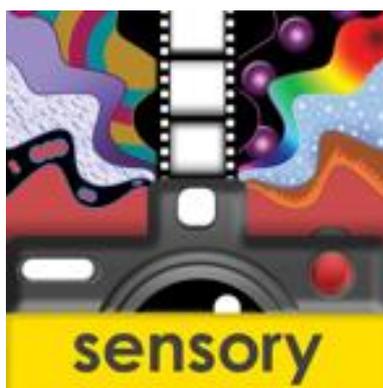
*Sensory Electra*



*Sensory iMeba*



*Sensory iMeba*



*Sensory CineFx  
Fun Effects*



*Sensory Just Touch*



*Sensory Fotos*



*Sensory Speak Up -  
Vocalise*



*Sensory Splodge 1 -  
Tap Splat*



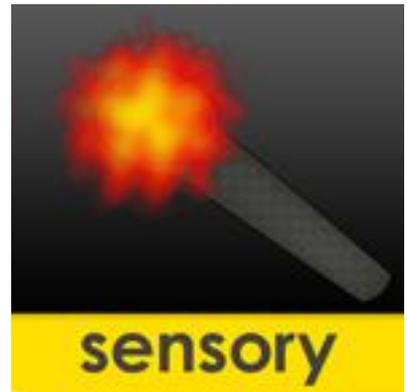
*Sensory Colour Symmetry*



*Speak Up Too - Speech*



*Sensory Plazma*



*Sensory Mica Vocalisation*



*Sensory Painting*



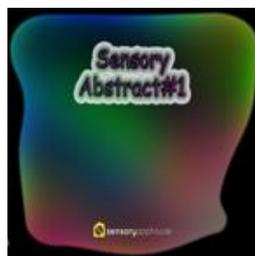
*Sensory Mandala Paint*



*Fun Painting*



*FotoFrezVR -  
Real World Augmented*



*Sensory Abstract 1*



*Sensory Air*



**Magic Fluids Lite** (free - can upgrade) - swipe, fingers and pointy finger.

Created by a Mad Professor as 'aesthetic digital art' but also creates engrossing vivid swirling images. There are simple ways to alter speed, vortex or size and force. Fascinating for all.

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.magicfluids&hl=en>

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/magic-fluids-lite/id1437514764>



A quick look on YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Ny4utnBa5s>



**Draw with Stars** - (still Free) a classic! Swipe, drag one finger, tap. Just swipe the screen and it erupts with starry, twinkly lines (inspired by Vincent van Gogh). Starry, tinkly noises accompany your marks.

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/draw-with-stars-play-with-shooting-stars/id367460661> (Not on Android)

Watch Leo, a special youngster with autism, working hard with his stars. Note the quick smile at the end!



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EKDY98s-q6g>



Don't forget all the **Disney** apps. These are part of everyday viewing, across the age span, modern life for all.



While the games are not useful, the excellent screen animations are eye-catching and so is the music. Look for the free adverts of the most popular movies. They are designed to captivate you, and are very enticing for sustaining attention. They also offer the opportunity for sharing with another person who likes Disney.

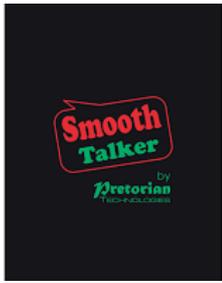
Anyone out there not know the song 'Let It Be' (from 'Frozen')? This is sung a million times while in the company of mainly little girls (silent scream from me, with female grandchildren). There are lots of 'Frozen' apps out there too.



<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/disney-frozen-adventures/id1461277361>

[https://play.google.com/store/apps/topic?id=character27EnHP5zQBk&hl=en\\_US](https://play.google.com/store/apps/topic?id=character27EnHP5zQBk&hl=en_US)

And here is the sing-along version if you need it!  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0MK7qz13bU>



**Smooth Talker** (**free** at the moment, so check it out quickly!)

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/smooth-talker-aac/id1032679182>

<https://www.facebook.com/Zyteq/posts/pretorian-technologies-smooth-talker-app-for-ipad-available-for-free-for-a-limit/1575098142654898/>

Devised by Australian speech and language therapists, Smooth Talker is a simple iPad & iPhone application that enables speech/language therapists the ability to measure their clients' syllable-to-stutter ratio (%SS), without the need to own expensive hardware. The blurb:



