



*Assistive and Instructional Technology
Supporting Learners with Disabilities*

ADAPTING A BATTERY-OPERATED TOY

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ADAPTING A BATTERY-OPERATED TOY

To use a switch with a battery-operated toy, the toy must first be adapted for switch use. A switch is then connected to the battery adapter. When a child activates the switch, the electrical circuit is completed and the current turns the toy/device on. This is referred to as “switch closure”. With a battery adapter, simple toys and any battery-operated device (flashlight, electronic game, etc.) can be operated using a single switch.

What You Need:

- Any single switch
- A battery-adapter for AA, C or D batteries
- Any battery-operated toy or device with AA, C, or D batteries. This adaptation works best with toys/devices with an on/off switch.



How to Adapt:

- Insert the copper disk at the end of the battery-adapter between the battery and battery contact; or place it between 2 batteries.
- After you have inserted the battery adapter, close the battery door (you may need to use a file to make a notch for the cord).
- Plug the switch into the jack at the other end of the battery-adapter. Have the child activate the switch to operate the toy. If it does not work, adjust the copper disk.
- Have fun!

WHAT TO DO

When starting switch use with the child put the switch as close to the adapted toy as possible. Even attaching the switch with tape or Velcro onto the toy/device will make the connection between the switch activation and the toy more direct. As a child begins to demonstrate her understanding of switch use, move the switch further away from the toy. Here are some hints for using switch toys:

- 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!



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- Record a message that encourages playful interactions onto a Communication switch. When the switch is activated, the message is heard and the toy turns on.
 - Consider toys that can be used with small groups; such as Spin Art, Elefun or a Bubble Machine.
 - Adapt commercial battery-operated toys, such as a Bug Massager or Mr. Potato Head, with a battery adapter so that the child can control the off and on vibrating response.
 - Devices such as flashlights can be adapted in the same way.
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