



Independent Living Aids/Adaptive Equipment:

Aids to Daily Living (ADLs):

Aids to daily living are devices that assist people with disabilities in their daily activities. They are also referred to as "assistive devices," "adaptive technology," and a variety of other terms. Basically, there are adaptive living aids for any daily tasks you can imagine. Think about your daily routine: Getting out of bed, having breakfast, brushing your teeth, walking to school, etc. What types of adaptive equipment do you think you might need to help you with these tasks if you were unable to use your hands, legs, or voice?

Telecommunications Device for the Deaf:

A telecommunications device for the deaf or TDD is an electronic device used for telephone communications for a person who is deaf or hard of hearing. The device is about the size of a small laptop computer with a keyboard and a small screen able to display words one line high. Direct communication can only be between telephones both fitted with the system. However, a relay service is an operator service which allows people who are deaf to place telephone calls to regular phone users. To use the relay service, typed messages are relayed as voice messages by an operator and vice-versa. This allows callers unable to use a regular telephone to be able to place telephone calls to people who use regular telephones.



Assistive Utensils:

Assistive utensils include utensils which have been redesigned to provide assistance to the user with limited function. The utensils considered are primarily knives, forks and spoons. Built-up handle utensils are used for independent feeding for the individual who lacks the amount of refined grasp needed for the narrow handles of standard flatware. The user must be able to grasp the built-up handle, fill the utensil with food, and bring it to his or her mouth. The utensils are made of stainless steel with handles of vinyl, plastic, or durable rubber. Some varieties are grooved for the fingers similar to bicycle hand grips.



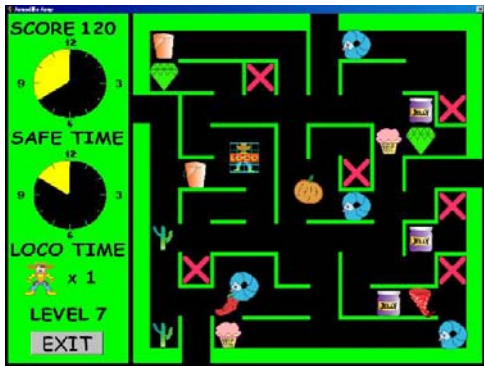
Service Animals:

Once of the largest providers of service animals for people with disabilities are Canine Companions. However, these animals are not only for people who are blind. Imagine not being able to reach a light switch, pick up your keys when you drop them, or open a cabinet door. Then imagine having a dog that could do all of that for you. Service dogs enhance independence for people with disabilities. They do this by reducing reliance on other people to perform tasks that they have difficulty performing themselves. These dogs are trained to perform physical tasks such as pulling a wheelchair, retrieving dropped objects, opening doors and drawers and flipping switches for lights or automatic doors. People as young as 5 years have “skilled companions” to help them with day to day tasks.



Video Games:

Armadillo Army is a maze game which uses three mazes with lanes that are wide and bright. When “Blind” is selected from the Player Selection control on the intro screen, the software provides additional information that makes it possible for a user who is totally blind to play the game.



The game is designed to allow the student to practice and perfect his/her eye movements, searching skills, timing skills, visual discrimination skills, peripheral detection skills, and eye-hand coordination. The maze is a two-dimensional overhead view as with Pac-man, but is much larger. The game consists of Armadillos over-running “Texville” and only “Tex” can save the city. The main character is Tex, a yellow humanoid with a ten-gallon hat, whose goal is to gather up goodies in the maze while staying away from the dust devil and armadillos which roll at random through the

maze. As Tex gathers up goodies, he gets points. When he gets enough points, he accumulates power with which he can zap armadillos and make them disappear.

Information/graphics for adaptive equipment and independent living aids obtained from: http://www.aph.org/tech/aa_doc.htm, <http://www.sdc.gc.ca>, www.caninecompanions.org, <http://www.dfulmer.com/daveynin/archives/000384.php>, <http://www.adaptworld.com/>, and www.ucp.org. More information can be found on the World Wide Web as well as your local library.