

CompuChild Chatter

March 2008
CompuChild USA

Can you believe it's March already? It seems the older I get, the faster life rushes by. I am so proud of all our students and the progress they're making! And I really love to hear how pleased our parents are. Some parents we get to meet face-to-face, but most we never see. If you're one of the parents we've never met, please don't hesitate to pick up the phone, send an e-mail, or leave a note in the blue box if you have any questions or concerns. We really enjoy hearing from you, either because everyone loves to hear the good stuff, or, if there's a problem, it's an opportunity for us to improve the level of service we provide our parents.

Here's an example of some of the emphasis points Rhode Island CompuChild students are learning this month:

- The Computer Song (about the parts of the computer)
- Inserting rows and columns in an Excel worksheet
- Scrolling using the scroll bar and the scroll wheel
- Inserting sound transitions between slides in a PowerPoint presentation
- Using the Windows key
- Using the Bold, Italics, Underline and Text Alignment toolbar buttons in Microsoft® Word

Our students are fantastic!!!

Please call (841.5268 or 935.1802) or email me (rgardner@compuchild.com) with questions or concerns. Visit us online at www.compuchild-ri.com.

Digital Cameras for Kids

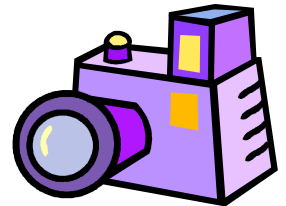
As the weather gets nicer, and the shoots begin to emerge from the ground, we start to get that itch to spend more time outside. Lots of families enjoy nature walks together, and what a great opportunity to study the world around us! If you love your digital camera, but are understandably anxious about letting your child use it, there are kid-friendly options. Some are more affordable than others, and the features vary. Before you shop, ask yourself these questions:

- Can your child close one eye and use the other, or does he need to use both eyes together?
- Will she take pictures of friends, or scenic landscapes that are far away?

There are a couple of different cameras we've used in CompuChild class, and we've been quite pleased with them. These cameras are designed specifically for young children. They are easy to grasp with little hands. They have viewfinders that allow children to use both their eyes at the same time. There are few controls, and non-readers and early-readers can master them quickly. These cameras aren't well endowed with megapixels, which means the picture quality is poor by comparison to the pictures you take with your camera. In fact, the best pictures will be of people, pets, or things close by. But if your young child is a budding photographer, a camera like these is a great place to start.

The Kid Tough Camera from Fisher Price is ideal for non-reading beginners. It's practically militarized to avoid damage when it falls. You can read a very thorough review of it here: <http://cameras.about.com/od/digitalcamerareviews/gr/fisherpricecam.htm>. Another camera we've used with great success is the Crayola® Digital Camera. Both cameras come in two color schemes, and can be used on PCs using a variety of operating systems, including Vista. Shop around locally and online—prices vary greatly.

If your child is ready for more advanced features, cameras like these may not be the best choice, but they are ideal for true beginners. The software that comes with them is designed for children, and offers your budding photo artist plenty of tools to create some great pictures that you can print out or share electronically with friends and family.



Where can we go today? Check these out!

- Lots of parents know that their children will need software such as Microsoft® Office for school, but it's an expensive product that's not in everyone's budget. Check out www.openoffice.org to learn about a free open-source alternative. It's not exactly the same as Office, but it gives you many of the same capabilities, and it's free.
- If your child loves to draw, you might want to visit this site together: <http://www.crayola.com/>