

THE AFFORDABLE ACCESS GUIDE FOR PARENTS, CARERS AND CHILDREN



Why do parents, carers and children use digital technologies?

Parents and carers who support people with disabilities, particularly children, told us the main purpose for using computers and mobile devices is for education and entertainment. This can include:

- Watching videos
- Playing games
- Using education-related software such as apps on a tablet



How does disability affect you using technology?

There are many disabilities that affect the physical and learning needs of people being cared for, particularly children, in the following ways:

- A vision impairment may make it difficult to see games on a small screen.
- Video content may not have captions, making it difficult to share video content between parents or carers with children.
- A cognitive disability may make it difficult to understand how to use devices, particularly in the use of educational apps.

Which technologies can help?

Popular computers and tablets have accessibility features that can help. These include:

- **Screen reader:** A text-to-speech application that reads out computer and internet-related information to assist people who are blind or vision impaired.
- **Screen magnifier:** A magnification tool for enlarging screen content.

- **Themes:** High-contrast themes allow people with vision impairments to change the colours to a more comfortable setting (such as white-on-black), and increase the size of mouse pointers and text.
- **On-screen keyboard:** Enables people with mobility impairments to 'type' by using a pointing device to select letters and words on the screen.
- **Alerts:** Visual messages can appear in place of audible sounds to help people who are Deaf or hearing impaired.



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Which products are affordable and accessible?

With accessibility features built into most popular computers and mobile devices, you can buy products that are accessible for under \$250.

Android tablets

Tablets that run the Android operating system are very popular and provide a large selection of apps that can be downloaded from the built-in Play Store, in many cases for free or for a relatively low cost. If you only want to use the free apps, there's no requirement to provide payment information, making it safe for children to use without fear of in-app purchases.

Features:

- An Android tablet contains a wealth of accessibility features including the Talkback screen reader, zoom functionality, captioned video playback, switch key support and colour inversion.
- Android tablets have popular free apps for watching videos such as YouTube and ABC iview.
- Tablets are portable meaning that they can be easily carried around and taken to different places unlike a desktop computer.
- Most apps are now released on both an iPad and Android-based tablet meaning that many games, along with education and disability-specific apps will run on affordable Android tablets.

- Make sure the tablet has at least Android version 4.4 or higher so it can use a wide variety of accessibility features. You can get Android tablets with a seven inch screen for under \$100.

Google Chromecast:

The Chromecast is a stick that plugs into the HDMI port of a TV to allow you to stream content from a variety of devices including Android tablets.

Features:

- Can view videos on most popular computers and mobile devices on a big TV.
- Supports the playback of videos with captions.
- Android tablets and phones can also use the 'mirror' function, allowing the whole Android screen to be shown on a TV, which is very helpful for people who have trouble seeing the small screen.
- Popular apps support Chromecast such as YouTube and ABC iview.
- Parents and carers can comment and participate on the activities on the tablet by viewing the same content on the TV.
- Chromecast retails for around \$50.



Where can I buy these products?

Many of these products can be purchased from popular retail stores such as Target, Harvey Norman and Myer. Online retailers also stock a variety of products. For more information on what questions to ask when shopping and details on other great products, visit the Affordable Access website.

Note: The Affordable Access website was put together by Media Access Australia with support provided by the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN). The operation of ACCAN is made possible by funding provided by the Commonwealth of Australia under section 593 of the Telecommunications Act 1997. This funding is recovered from charges on telecommunications carriers.