

# Alternative Access: Assistive Technology Switches



## What is it?

Switches enable individuals with disabilities to interact with electronic devices by providing alternative input methods for those who struggle with traditional devices like keyboards or touchscreens. Available in various forms—such as buttons, levers, or pads—switches can be activated by pressing, tapping, or slight movements and can be customized to meet individual needs. Mechanical switches use physical movement to activate, while electrical switches rely on sensors or touch-sensitive panels. They can perform a wide range of functions, including navigating menus, typing, clicking icons, or controlling environmental systems.

## Why use it?

Switches offer alternative ways for people with disabilities to access, operate, and interact with electronic devices, making technology more inclusive. They serve as communication tools, aid in accessing educational resources, and even control environmental systems like lights and appliances. Assistive technology switches are essential for enhancing accessibility, independence, communication, learning, and overall quality of life for individuals with disabilities.

## How to use it?

First, choose the appropriate switch for the user. Connect it to the assistive technology device directly or via a switch interface box. Configure the switch to perform desired functions by adjusting device or software settings. Position the switch in a comfortable, accessible location with input from an Occupational Therapist. Customize settings and placement based on user feedback, integrating switch use into various activities. Finally, provide ongoing support and monitor progress to ensure successful use.

## Examples we use in Bellevue School District

- Ablenet jelly bean switch and specs switch
- Ablenet little candy corn proximity switch
- Ablenet micro light switch
- Enabling devices textured plate switches
- Enabling devices mini dome switch

