

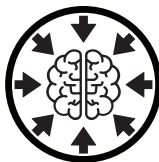
Handy Handouts®

Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students

What is Assistive Technology? Is My Child Eligible?

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Assistive Technology Devices and Services



Many children with disabilities have difficulties with reading, writing, and math. Some children have problems with vision, hearing, listening and/or communicating. Others have physical, mobility, and motor problems. Assistive technology helps children use their strengths to compensate or “work around” weaknesses caused by the disability and includes both “devices” and “services.”

The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act – 2004* (IDEA) requires the teams of educators involved in creating a student’s Individual Education Program (IEP) to consider the assistive technology needs of all children with disabilities. (20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(3)(B)(v))

IEP teams make decisions about assistive technology devices and services based on a child’s unique needs so he/she can be more confident and independent. The law requires schools to use assistive technology devices and services in order “to maximize accessibility for children with disabilities.” (20 U.S.C. 1400(c)(5)(H))



IDEA defines an ‘assistive technology device’ as...



“any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability.” (20 U.S.C. 1401(1))

IDEA defines an ‘assistive technology service’ as...

“any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device” including:



A. Evaluation



B. Purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of assistive technology devices



C. Selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing



D. Coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices

F. Training or technical assistance for such child, the family of such child... training or technical assistance for professionals (20 U.S.C. 1401(2))

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(cont.)

IDEA 2004, Wrightslaw: Special Education Law, 2nd Edition, p. 49.

If/when your child's IEP team determines that your child needs assistive technology devices and services, *the school district is responsible for providing these and cannot use lack of availability or cost as an excuse.*

Assistive Technology Training

IDEA 2004 also requires schools to provide assistive technology training for the teachers, child, and family. (20 U.S.C. 1400(2)(E) & (F))



You, your child, and your child's teachers may need training to learn how to use an assistive device. Assistive technology services, including training, need to be documented in your child's IEP.

Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a set of principles for designing a curriculum that provides all individuals, including those with learning differences, with equal opportunities to learn.



The key concept in UDL is that the design of new curricular materials and learning technologies are to be flexible enough to accommodate the unique learning styles of a wide range of individuals, including children with disabilities. Examples include accessible websites, electronic versions of textbooks and other materials; captioned and/or

narrated videos; word processors with word prediction and voice recognition. The definition of universal design is in the Assistive Technology Act at 29 U.S.C. 3002 (19).

Assistive Technology Evaluation

If you think your child needs assistive technology, you need to request that the IEP team refer your child for an evaluation by an assistive technology specialist. If the IEP team refers your child, *the evaluation is at no cost to you.* An assistive technology evaluation may include a functional evaluation of your child in school or at home. Be sure the IEP team includes the evaluation in the IEP, along with the expected date to start and finish the evaluation.



Assistive technology specialists have specific knowledge and expertise. If your child's needs are complex, or you anticipate resistance from your child's school or teachers, you are within your legal right to call a meeting with the IEP team and ask the assistive technology specialist in your district to join you. You are also within your legal right to ask the AT specialist to be a member of your child's IEP team.



Resources:

Center on Technology and Disability. 2016. AT and the IEP. Retrieved October 2016 from <http://www.ctdinstitute.org/library/2014-10-13/and-iep>
 US Department of Education. 2016. Query for assistive technology. Retrieved October 2016. http://idea.ed.gov/explore/search?search_option=all&query=assistive+technology&GO.x=0&GO.y=0
 Wrightslaw. 2016. Assistive technology. Retrieved October 2016 from <http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/atech.index.htm>

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