



joyoutsidethebox

parenting, living, & advocating in a world of neurodiversity

Appy Monday: Clicker Communicator Review

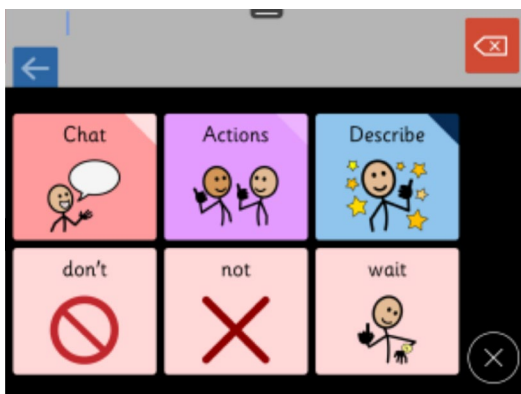
JULY 20, 2015

App: Clicker Communicator

What it's for: Communicator is an AAC app with three built-in levels of vocabulary. It's a core word language app with lots of available language on vocabulary level 2 or 3. Clicker comes with Acapela voices and the Symbolstix image library. You can also create stand-alone vocabulary sets that could be used to supplement children's systems. For example, if you were reading about climate change and wanted children to access words not in their systems, you could create a board for that. There's also dozens of pre-made materials for various songs and activities.



Screenshot of Diva's Clicker screen.



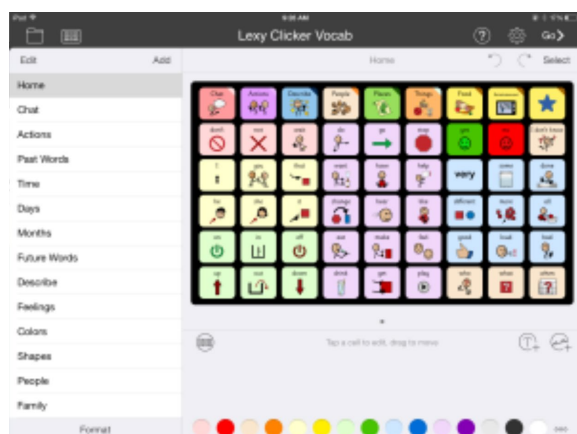
Screenshot of a Super Key after it is selected.

What we love:

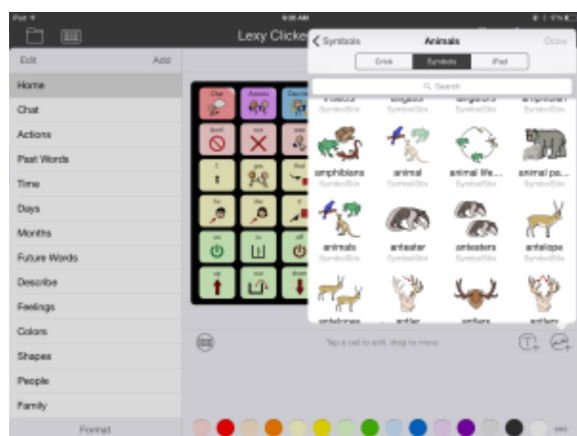
Super Keys!!! The Super Key option is hands-down the reason why we switched Diva from Proloquo2Go to Clicker Communicator. Super Keys makes this one of the very best apps out there for children with more significant visual and/or motor challenges, in my opinion. What's a Super Key? You can see in the images below that the main home screen of Diva's page has been split into nine clusters of keys. When she hits that cluster, the six icons on that Super Key then enlarge. With Super Keys, Diva now has 45 buttons on a screen. The most she has ever had before was 25, and she really did better with 18 or less. It adds one extra hit, so to speak, but it opens up the whole world as her maximum vocabulary size tripled. And we are fairly confident that we will be able to expand this grid with time and add 3 more rows, one row per Super Key — another one thousand words. That will make her layout competitive with the number of words in LAMP, Proloquo2Go, and other robust language apps. Super Keys also has increased her independence and accuracy more than anything else we have tried — more than keyguards, more than spacing, more than colour-coding.

Editing – Communicator has some of the easiest editing features that I have played with. You can literally type a list of words in, hit enter, and it will send the words to buttons — and add pictures for you. You can also

pull-up the pictures from your symbol library and select the ones you want to add. It will be inserted in the order that you click. If you've pre-coloured buttons, they will keep their colour as the words are added. Swapping button position is as easy as drag-and-drop. It's pretty easy to pull up a button and make changes — will this button speak? Open another topic? Insert words? It didn't take long to figure out, but there are also some really good support systems in place if you struggle with technology, including a built-in help guide. I'm now so in love with their way of adding words and pictures that I feel frustrated when I open other apps and have to add words button-by-button.



The main edit screen for Communicator.



Displaying a pop-up where you can select images for a page.

Alarm – I have to make sure I mention Diva's favourite feature, which is that you can set a button to sound an alarm, rather than speak text. This is when it became clear to me that Clicker knows its audience and has worked with children with multiple disabilities for a long time. This alarm is essential for her — it gives her a loud and quick way to call for us across the house. She also tends to use it these days to say something like, "I mean it!"

Keyboard – The Communicator keyboard also uses Super Keys if enabled. The extra bonus comes with the picture-supported keyboard. While we rarely use picture supported writing during journals, I love the picture supports for communication. It will assist my daughter to find words independently, while also giving her a way to access UNLIMITED vocabulary.



Picture supported word prediction keyboard. Alphabetical and QWERTY layouts are available. You can also edit the number of words predicted.

What's okay: The vocabulary templates are pretty solid. They include core, fringe, and keyboard access. There are spaces marked to help you remember to put things in (like "my name is..."). My only complaint is that the layout was not necessarily designed with Super Keys users in mind. This makes some of the positioning a little awkward. There might be 3 different colours of word types on a single Super Key. It's still usable, but we did end up designing our own vocabulary layout.

Support: The support team for Communicator has been hands-down amazing. We participated in one webinar that was offered to the public, but were then able to set-up a second webinar for ourselves, Diva's team, and a friend to ask specific questions about Super Keys and scanning. The Facebook group is small but the support staff have been really on top of it. They have answered questions, taken ideas/suggestions, and helped troubleshoot the things that come with any brand new app roll-out. I'm a HUGE fan.

Caveats: We have not yet tried any switch control with Clicker Communicator, since Diva uses direct access. I could see the set-up's working really well with switch scanning, automatic or two-step, but I can't speak for it personally.