

Connecting For Kids: How-To Guides

How to help fund an iPad

Many families have seen enormous benefit from iPad ownership – ranging from using their iPads as communication devices to running educational apps and even for helping a child with anxiety to “get away” from it all. Unfortunately, the price of a new iPad can be cost prohibitive for many, leaving families to cut corners to figure out how to bring this technology home. This guide shares tips and ideas for reducing the cost of an iPad as well as some organizations that raffle iPads or give the devices away to deserving families.

Please Note: Deadlines and offers change frequently. While we make every effort to ensure that this remains up to date, Connecting for Kids (CFK) is not responsible for errors or outdated information on this document. For the latest information, please visit our web site at www.connectingforkids.org.

TIP: Click the globe icons and links to go directly to web pages.

How do I purchase an iPad for my child with special needs?

Step 1: Decide what you are looking for.

Before purchasing an iPad, stop and consider what you need/expect from the device.

1. What are your basic needs for the device?

- What sort of applications do you expect to use? How much memory do they consume?
- Are the applications you want to run supported on older iPads? On other tablet platforms?
- Do you need a cellular plan in addition to the device or will you use existing wireless service?
- Does size matter (i.e., do you have vision issues that require a larger screen?)
- Does the resolution matter to you?

Remember: Apple currently supports [both the mini and full-sized options](#) with different memory sizes and screen resolutions, but you can also buy good quality, refurbished iPads online. Also, depending on what you need the device to do, you may be able to purchase a lower-priced tablet (for example, [Kindle](#), [Galaxy Tab](#), [Surface](#), or even [LeapPad](#)).

2. What else will you need to purchase?

When you’re adding up the price for your new iPad, don’t forget the extras you will likely end up needing:

- iPads typically come with one USB power adapter. Will you need additional adapters for school, the car, etc.?

Step 1: Decide what you are looking for (cont.)

- A good case is crucial when purchasing an iPad for any child. Popular cases (like the Otter Box) can cost \$60 or more.
- Do you need other items to make the iPad accessible? Switches, stands, headphones, and keyboards are available but add to the cost.

Step 2: Investigate options for funding.

There are five key resources that may be able to help fund an iPad for your child. They are:

- Medical Insurance
- School
- Grants & Giveaways
- Local Charities
- Fundraising Sales & Sites

The remaining sections in this guide will address each of these resources and give you some ideas on how to use them.

Connecting for Kids (connectingforkids.org) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing education and support for families with questions or concerns about their children’s development. The services and groups listed in this guide are a sampling and are for informational purposes only; providers, methodologies, or companies listed are not endorsed or recommended by Connecting for Kids.

For more information, or to have your organization added to this guide, please contact Sarah Rintamaki at 1-440-250-5563 or info@connectingforkids.org

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Medical Insurance

iPads as Durable Medical Equipment

Durable Medical Equipment (DME) is any equipment that provides therapeutic benefits to a patient in need because of certain medical conditions and/or illnesses.

Historically, devices like iPads and laptops have not been covered under “speech generating devices” (SGDs) due to the fact that this equipment is not dedicated or “primarily medical” in nature. Some medical insurers even state that DMEs shall not be useful to a person in the absence of illness or injury. However, as iPad use becomes more prevalent in treatment and in education of children with special needs, this policy may begin to change.

When inquiring about coverage for iPads and software, here are some tips to help the process:

- Request a case manager who is familiar with children with special needs.
- Explain that you need the iPad as a communication device INCLUDING the desired communication app (Proloquo2go, TouchChat, TapToTalk, etc.).
- Use language that is pertinent to the funding source. For example, stress the “therapeutic nature” of the device and the “medical necessity.” Talk About Curing Autism (TACA) offers several [sample letters of medical necessity](#) that may help in this area.
- Provide cost comparisons showing that the iPad will save the insurance company money.
- Provide case studies and documentation from your IEP and/or speech-language pathologist that support your claims.

