

Tech learning without limits this summer

For parents, the summer holidays present the challenge of how best to engage your child constructively, keeping their brains engaged while giving them time to relax and get refreshed for the next academic year. That challenge can be even greater if your child has special educational needs.

Well, if your child is between the ages of 7 and 18, we might just have the answer. FunTech has been running week-long summer tech camps since 1995 where children can learn cutting edge computing skills in a structured but informal environment.

FunTyper: a life changer for children with dyslexia and dyspraxia

FunTyper is one of FunTech's most popular tech camps, and it's an excellent way of making touch typing accessible to children with special educational needs. Recommended by educational psychologists and special needs teachers, FunTyper can be an invaluable tool for children with dyslexia and dyspraxia in particular. By introducing them to short, regular practice sessions and using gameplay mechanics that will be familiar to children, this camp builds up their muscle memory, making touch typing just as instinctive for them as riding a bike.

One of the main frustrations for children with dyslexia is that they know in their heads that they can perform much better, but they don't know how to: for them, touch typing is genuinely the magic key to success. And as their IQ is usually much higher than the average youngster, once they have mastered touch typing they are soon out-performing their age group academically. Whilst co-ordination is still a challenge for children with dyspraxia, FunTyper helps them to develop some muscle memory which has a noticeable impact on their performance.

Obviously, learning to touch type is not the most exciting of tech topics, because it is all about improvement through repetition, but FunTech has very cleverly built this camp around an activity children will happily spend hours on without complaint: gaming. FunTyper comprises interactive games, challenges, targets, leaderboards and competitions, all of which are finely tuned to each child's optimum requirements by constantly measuring and monitoring their performance and progress. In addition, unashamed bribery is sometimes used to combat attention deficit during mid-afternoon lulls: it's amazing how quickly children come alive again when they're told that the tokens earned in their piggy banks get converted to cash at the end of the week!

All the sessions are lively, engaging and energetic, but as the children will get tired especially those that have dyspraxia, the FunTyper camps run for 50 minute sessions with 10 minute breaks. These breaks are compulsory and electronics free, as is the 90 minutes lunch break, during which the children are encouraged to go out for a picnic and take part in some light physical activities. Any who don't wish to participate in those activities go for a nice nature walk to ensure they have a refreshing break from screens.

What progress should you expect to see by the end of the week? Your child should have good posture, correct finger placement, and depending on levels of support required, they should have completed a minimum of a third of the keyboard. The focus is on accuracy rather than speed, as speed will come once the child has nailed the muscle memory.

But most importantly, by the end of the FunTyper tech camp, children will be feeling good about themselves and their confidence will begin to develop: that's the magic of touch typing!

For children with dyspraxia and dyslexia who are more interested in coding and creating, FunTech also offers a range of camps that focus on drag and drop coding techniques rather than typing, such as LEGO Robotics, animation using Scratch and 3D Game Design.

Years of experience working with children with Autism and ASD

The company also has many years' experience of working with children with Autism and ASD and has seen youngsters overcome their challenges to achieve outstanding results, both in terms of academic achievement and personal growth after attending their camps. Children with a more logical bent thoroughly enjoy the LEGO Robotics, Scratch, Minecraft Redstone and coding camps; whereas those with more creative tendencies let their imaginations run riot on camps such as Minecraft with Mods, Mobile App Design, 3D Game Design and 3D Modelling.

Small class size is ideal for children with special educational needs

FunTech is dedicated to providing an optimum environment for its students to learn, where they can get the best possible support from expert tutors. As a result their camps are always run with a maximum class size of 8 students to 1 tutor, so the children are guaranteed excellent learning support. Over the years, this approach has also proved very valuable for students with Autism, ASD and ADHD.

FunTech has a great range of tech camps for children from age 7 to 18 running at a number of venues this summer including Canary Wharf, Chester, Dulwich, Hampstead, Maidenhead, St. Albans, Tonbridge and Westminster. For more information, see their website:

www.funtechsummercamps.com