*Smooth Talker has been specially developed in consultation with SLPs and parents of children that have fluency difficulties. Smooth Talker puts the power of expensive hardware devices into your palm. Smooth Talker is the FREE alternative, unlike competing apps on the App Store or devices that cost a lot of money. Smooth Talker has minimal features, so getting started is really easy. Smooth Talker has a plain*

*interface, so that children are not distracted during sessions.*

## **Tocaboca**

This is an excellent apps provider. Really top quality and their aim is the pursuit of play. Here is their interesting website for details of all their apps. There are about 50 of them! Well worth purchasing any of them for good interactions for everyone. Visit <https://tocaboca.com/apps>



## **Toca Hair Salon - Christmas**

Below is a link to the free app for Christmas. Just watch for a reaction when used in the middle of summer. All learners seem to cotton on to Father Christmas! The sounds effects are particularly good. I could 'feel' the electric razor with the sound effects. It is sheer playful fun.

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/toca-hair-salon-christmas/id481623941> (Not on android)

Watch the YouTube clip:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xAYVdm9BOaQ>

Here is the list of all their apps. Collate with projects you are planning.

- \* Toca Kitchen Sushi, 2018
- \* Toca Life: World, 2018
- \* Toca Life: Neighborhood, 2018
- \* Toca Mystery House, 2018
- \* Toca Life: After School, 2018
- \* Toca Life: Pets, 2017
- \* Toca Life: Office, 2017
- \* Toca Lab: Plants, 2017
- \* Toca Life: Hospital, 2017
- \* Toca Hair Salon 3, 2016
- \* Toca Life: Stable, 2016
- \* Toca Life: Farm, 2016
- \* Toca Life: Vacation, 2016
- \* Toca Dance Free, 2016
- \* Toca Dance, 2016
- \* Toca Blocks, 2015
- \* Toca Life: School, 2015
- \* Toca Life: City, 2015
- \* Toca Kitchen 2, 2014
- \* Toca Nature, 2014
- \* Toca Boo, 2014
- \* Toca Life: Town, 2014
- \* Toca Pet Doctor, 2014
- \* Toca Lab: Elements, 2013
- \* Toca Hair Salon Me, 2013
- \* Toca Mini, 2013
- \* Toca Cars, 2013
- \* Toca Builders, 2013
- \* Toca Hair Salon 2, 2012
- \* Toca Tailor, 2012
- \* Toca Band, 2012
- \* Toca Train, 2012
- \* Toca Kitchen Monsters, 2012
- \* Toca House, 2012
- \* Toca Kitchen, 2011
- \* Toca Hair Salon - Christmas Gift, 2011
- \* Toca Birthday Party, 2011
- \* Toca Store, 2011
- \* Toca Robot Lab, 2011
- \* Toca Hair Salon, 2011
- \* Paint My Wings, 2011
- \* Toca Doctor, 2011
- \* Toca Tea Party, 2011
- \* Helicopter Taxi, 2011





The **Red Button** (*free*) - only for unstressed adults!

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/dont-push-red-button-famous-game-you-wont-be-able-to/id330560517>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.klikapp.bigredbutton&hl=en>

**This is for YOU.** It consists of a **red** button. Just read the caption when you press the **red** button .

'Do it okay,  
Now you've had your fill.  
Stop.  
You see, this is why we can't be friends.  
You're too selfish.  
Grrr...now you've asked for it.  
**DO NOT** Press **THE** Button!



This will raise your stress levels!



**Ebenezer School** and home for visually impaired children - Hong Kong.

Four free apps were originally developed by the Ebenezer School for students with low vision. They have basic options of contrast, sizing of objects, background colours and patterns and choice of objects. The four apps are also in Chinese! Well done that school!

The school has gone on to develop more apps that have now come to my attention. They are all up on the app store, **well done to Apple** for maintaining and adding these new apps over time. This link takes you to their app list.

<https://apps.apple.com/us/developer/ebenezer-school/id512093968>

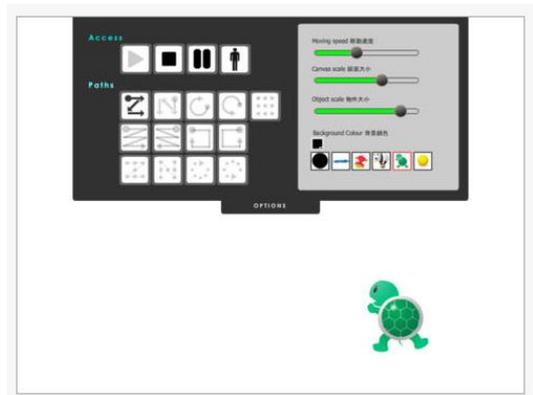
Here are the original four apps.



