

## Recommended software programs for children

# No Fail Software

by Warren Buckleitner

*Whether you're a veteran computer hacker or just getting started, one thing's for sure — you need good software for success. Here's some good news. If you own either a Macintosh or Windows computer with at least 8 MB of RAM (internal random access memory), a CD-ROM drive, and the other standard equipment that comes with most newer computers, you have a wide assortment of high quality titles from which to choose. These are titles that can entertain and teach at the same time. After our review of over 1800 titles for children, here are some of the good ones.*

### **PRESCHOOL**

#### **Language**

**A to Zap!** by Sunburst Communications, (800) 338-3457, ages 3-6, CD-ROM for Windows or Mac. A range of fun letter recognition activities for exploring letter/sound relationships in a playful way.

**Bailey's Book House** by Edmark, (800) 426-0856, \$49.95, CD-ROM for Windows or Mac. Seven easy-to-

use early language activities with clear speech and graphics. An ideal first program for younger children.

**Imo and the King** by Davidson, (800) 545-7677, \$49.95, ages 3-8, CD-ROM for Mac or Windows. An African folk tale full of "clickables" (like a pop-up book) about the young boy Imo and his quest to be king. An ideal language experience.

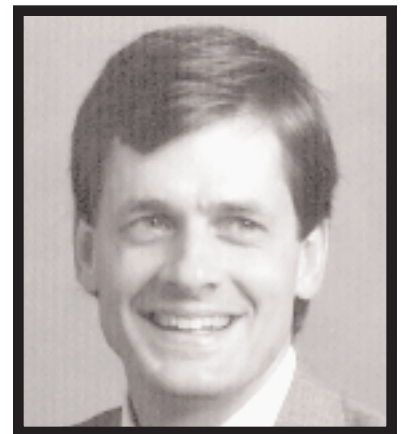
**Just Grandma and Me** by Living Books, (800) 521-6263, \$49.95, ages

3-8, CD-ROM for Mac or Windows. A classic 12-page talking pop-up book in three languages about a boy's day at the beach with his grandma. An ideal language experience in Spanish, Japanese, or English.

**My First Incredible Amazing Dictionary** by Dorling Kindersley, (800) 356-6575, \$39.00 (street price), ages 4-7, Mac and Windows CD-ROM. One thousand words are clearly illustrated and animated.

#### **Math, Logic, and Science**

**Millie's Math House** by Edmark, (800) 426-0856, \$49.95, CD-ROM for Windows or Mac. Children build a mouse house, count jelly beans, put shoes on little creatures, decorate a bug. New for fall '95 — a new addition/subtraction activity.



*Warren Buckleitner is editor of **Children's Software Revue** in Ypsilanti, Michigan. To subscribe to this 24 page, bimonthly consumer's guide to children's software for \$24, call (800) 993-9499, or write to CSR, 520 North Adams Street, Ypsilanti, MI 48197. (buckleit@aol.com)*

**Mixed-Up Mother Goose Deluxe** by Sierra On-Line, (800) 757-7707, \$44.95, ages 3-8, Windows CD-ROM. Children use logical and spatial thinking — and memory — to unscramble 18 nursery rhymes. Children keep coming back to this one, making it ideal for either home or school.

**Nick Jr. Play Math!** by Viacom New Media, (800) 469-2539, \$44.99, Windows 95, Windows 3.1 (CD-ROM), Mac OS in early '96. Fifteen different activities give children structured and open-ended number experiences. Hidden beneath cartoons are solid early math activities.

**Playskool Puzzles** by Playskool Children's Educational Software, (800) 638-6927, \$39.95, ages 3-6. Windows 95, Windows 3.1 (CD-ROM). Here's a brand new set of puzzles, along with a set of puzzle making tools. Even three year olds can use this one on their own.

**Putt-Putt Saves the Zoo** by Humongous Entertainment, (800) 499-8386, \$39.95, ages 3-8, CD-ROM for Windows or Mac. A lighthearted scavenger hunt adventure with logic puzzles, animal trivia, and excellent music.

**Sammy's Science House** by Edmark, (800) 426-0856, \$49.95, ages 3-7, Mac, DOS, Windows (disk or CD-ROM). Five activities introduce early science thinking. If you liked **Millie's Math House**, you'll also like this title. We also recommend the newest "House" title from Edmark, **Trudies Time and Place House**.

## All Purpose

**JumpStart Preschool** by Knowledge Adventure, (800) 542-4240, \$54.95, ages 4-6, Windows CD-ROM. Thirteen well-designed activities provide a range of options for

young children. Includes a record keeping system that tracks children's progress.

**The Playroom CD-ROM** by Brøderbund, (800) 521-6263, \$49.95, ages 3-6, CD-ROM for Mac or Windows. Six excellent early reading and math activities make this a useful all-purpose title. If you were to just buy one title, this might be a good choice.

