

Kansas Assistive Technology Guide

March 2024



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OVERVIEW

The *Kansas Assistive Technology Guide* was created for schools and district individualized education program (IEP) teams in response to a need expressed by Kansas administrators and educators for high-quality examples of the processes that individual school districts and IEP teams can use to provide legal, effective, and ethical assistive technology (AT) services. Development of the guide was led by Kansas Infinitect, sponsored by the Kansas State Department of Education.

The *Kansas Assistive Technology Guide* can be tailored to local services. The guide is envisioned as a starting point for the development of a specific agency's AT services. Any part of these guidelines may be copied or revised for use by an individual program or agency. The document is available on [Kansas Technical Assistance System Network](#) and [Kansas State Department of Education Special Education and Title Services](#) websites in an accessible PDF.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thanks to all the Kansas educational leaders, advisors, and Infinitec Cadre members who shared their expertise in the development of the guide. Your broad range of experience and passion was instrumental in creating a document that will benefit Kansas staff, families, and students.

This manual offers samples of assistive technology (AT) processes and materials to support effective AT services. Materials included have been assembled from multiple agencies and credited.

This document will be periodically reviewed and updated. To provide feedback please complete the [feedback form](#) to share your input.

For further information, contact:

Beth R. Zillinger, MS, CCC-SLP

Program Director

Assistive Technology State Lead

Kansas Infinitec

bzillinger@ucpnet.org

ksdetasn.org/infinitec

myinfinitec.org



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SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION TO ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES



The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) makes it clear that it is a school district's responsibility to provide assistive technology (AT) if a child needs it for a free appropriate public education (FAPE). IDEA does not, however, give districts specific information about the ways AT decisions should be made or the process that education agencies should follow as they assess a child's need for AT, acquire the AT that is needed, and help students use it to gain better access to their individualized education program (IEP). Without specific guidance, IEP teams may have questions about how to proceed when considering the AT needs of students with disabilities.

This document is designed to be used as a template by education agencies wishing to develop AT processes that are effective, legal, ethical, and efficient. It describes a process which starts with individual student teams. The process guides those teams through consideration of AT need, AT assessment, implementation of AT programs, and periodic review of AT use. The guide's focus is on establishing a process which can be used independently throughout an education agency by a variety of student teams. In addition, because some teams may need to call upon people with additional expertise when a student requires complicated or unusual technology tools, processes are described to help teams add members who can offer the expertise they need.

Section One of the guide describes the statutory basis of the public agency's requirements to provide AT as well as reasons to develop consistent, legal, and ethical agency processes. Section Two describes essential elements of district AT processes and the AT actions that IEP teams take before, during, and after an IEP meeting. Section Three provides sample resources and forms, which may be used to guide and document team activities at each of these steps. Section Three's forms are accompanied by a brief explanation of their purpose and use. They are offered to help guide districts as they develop their customized AT processes. ***No process or resource document provided in this guide is required by the Kansas State Department of Education.***

The unique nature of each child's needs requires flexibility of team actions. However, there is also a need for a process which ensures agency-wide consistency and quality in the services provided to all children. The *Kansas Assistive Technology Guide* is offered as a starting point for education agencies whose goal is to ensure that quality AT services are available to all of their students with disabilities.



RATIONALE FOR DEVELOPING AN ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY GUIDE

This guide offers a sample process for schools to use when addressing each student's need for assistive technology (AT). It assumes that the primary responsibility for AT assessment, consideration of need, and implementation of AT plans resides with the child's individualized education program (IEP) team.

A system that places the primary responsibility for AT with the IEP team, rather than with an individual specialist, requires that *all* team members have a basic level of information about AT. Team members need to know how the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) defines AT devices and services. Finally, to try it with their students, teams need to know about the AT that is most frequently used by the children for whom they provide services.

When education agencies focus their processes for AT assessment and decision making on the actions of IEP teams, they increase the likelihood of effective AT use by students who need it. The sample AT processes, presented here, were developed based on the assumption that all teams will be able to describe the following:

- tasks that are difficult for the child,
- the child's learning strengths and learning needs,
- environmental factors that influence the child's performance, and
- commonly used tools that might help the child to do difficult tasks.

This approach requires that teams also know when they need additional information or help to identify AT options. Many districts may choose to assign a staff member to be an AT coordinator. In cases where this is not possible, IEP teams need to know how the district supports them to find the help they need when they do not have enough information.

To ensure equity, it is desirable that every IEP team follows a consistent process when considering AT. This manual offers samples of such processes. When materials were directly borrowed from a particular source, the source has been credited.