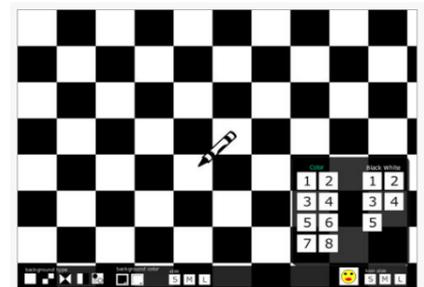
**Eye Movement Training (free)** - Basic tracking skills with 13 different visual tracking tasks, options of moving speed, canvas scale, object scale, background colour and six different objects

to track.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/eye-movement-training-free/id529054297?mt=8>



**Shapes in Complex (Lite) (free)** This requires locating pictures and designs within competing backgrounds. It provides 5 different backgrounds, background colours, eight different objects to track and small, medium, and large sizing of the contrast and objects.

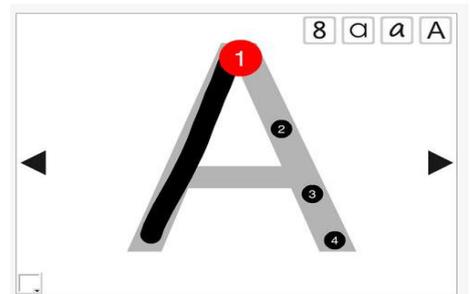


<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/shapes-in-complex-free/id512093965?mt=8>

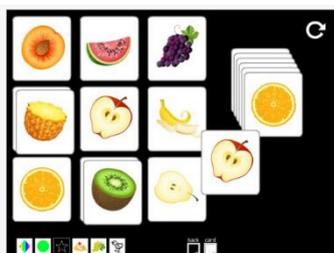


**Dot to Dot (Low Vision) (free)** - advanced, for those beginning more complex thinking'

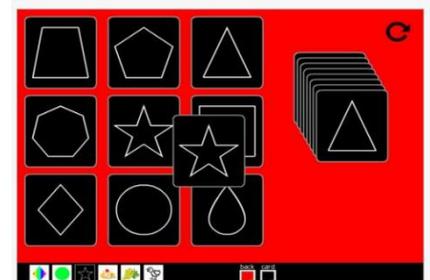
The learner must complete dot-to-dot letters (upper and lower case) and numbers. They will use large numbered dots and animation to guide the formation of the letters and numbers. Background contrast options are available. Provides an audio reward for completion.



<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/dot-to-dot-low-vision/id691058108?mt=8>



**Find the Same (Lite) (free)** This app requires visual discrimination/matching of shapes, food, and line drawn animals. Options for background colour and card colour are available.



<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/find-the-same-free/id521635756?mt=8>

Here are the ones I have not explored from Ebenezer School Hong Kong, so do have a look and let me know what you think.

<https://apps.apple.com/us/developer/ebenezer-school/id512093968>



- \* CVI training (visual tracking)
- \* CVI training (colour)
- \* CVI training (recognition)
- \* CVI training (pattern)
- \* CVI training (human face)



**Infant Zoo Lite for Babies** (free) - vision head-turning and reaching out to touch. Ignore the word 'baby'!

This is a well-researched visual app with high contrast object and background. There is sound and movement to encourage the viewer and it also has an element of humour in each scenario. The sounds are very ear



catching.

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/infant-zoo-lite-for-babies/id677233768>

This YouTube clip shows all the app, so you will see the sequences of black/white, black, white, primary colours.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AcAk88df1-g>



**Tap-n-See Now Lite** (free - with add-ons that are very expensive) - eye tracking, focus zoom in/out. Ignore the word 'baby'!



This app has very high contrast with an object that moves around the screen and when tapped, it zooms in and out. The speed, size and sound can be changed and there is a choice of sounds.

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/tap-n-see-now-lite/id490943761>





**BabyView & Baby View Lite** (**free**, with add-ons) - visual tracking, contrasts. Ignore the word 'baby'!



This app has very clear b/w images with clear sounds. The images can be made bigger or smaller. Very much like pop art.



<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/baby-view-lite/id516453131>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.u.babyview&hl=en> (BabyView)



**Sensory Sound Box** (£2-99) and **Sensory Light Box** (£3-99) - cause & effect.

These were developed a while ago and may not look so well compared with other similar apps such as the amazing free sensory house ones.

They were developed for a group of special students.