If you are denied, make sure to get your denial in writing – many private funding organizations require proof of denial before they will provide assistance.

For more tips (including sample recommendation letters), see Dawn Gaita’s [“5 Steps to Getting an iPad Covered by Insurance”](#)

Medical Insurance (cont.)

iPads and Your Health Savings Account (HSA)

Some insurance providers allow customers to use HSAs to make tax-free purchases of medical and health-related items. While this option will still require you to pay for the device out-of-pocket, you may be able to use pre-tax dollars.

School

As iPads and other electronic devices become more common in schools, it is also becoming easier to convince schools to provide these devices as part of a student’s IEP.

IMPORTANT: Keep in mind that if the device is provided by the school, it will be considered school property and may not be available for use after school hours.

Before the school can use assistive technology in the classroom, an Assistive Technology Evaluation must be performed. This may be completed as a part of the IEP process, or you can request an evaluation in writing. The evaluator should look at different levels of technology (for example, Picture Exchange Card System or PECS, iPads or other similar devices, and dedicated AAC devices like Dynavox).

If approval is granted, the device should be written into the IEP ([PrAACtical AAC](#) has some tips for this) and all IEP goals should be updated to ensure that the device goes everywhere with your child.

Grants & Giveaways

The following websites/organizations give away a limited number of iPads and/or cash grants. Deadlines and availability are always changing (some groups only raise money for one iPad at a time), so you may need to check back regularly.

ACT Today! & ACT Today! for Military Families

Applicants with an autism spectrum disorder diagnosis and those families with under \$100,000 annual income receive first priority.

 www.act-today.org

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Grants & Giveaways (cont.)

Apps for Children with Special Needs (A4CWSN)

Provides information and reviews on apps to use with children with special needs.

 a4cwsn.com

Autism Speaks & Autism Cares

Autism spectrum disorder diagnosis only.

 www.autismspeaks.org

Babies with iPads

 babieswithipads.blogspot.com

Building Blocks for Kids

Greater Cincinnati residents or children with a strong connection to the area only.

 www.bb4k.org

Conover Company

 education.conovercompany.com

Danielle's Foundation

Cerebral palsy/brain injury diagnosis only. Award includes a gift card to help purchase adaptive accessories.

1-800-511-2283

 www.daniellesfoundation.org

Danny's Wish (Let's Chat Autism)

Autism spectrum disorder diagnosis only.

 www.letschatautism.com

Different Needz Foundation

Helps families to purchase medical equipment.

 www.differentneedzfoundation.org

Gia Nicole Angel Foundation

Provides funding to struggling families of children with special needs. Denial of insurance required.

 www.giafoundation.com

Gracie's Hope

Provides funding to help purchase equipment for children with special needs.

 www.gracieshope.org

Gwendolyn Strong Foundation (theGSF)

Provides iPads through Project Mariposa.

 thegsf.org

Grants & Giveaways (cont.)

HollyRod Foundation: Give the Gift of Voice

Provides iPads and specially designed apps for non-verbal or minimally verbal individuals with autism spectrum disorder.

 www.hollyrod.org


iTaalk Autism Foundation

Provides tablets and cellphones to individuals with an autism spectrum disorder.

 www.itaalk.org

Jake's Help From Heaven

Offers a technology grant to help purchase tablets and software.

 www.jakeshelpfromheaven.com

Jasmynn's Voice

Provides communication devices to individuals with an autism spectrum disorder who are non-verbal or minimally verbal.

 www.facebook.com/jasmynns-voice

Lil Mac-Kids foundation

Available to OH and MN families with an autism spectrum disorder diagnosis.

 www.lilmackkids.org

Little Bear Gives

Provides iPad packages to families in need who have children with cortical visual impairment (CVI).

 www.littlebearses.org

The Lindsay Foundation

Provides assistance with medical treatment, therapies, and medical equipment.

 www.lindsayfoundation.org

Nabi Inspire Program

Allows families with autism spectrum disorder diagnosis to purchase a Nabi tablet at a discounted price ([Purchase Program](#)) or receive a free tablet ([Gifted 10K Program](#)).

 www.nabitablet.com/inspire

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Grants & Giveaways (cont.)