STATUTORY BASIS OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY PROCEDURES

Every individualized education program (IEP) team is required to consider whether a student with disabilities needs assistive technology (AT) devices and services to benefit from a free appropriate public education (FAPE). The requirement is included in the list of items IEP teams must include in an IEP program by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Once teams decide that a student needs AT and includes it in an IEP, they take action to make sure that the AT is used in the way that it is intended and is helpful. Teams provide a variety of AT services to support students. The next section of this guide includes the specific IDEA wording about each of these services and further explanation of each service.



LEGAL DEFINITIONS RELATED TO ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

IDEA Assistive Technology Definitions and Requirements

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), a federal law regarding education for children with disabilities, provides the following definition of assistive technology (AT):

An assistive technology device is defined 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. (34 C.F.R. § 300.5)

IDEA establishes AT as a special consideration that must be addressed by every individualized education program (IEP) team. The law states that IEP teams must “consider whether the child needs assistive technology devices and services” (34 C.F.R. § 300.324(2)(v)).

Kansas Definitions and Requirements

The rules adopted by the Kansas State Department of Education support the IDEA requirement to provide AT but provide additional clarification and guidance for Kansas educators. Here are the specific definitions from Kansas Administrative Rules.

Assistive Technology Device:

K.A.R. 91-40-1.

(c) “Assistive technology device” means 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 the functional capabilities of a child with a disability. The term shall not include any medical device that is surgically implanted or the replacement of the device.

Assistive Technology Service:

K.A.R. 91-40-1.

(d) “Assistive technology service” means any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. This term shall include the following:

- (1) Evaluating the needs of a child with a disability, including a functional evaluation of the child in the child’s customary environment;
- (2) purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of assistive technology devices by children with disabilities;
- (3) selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing assistive technology devices;
- (4) coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs;



- (5) providing training or technical assistance for a child with a disability or, if appropriate, that child’s family; and
- (6) providing training or technical assistance for professionals including individuals providing education or rehabilitation services, employers, or other individuals who provide services to, employ, or are otherwise substantially involved in the major life functions of a child.

(kk) “Interpreting services” means the following:

- (1) For children who are deaf or hard of hearing, oral transliteration services, cued language transliteration services, sign language transliteration and interpreting services, and transcription services, including communication access real-time translation (CART), C-Print, and TypeWell; and
- (2) special interpreting services for children who are deaf-blind.

(ttt) “Supplementary aids and services” means aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes, other education-related settings, and extracurricular and nonacademic settings to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate.

Kansas Statutes Annotated (K.S.A.) describe the actions that IEP teams take to develop an IEP. This list of actions includes the determination of whether a child requires AT devices and services:

K.S.A. 72-3429.

Individualized education program or family service plan; contents; development; duties of IEP team ...

(d) In developing each child’s IEP, the IEP team shall consider:

- (1) The strengths of the child and the concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their child;
- (2) the results of the initial evaluation or most recent evaluation of the child;
- (3) the academic, developmental and functional needs of the child;...

(8) whether the child requires assistive technology devices and services.

All IEP teams are required to consider the need for AT devices and services and must address the student’s need to access curriculum and specially designed goals and objectives.

IEP teams ask the question “What does the student need to do that he/she cannot do because of his/her disability?” Consideration does not imply a mandate for an AT assessment or for the actual provision of devices for every child with a



disability. For example, if a student’s performance is functional in relation to curriculum and goals, the consideration should be brief, and consensus could be reached relatively quickly.

The [Kansas Special Education Process Handbook](#) clarifies the IEP team’s role in considering and providing AT. IEP teams must determine whether an individual child needs an AT device or service and, if so, the nature and extent to be provided. It is possible that an AT evaluation will be required to determine whether the child would need an AT device and/or service. Any needs identified should be reflected in the content of the IEP, including, as appropriate, the instructional program and services provided to the child. According to current Medicaid reimbursement rules, if an AT device is purchased with Medicaid funds (or from private insurance), it belongs to the family. Further guidance is provided in the [Kansas Special Education Process Handbook](#) (p. 72).

Student Strengths and Needs

AT is one aspect of a multifaceted approach to addressing the strengths and needs of a student with disabilities. The needed technology is considered in relation to the student’s learning potential, motivation, chronological age, developmental level, and curriculum access needs. AT is a tool for access to education that will change over time as the student’s needs change and as advancements are made in technology. The World Health Organization summarizes the role of assistive technologies in the following way: “They enable people to live healthy, productive, independent and dignified lives, and to participate in education, the labour market and civic life” (WHO, 2023).

Assistive Technology Use at Home

IDEA regulations also require that an AT device be provided for home use if the IEP team determines that the device is required for home use in order for the student to achieve the goals and objectives on the IEP. The IEP team should base its decision for home use on the educational and instructional activities that have been planned for the student to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Further guidance is provided in the [Kansas Special Education Process Handbook](#) (p. 131).