<https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/sensory-sound-box/id548622567>

<https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/sensory-light-box/id533976433>

[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=air.com.cognable.lightbox&hl=en\\_GB](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=air.com.cognable.lightbox&hl=en_GB)

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Cause-Effect-Sensory-Light-Box/dp/B008I3DZIO>

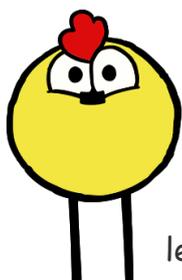


**Magic Zither** (**free**) - mystical Chinese oddity!

An oddity but good to use something out of the commercial rut. The backgrounds are Chinese and the lovely clear precise sounds are from a Chinese zither. Just enjoy/or not!

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/magic-zither/id399338194>

<https://www.amazon.com/成都云创新科技有限公司-Magic-Zither/dp/B00AHQV2UY>



**Peep Apps (free)** - narrative, thinking skills.

Find out more at the website, which is well worth exploring for early cognitive skills using attractive and engaging games. I would use them with learners embarking on very early thinking skills, but also for very special learners to join in with the good visual and movement elements.

Visit: <http://www.peepandthebigwideworld.com> (note: not a secure web site)

This range of apps/videos originated from the WGBH television station in Boston USA. The animation is clear and well presented. The voices sound a bit shrill, but that may only be my impression. An example is below:

**Play and the Big Wide World - Hide and Peep! (free)** - hide and reveal story game.

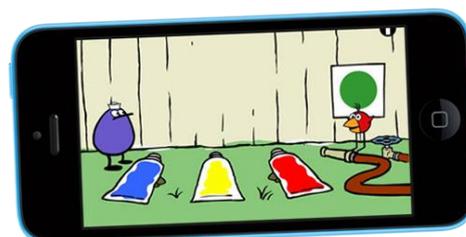


Peep, the chicken, and his friends are hiding. They peek from their hiding places in the tool shed. Tap the screen where you think each character is hiding. The first level of the game has three characters hiding. If they are all found, the lights go out and the characters hide again, ready for the next round. The difficulty increases only if the previous round was successfully completed without mistakes. This encourages observations, scanning and memory skills. On the simplest level it is hide and reveal.

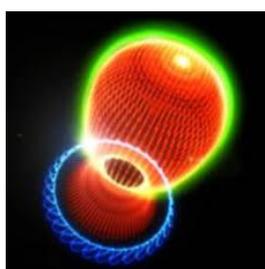
<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/peep-and-the-big-wide-world-hide-and-peep/id536312346>



**Peep and the Big Wide World Paint Splat (free)** - colours and cause/effect. Make Quack jump on a paint tube to create a colour, nice and easy to use with evident cause and effect.



<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/peep-and-the-big-wide-world-paint-splat/id536621786> (No Android version)

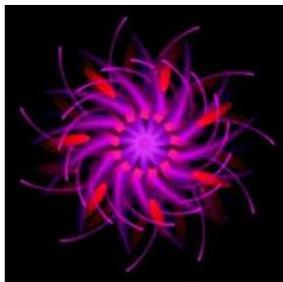


**Forge of Neon (free)** - you can upgrade) - fluorescent 3D sand box art, swipe.

A classic, with excellent eye-catching colour and movement. There are many different ways of changing the images such as speed, colour, shapes. Record your works of art. One of my favourites.

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/forge-of-neon-3d-sandbox-art/id393366672>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.volutopia.forgeofneon3d&hl=en>



**Springle** (**free**) - swipe, tap, no adds, no sound.

Excellent! Amazing quick-moving patterns, full intense images that captivate. Very modern art. There is a control panel at the bottom of the app.

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/springle/id628311639>

Have a look: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=duF-l8Tmsgg> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPkpxRILMeo>



**Mebop apps** on a very simple level of engagement. Ignore the word 'baby'!



**Mebop Body Lite: Musical Burps, Bubbles and Music** (**free**, with add-ons)

A musical where burps, yawns and sneezes follow the beat as this app brings motion, shape and sound to the user.

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/mebop-body-lite-musical-burps-bubbles-music-for-your/id937343777>



**Mebop Maestro: Music, Bubbles and Shapes** - motion made musical.

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/mebop-maestro-lite-music-bubbles-shapes-for-your-baby/id937976827> - (No Android app)



**Infant Faces Lite** (**free**, with add-ons)

<https://apps.apple.com/il/app/infant-faces-lite-baby-fun/id875591727>



### Teenagers Students only!



**Shut Up!!!** (**free** -can upgrade) - emotional, tap.

This app is for the frustrated to yell 'shut up!' in different languages. Listen to the German one, it makes your toes curl. The app voice gives power to the user!