## Art and Creativity

**Crayola Art Studio 2** by Micrografx, (800) 487-2116, \$39.95, ages 3-12, Windows 95, Windows 3.1, Mac OS (CD-ROM). A drawing program with 26 puzzles and activities. Provides a wide assortment of things to do in a playful context.

**Kid Pix Studio** by Brøderbund, (800) 521-6263, \$44.95, ages 3 and up, Mac or Windows CD-ROM. An easy-to-use, yet powerful drawing program. It's hard to go wrong with this one.

## EARLY ELEMENTARY

(Grades K-2)

### Reading

**Arthur's Teacher Trouble** by Living Books, (800) 521-6263, \$49.95, ages 3-8, CD-ROM for Mac or Windows. A 12-page talking pop-up book in two languages about a boy's school adventures.

**Grammar Rock** by Creative Wonders, (800) 543-9778, ages 6-10, Windows 95, Windows 3.1, Mac OS (CD-ROM). Nineteen multi-level activities that provide practice with specific grammar concepts such as parts of speech and so on. Correct answers win coins that can be used to play one of two engaging arcade games. Shhh! Don't tell the kids they're learning grammar!

**Reader Rabbit's Interactive Journey** by The Learning Company, (800) 852-2255, \$99.95, ages 3-7, CD-ROM for Mac or Windows. An entire first grade phonics-based beginning reading curriculum on one CD. Nicely structured lessons walk children through each concept, and the program "remembers" progress from day to day.

## Writing

**Read, Write and Type** by The Learning Company, (800) 852-2255, \$60.00, ages 6-8, CD-ROM for Mac or Windows. Integrates typing, reading, and phonics in a series of structured games. Ideal for the home schooling family.

**Kid Works Deluxe** by Davidson, (800) 545-7677, \$35.00, ages 4-9, Windows, Mac OS (CD-ROM). A talking word processor for writing, editing, drawing, and narrating text.

## Math and Logic

**Big Job** by The Discovery Channel, (800) 762-2189, ages 5-9, \$49.95, CD-ROM for Mac or Windows. Children visit three work sites where they play logic games, like figuring out the shortest path to get a fire hose to a fire.

**Math Dodger!** by Davidson, (800) 545-7677, \$35.00, ages 6-14, Windows or Mac. Kids help the Math Dodger navigate through mazes and ditch the bad guys in order to get tokens. Each token gives the child a chance to solve a math problem, score points, and advance to the next level.

**Math Workshop** by Brøderbund, (800) 521-6263, \$45.00 (street price), ages 6-10, CD-ROM for Mac or Windows. The best all-purpose math title available, with seven well-designed activities, makes learning "the basics" fun.

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**Thinkin' Things** and **Thinkin' Things Collection 2**  
by Edmark, (800) 426-0856, \$49.95, ages 4-8, DOS,  
Windows, or Mac. Young Einsteins will love these six  
activities that allow children to experiment with size,  
shapes, colors, and musical patterns in new, fun ways.

## **Science and Social Studies**

**Magic School Bus Explores the Ocean** by Microsoft,  
(800) 376-5125, \$49.95, ages 6-10, CD-ROM for Mac or  
Windows. Ms. Frizzle (from the PBS show) and her  
class explore the ocean in a submarine where they  
conduct experiments.

**Let's Explore the Airport** by Humongous Entertain-  
ment, (800) 499-8386, \$29.95, ages 3-8, Windows  
CD-ROM. Starting with the top view of an airport,  
children can "zoom in" on objects or areas by clicking,  
e.g., a Concorde, a small propeller plane, hangers, the  
runway, and the cockpit. Also includes an airport trivia  
game and a multi-level luggage sorting activity which  
requires strategy and timing.

**Sim Town** by Maxis, (800) 336-2947, \$44.95, ages 8-12,  
Windows 95, Windows 3.1, Mac OS (CD-ROM).  
Designed to be less complex than Sim City 2000, this  
program lets children place houses and stores and  
manage the town as the mayor — balancing water  
supply and other important resources.

## **Creativity**

**Adobe Art Explorer** by Adobe Systems Incorporated,  
(800) 888-6293, \$30.00 (street price), ages 6 and up, Mac  
OS CD-ROM. A powerful, easy-to-use drawing pro-  
gram with a wide range of tools such as an air brush —  
along with sets of stamps and image editing tools.

## **All Purpose**

**JumpStart First Grade** by Knowledge Adventure,  
(800) 542-4240, \$33.00 (street price), ages 5-7, Windows  
CD-ROM. Fifteen challenging activities cover a wide  
range of subjects. Keeps progress for each child.

**The Lion King Activity Center** by Disney Interactive,  
(800) 688-1520, \$39.95, Windows 95, Windows 3.1, Mac  
OS (CD-ROM), ages 5 and up. If your kids liked the  
movie, here's eight games and puzzles, seven art  
activities, and six clips from the film. Games include  
spelling, mazes, puzzles, and memory teasers. Several  
games are multi-level and are for more than one player.