Understanding the Role of Assistive Technology in Schools

The definition of AT in IDEA is broad and includes almost any type of device used to support the education of a student with a disability. For all students with disabilities, it is important for IEP teams to recognize that AT encompasses a range from simple devices (e.g., picture boards, lined paper, pencil grips, calculators) to more high-tech devices, which may include computers or devices with electronic components. The word “technology” in the phrase “assistive technology” does not imply a requirement for electronic components. Further guidance is provided in the [Kansas Special Education Process Handbook](#) (p. 104).



THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA): ADDITIONAL DEFINITIONS RELATED TO ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

IDEA (34 C.F.R. § 300.17) defines FAPE in this way:

Free appropriate public education or FAPE means special education and related services that—

- (a) Are provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge;
- (b) Meet the standards of the SEA, including the requirements of this part;
- (c) Include an appropriate preschool, elementary school, or secondary school education in the State involved; and
- (d) Are provided in conformity with an individualized education program (IEP) that meets the requirements of §§ 300.320 through 300.324.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1401(9))

The provision of assistive technology (AT) may serve as one of the elements of a school's obligation to provide a FAPE to students. The "free" in a FAPE means that all special education and related services (including necessary AT tools and services) should be provided to students with disabilities at no cost to the family if AT is required as part of the student's special education program and/or related services or if it is needed for the student's access to the curriculum. This rule prohibits schools from refusing to provide AT or AT services in a student's individualized education program (IEP) due to expense. The only time schools may consider the cost of AT in making a determination is when two equal alternatives exist that would enable a student to receive a FAPE. Further guidance on Ancillary FAPE requirements (K.A.R. 91-40-3(d)) is provided in the [Kansas Special Education Process Handbook](#) (p. 113).

AT and Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

LRE means the child is provided special education and related services with peers who are not disabled, to the maximum extent appropriate (K.A.R. 91-40-1(II)). The group of persons determining placement must consider how the child with a disability can be educated with peers without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate and how he/she will participate with children without disabilities in other activities such as extracurricular and nonacademic activities.

Schools are required to ensure that a continuum of placement options is available to meet the needs of children with disabilities for special education and related services in the LRE. In all cases, placement decisions must be individually determined on the basis of the child's abilities and needs as listed in the IEP.

The use of AT may enable a child to participate in the general curriculum in ways that are otherwise difficult or impossible because of the student's disability. If the student needs an AT device (e.g., software, computer, writing aids, prone stander) to remain in the LRE, the IEP team would list that service on the IEP, and the school



must provide it or ensure that it is provided. Further guidance is provided in the [Kansas Special Education Process Handbook](#) (p. 125).

AT and Accessible Educational Materials and Technologies

Accessible educational materials (AEM) are print- and technology-based educational materials, including printed and electronic textbooks and related core materials, that are designed or enhanced in a way that makes them usable across the widest range of learner variability, regardless of format, for example, print, digital, audio, or video formats (National Center on Accessible Educational Materials, 2021). AT and AEM work together to provide access, learning opportunities, and independence for students with disabilities. IDEA states that local education agencies must ensure that children with disabilities who need AEM in specialized formats receive those materials in a timely manner (34 C.F.R. § 300.172). The IEP team chooses formats based on how the student will access information contained in printed materials and which format(s) will help the student work independently, develop literacy skills, and participate and make progress in the general education curriculum and on IEP goals. [Accessible Educational Materials in the IEP](#) offers an in-depth explanation of accessible formats and eligibility requirements.



THE RELATIONSHIP OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY TO OTHER INITIATIVES

AT and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a civil rights law that prohibits agencies and programs that receive federal funds from discriminating against individuals with disabilities. Public schools receive federal funds and must follow this rule. The law states:

No otherwise qualified individual with handicaps in the United States ... shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. (34 C.F.R. § 104.4(a))

The definition of disability under Section 504 is different from the definition of disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA). Under Section 504, a “handicapped person” is defined as a person who:

(i) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, (ii) has a record of such an impairment, or (iii) is regarded as having such an impairment. (34 C.F.R. § 104.3(j)(1))

Kansas defines “major life activities” as “functions such as caring for one’s self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working” (34 C.F.R. § 103.3(j)(2)(ii)). The definition of “individuals with handicaps” under Section 504 is broader than the definition of children with disabilities under the IDEA. Some children who are not eligible for special education services may be able to receive services under the protections of Section 504. The Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Title II regulations emphasize that “major life activities” may include more than the listed activities in the regulations and also cover such things as standing, sitting, speaking, reading, learning, breathing, and interacting with others (28 C.F.R. § 35.108(c)(1)(i)).

