



Special Toys: Switch Toys: Where to Begin

What's a switch toy?

A battery-operated toy that has been adapted to be used with a single switch.



Most battery-operated toys can be used to provide a way for a child to independently play. Switches can give a child control over starting and stopping a toy and provide a means to play in a group. To begin, you will need an adapted battery-operated toy and a switch.

Battery-operated toys

These can be found in most toy and novelty stores. Look for ones that use AA, C or D batteries and that appeal to the child. Does s/he like toys that are noisy or musical? Fast or slow? High or low contrast colors? For success by young children, look at the movement of the toy. Toys that make sound or action but stay in one place are best; or those which move slowly in a straight line. A child will want to anticipate and control the movement of the toy. Permanently adapted toys can be purchased through special catalogs or a battery adapter can be used with "off the shelf" toys.

Choosing a Switch

Switches come in all shapes and sizes. They are often used by a hand or arm, but can be used with any body part. A child should be able to voluntarily activate the

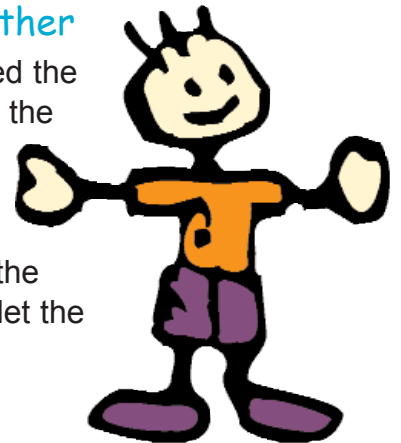
switch with large or small movements. Our experience indicates that young children most frequently use a 2" to 5" push switch such as "Big Red" (avernit) pictured here.

Battery Adapter:

These are available through several vendors. Make sure the toy starts when it is turned on. Insert a battery adapter between 2 batteries or at the end of one.

Putting it all together

After you have inserted the battery adapter, close the battery door (you may need to use a file to make a space for the cord). Attach the switch to the toy and let the child play!



Switch Toy Hints

- ◆ secure the switch with velcro or a sturdy mount
- ◆ turn the toy towards the child- it will keep him/her more involved
- ◆ try adding props; knocking down blocks is always fun!
- ◆ use these toys as part of pretend play; a fire engine comes to the rescue!
- ◆ consider toys that can be used with small groups, such as Spin Art, Elefun or a Bubble Machine (Fisher-Price).

Resources: Switches and Switch Toys

Ablenet

1081 10th Avenue East
Minneapolis, MN 55414-1312
(800) 322-0956

Don Johnston, Inc.

P.O. Box 639
1000 N. Rand Road, Bldg. 115
Wauconda, IL 60084
(800) 999-4660

TASH, Inc. (Technical Aids & Systems for the Handicapped)

Unit 1-91 Station Street
Ajax, Ontario, Canada L1S3H2
(800) 463-5685

Enabling Devices

385 Warburton Avenue
Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706
(800) 234-6006

HCT - Handicapped Children's Technological Services, Inc.

P.O. Box 7
Foster, RI 02825
(401) 861-3444

Jesana, Ltd.

P.O. Box 17
Irvington, NY 10533
(800) 443-4728

TFH (USA) Ltd.

4537 Gibsonia Rd.
Gibsonia, PA 15044
(412) 444-6400

Therapeutic Toys

P.O. Box 418
Moodus, CT 06469-0418
(800) 638-0676