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/shut-up/id366404998>  
(No Android app).



**Funny Fan** (**free**, no ads) - pointy finger.

A very simple game, just out in 2020, there are 9 levels inside the fan, just make circles with your finger to create a wind to send the objects up into the sky.

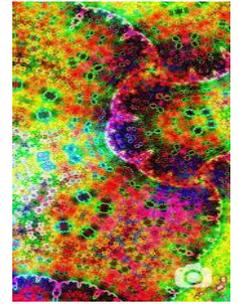
<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/funny-fan/id1498082417>  
(No Android app).





**Fractal Explorer 5D** (*free*, no adds) - swipe, tap both hands.

Have a go at modern fractal art.



<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/fractal-explorer-5d/id1437101830>

[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.emreerkan.fractalexplorer5d&hl=en\\_US](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.emreerkan.fractalexplorer5d&hl=en_US)



**RataTap Drums** (*free*, with add-ons) - loud noises, trendy.

Fastest response, best playability, 15 drum kits, editable drums. WOW!



<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/ratatap-drums-free/id428149234>

(Not on Android, but there are similar ones there for you to play).



**Burp and Fart Piano** (*free*) - vulgar, snigger, fun!

I am really pleased this is still around for the sort of noises that all teenagers enjoy, despite adult disapproval! The sounds are very musical.

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/burp-and-fart-piano/id380245121>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.MeechWard.RudePiano&hl=en>

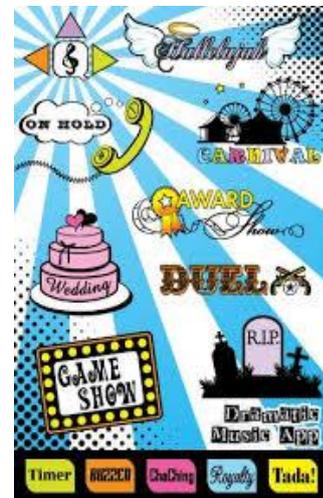
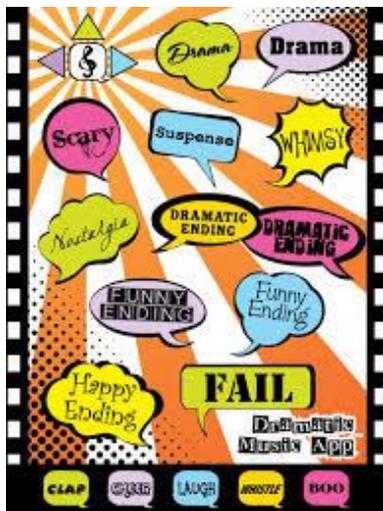


**Dramatic Music App** (*free* - can be upgraded) - brilliant for sensory stories.

One of my most used free apps on my iPad. It is so good I paid for the upgrade and was not disappointed. Sudden noises capture attention! This app contains multiple swipe pages that will give you everything you need for every type of situation or conversation you may be in: dramatic, funny, nostalgic, beginnings and endings, events, continuous loops of beats, instruments, and, everyone's favourite button: drum roll or hallelujah!

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/dramatic-music-app/id417696249> (free version)

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.DramaticMusicApp.plus&hl=en>  
(**Dramatic Music App Plus** - €0.99 to buy on Google Play)



**Kaleidoscope Drawing Pad** (*free* - can upgrade) - fingers, abstract art.

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/kaleidoscope-drawing-pad/id525904070>



A video describing all the different tools is here:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKhNZt6cDUK>



**Kaleidoo - Magic Drawing** (free - can upgrade - £1.99 ads free) - fingers tap, twirl.

Easy art that creates a wide range of beautiful moving kaleidoscope pictures.

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=ammanify.apps.arkaleidoo&hl=en>





All of these apps are for very special learners who are learning to:

- \* Be a valued partner included in the world of exciting technology in 2020
- \* Use simple apps
- \* Have fun, excitement, and pleasure
- \* Look
- \* Pay attention
- \* Focus on the screen
- \* Listen
- \* Watch and listen at the same time
- \* Swipe randomly
- \* Then up and down or side to side
- \* Tapping with fingers
- \* Then just a one finger tap
- \* Drag on the screen
- \* Pinch the screen
- \* Engage on their own
- \* Act independently
- \* Communicate
- \* Follow a leisure-time pursuit.

*Happy viewing and app-ing!*

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