National Autism Association

Provides communication devices to individuals with an autism spectrum disorder who are non-verbal or minimally verbal through the Give a Voice program.

 nationalautismassociation.org


NWO Apraxia Support

Provides financial support to families in Southeast MI and Northwest OH. Priority given to children with childhood apraxia of speech (CAS), but other diagnoses may be considered.

 www.nwoapraxiasupport.org

Parker's Purpose

First priority given to OH residents. Must demonstrate financial and emotional need. Award (up to \$1,000) may be used as recipient sees fit.

 parkerspurpose.net

Prayer Child Foundation

Provides assistance to children 18 and younger with physical and emotional challenges.

 www.prayerchild.org

Silent Stars Foundation

Provides iPads or other speech devices to children with childhood apraxia of speech (CAS).

 www.silentstars.org

Small Steps in Speech

Offers awards toward purchase of iPad software for speech/language therapy. Ages 22 and under.

 www.smallstepsinspeech.org

Special Kids Therapy

Must be OH resident. First priority given to requests that will benefit the greatest number of children with special needs.

 specialkidstherapy.org

The Color of Autism

Provides iPads to individuals with an autism spectrum disorder who are non-verbal or minimally verbal. Must meet financial requirements.

 www.thecolorofautism.org

Grants & Giveaways (cont.)

UCP: Bellows Fund

Must be submitted by a United Cerebral Palsy affiliate on behalf of the candidate.

 ucp.org

Zane's Foundation, Inc.

Must be Northeast OH resident with a lifelong disability or intellectual impairment.

 www.zanesfoundation.org

Local Charities

Local charities are often very happy to help children in their community and are often more receptive to fundraising efforts than the larger, national organizations.

Places to start include:

- Church/prayer groups
- Kiwanis, Lion's, or Rotary Clubs
- Senior centers
- College organizations (fraternities, sororities, etc.)

Fundraising Sales

Many companies, such as Cookie Lee Jewelry, Longaberger Baskets, Pampered Chef, Tastefully Simple, Thirty-One Gifts, and Scentsy have "fundraising" options. Contact a local consultant to schedule an in-home party or book a party online.

iHelp for Special Needs

Digital catalog fundraising pilot program.

 www.ihelpforspecialneeds.com

The Puzzling Piece

Offers an iPad challenge that awards an iPad to individuals who sell 60+ qualified pieces.

 www.thepuzzlingpiece.com

Fundraising Sites

Several sites allow you to set up fundraising accounts for your child to allow family and friends to donate.

Fund It Forward

Nonprofit helping families to raise money for adaptive equipment not covered by health insurance. Organization funds family requests with the promise that they will raise funds for future requests.

 www.funditfwd.org

FundRazr

Commercial online fundraising site. Charges 5% for fundraising and a credit card fee of 2.9% + 30 cents per transaction.

 fundrazr.com

GiveForward

Online fundraising site targeting medical expenses, living expenses associated with illness or injury, and memorial funds. Charges 7.9% and a credit card fee of 2.9% + 30 cents for each transaction.

 www.giveforward.com

GoFundMe

Commercial online fundraising site. Charges 5% for fundraising and a credit card fee of 2.9% + 30 cents per transaction.

 www.gofundme.com

Indiegogo

Commercial online fundraising site. Offers different fee schedules depending on fundraising goal achievement (9% if you do not reach your goal and 4% if you do) plus a credit card fee of 2.9% + 30 cents per transaction.

 www.indiegogo.com

YouCaring

Charges only a credit card fee of 2.9% + 30 cents per transaction.

 www.youcaring.com