

'BIG Blue'-Tooth(TM) Keyboards & LARGEKeys Keyboards for iPads

from RJ Cooper & Associates, Inc.

First, I've concluded, after many years of observing 'our' learners, that it is preferable to have any keyboard for special needs on a 45 degree angle (when the user is *not* 'touch-typing' with all his/her fingers). This eliminates, what I call, 'head-bobbing', where the user leans over the keyboard to find his/her key, taps it, and then 'bobs' his/her head up to confirm the entry. This is a HUGE waste of time, not to mention, the poor posture position this puts user in. Simply have the keyboard on an angle and the user's trunk immediately stays upright all the time, AND their eyes are *forward*, not moving down/up all the time! And my Keyboard Stand is specifically offered for this purpose!

Second, if you do follow my advice above, then the iPad's bottom edge must be *above* the keyboard's *top* edge (or half the iPad is hidden by the keyboard). So you would need an iPad stand that puts the iPad up high enough. I could only find a few online and they were quite pricey, so I've adapted one that somewhat did the trick and now it's *great*. And now I offer my Tall Tablet Stand (which includes one of my Adjustable Tablet Holders). Unlike ones I found online, mine holds the iPad 'special needs' securely, pivots in every direction, and when you use your iPad without a keyboard, you can 'collapse' the Stand so the iPad is directly on your surface at any angle and secure :-)

I also offer these keyboards (but without the iPad mode) in USB-wired versions which I call "LARGEKey Keyboards," one for colored-rows and the other for all yellow keys.

Fourth, my Colored-Rows scheme makes teaching keys soooooo much easier than having to point keys out all the time. I just quietly 'suggest', "It's on the blue row," and most learners scan their finger across that row seeking their letter. It's a joy to behold :-). Of course, for some, (Important teaching tip coming up...) I still must point to the target key, hold my pointer until their finger is 'inbound', and try to take my finger away earlier and earlier, so the learner feels like he/she is doing it all by him/herself, *always* praising him/her, no matter how long I had to keep my finger there as a guide. But for most, I can simply point out the row, either verbally and/or manually. I'm surprised no one has come up with this before me ;-). (For you 'brainy's out there, using color pulls in the right hemisphere.)

BIG Blue can also be used with any tablet, Mac, or PC that is Bluetooth-enabled! Even if yours is not, I offer a Bluetooth USB 'dongle'.

But getting back to what this page is really about, my 'BIG Blue'-Tooth Keyboard, it is wireless (Bluetooth), has almost 1" key size, and is available with keys in either my favorite 'teaching scheme', Colored-Rows, or yellow. A keyguard *is* available for it.

It's great for *any* text-oriented app on the iPad and I've tested it with:

I've also designed the electronics of BIG Blue to be able to go into a special iPad mode and you can use VoiceOver's keyboard shortcuts to completely control your iPad with just a few single keys:

Left/right arrows move between screen-objects (buttons, list items, paragraphs, etc.)

Simultaneous up/down arrows acts as 'enter' (comes with special 'helper' for 1 finger operation)

<Esc> key acts as Home button

Key for QuickNav toggle (to change arrow movement between movement-within-text and screen-object movement)

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