



For kids

Gail Lipscombe reviews the latest software, web sites and tech toys for kids.

INTREPICA

AGES THREE TO ADULT / PRICE \$19 PER MONTH PER CHILD; \$30 A YEAR PER STUDENT FOR SCHOOLS / CONTACT INTREPICA PHONE 1300 565 696 / WEB www.intrepica.com.au

Intrepica is an impressive online literacy program that will help develop skills in pre-reading, phonics, vocabulary, spelling, reading, comprehension and grammar through more than 10,000 interactive activities. There are diagnostic tools for assessing kids' abilities and a learning schedule is generated

to their needs. Parents are also notified of areas in which their child is struggling. Learning takes place in the Academy section of the site and kids can work at their own pace. They're rewarded for good work with trophies, medals, badges, points, spendable credits and more. Because Intrepica is a completely

95%



safe environment, parents can let kids chat and play games with other site members in the Arena section, or play games independently in the Arcade. The Intrepica program is based

on the Australian school curriculum and it's available for home or school use. **PC User says:** Provides quality learning in a fun and social environment.

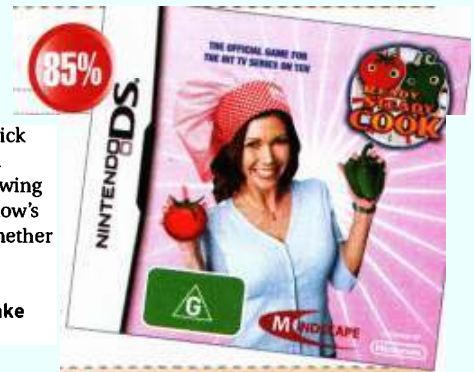
READY STEADY COOK DS

RATED G / PRICE \$49.95 / CONTACT MINDSCAPE / PHONE (02) 9964 0475 WEB www.mindscape.com.au

On the back of the success of cooking TV shows, everyone seems to have the cooking bug. This game, based on the popular *Ready Steady Cook* TV show, lets the whole family have fun virtual cooking. Best of all, there's no mess to clean up and you don't have to worry about the kids

burning or cutting themselves. First, choose whether you want to be a green capsicum or a red tomato. Next, pick your player mode: single, multi, trainer (where you just play the mini games) or cookbook (you get to cook the recipes in your kitchen at home). Then, choose a chef

from the five on offer, pick an ingredient bag and a recipe, and cook it following the instructions. The show's audience will decide whether you're the winner. **PC User says:** Best for older kids starting to take an interest in cooking.



85%

HOODA MATH

WEB www.hoodamath.com

If your kids need to brush up on their maths skills, the net can be a good place to do it, and they can have fun at the same time. On the Hooda Math site, kids can play games based on geometry, arithmetic and logic (there are 12 games in each category). All the

games are really well thought out, engaging and challenging. The Movies section contains cool maths cartoons that teach kids mathematics principles in a really different way. Using visual demonstrations with spoken explanations, the Tutorials

section shows them how to do core maths tasks relating to decimal numbers. You'll also find links to other good maths sites in the Links section. **PC User says:** Makes learning maths fun with a good range of games and activities.



80%

LEAPFROG TAG JUNIOR

AGES TWO TO FOUR YEARS / PRICE \$79.95 / CONTACT FUNTASTIC / PHONE 1800 244 543 / WEB www.funtastic.com.au

This latest LeapFrog Learning toy introduces preschoolers to the joys of reading, with interactive activities that help them learn. The chunky stylus is easily managed by little hands, and its solid build is up for the rough and tumble of a toddler. The Tag

Junior comes with one book, and the necessary software is already installed on the stylus. Kids just need to touch each page with the stylus to hear a story and interact with the characters. Additional books are available and the software

downloaded via the provided cable from the LeapFrog web site — the stylus holds up to five books at a time and requires two AAA batteries. **PC User says:** A great way to introduce very young children to reading.



90%