Section 504 applies to preschool, elementary, and secondary schools that receive federal financial assistance. Under Section 504, schools must ensure that students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate in all academic and extracurricular school programs. Benefits and services provided to students with disabilities must be equal to, and as effective as, the benefits and services afforded to other students. Some students who have a disability may not need specially designed instruction or an individualized education program (IEP). A 504 Plan is developed for these students.

A student’s 504 Plan may include provisions of assistive technology (AT) devices and/or services, to allow access to the full range of programs and activities. The key here is the equal opportunity to participate required under Section 504.



AT and Transition Planning

For students aged 14 and older, IDEA requires that beginning at age 14, a student’s IEP must have a statement of the transition service needs of the student that focuses on the student’s courses of study. Beginning at age 16, a statement of needed transition services for the student must be included on the IEP, including a statement of interagency responsibilities. Equipment provided for a student enrolled in the district is returned to the district upon graduation. If AT and services have been provided as part of the student’s school program, a determination regarding continued need after graduation should be made by the IEP team. Provisions for interagency support for AT devices and services should be specified as part of the transition plan, when appropriate. Further guidance on transition planning is provided in the [Kansas Special Education Process Handbook](#) (pp. 75–53, 101).

AT and Kansas State Standards and State Testing

Kansas state standards provide guidance about the content that students are expected to learn. They foster the development of curricula and associated experiences. AT provides a means for individual students with disabilities to access and engage in curricula when the curricular tasks are unable to be performed without the use of the AT. Refer to the Kansas State Department of Education [FAQ: Text-to-Speech Accommodation for ELA Passages \(Nonvisual\)](#).

AT and Universal Design for Learning

“Universal Design for Learning (UDL) means a scientifically valid framework for guiding educational practice that—(A) provides flexibility in the ways information is presented, in the ways students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills, and in the ways students are engaged; and (B) reduces barriers in instruction, provides appropriate accommodations, supports, and challenges, and maintains high achievement expectations for all students, including students with disabilities and students who are limited English proficient” (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). The UDL principles guide curriculum development, resulting in equal opportunities for learning (CAST, n.d.). UDL focuses on instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that can be used by all students, regardless of their ability or background. UDL is a flexible pedagogical framework that more easily and effectively meets individual needs. Technology is not necessary to implement UDL but is often helpful. AT, on the other hand, is documented in the IEP and therefore is required for the student’s free appropriate public education (FAPE). AT directly addresses individual student barriers. The consideration and use of AT addresses issues a student with a disability may be facing when engaging in curricular tasks.



AT and Instructional Technology

The Center on Inclusive Technology & Education Systems (Wilcauskas & Dolan, 2022) defines other types of technologies in schools, including information technology (IT), which is technology that is used for the creation, storage, manipulation, analysis and management of data, and educational technology (EdTech), which is technology that is used to help facilitate learning, also sometimes called instructional technology or digital learning. Educators can use both information and instructional technology widely to support all students in a classroom. The same technology tool may be widely used by all students but also be considered an essential compensatory intervention for a student with a disability.

The concept *is good for all but necessary for some* applies here. The IEP team can consider all types of technology supports and services as AT and document the necessary need in the IEP.



SECTION TWO: ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY PROCESS FOR IEP TEAMS



ACTIONS IEP TEAMS TAKE WHEN CONSIDERING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Each individualized education program (IEP) team makes decisions about the special education instruction and related services, as well as supplementary aids and services to be provided to the child, or on behalf of the child, so that the child will advance appropriately toward meeting the child's annual goals, advance in the general curriculum, and be educated with the child's peers. Further guidance on is provided in the [Kansas Special Education Process Handbook](#) (p. 112).

Here is a list of IEP team member's actions about assistive technology (AT). Example agency guidelines such as these can help to ensure that quality AT services are consistently provided by all IEP teams.

Consistency in AT services can also contribute to equity for students with disabilities as well as a reduced level of conflict within the district.

When every IEP team member, including families and advocates, knows how AT is addressed by the agency, there is less chance that there will be inconsistencies and inequities in the AT devices and services provided to individual students.

An AT service checklist description like this can be made available to all those who participate as IEP team members, including but not limited to administrators or administrative designees, parents, general education teachers, special education teachers, related services providers, AT Specialists, and other support services staff.



ACTION CHECKLIST FOR IEP TEAMS

Below is a list of suggested assistive technology (AT) individualized education program (IEP) team actions, which can be modified to best meet an educational agency's resources and processes.

Prior to the IEP Meeting

IEP team members should:

- [Collect information](#) about the student, the environments where the student experiences barriers to meeting IEP goals or accessing the curriculum, and the tasks the student needs to accomplish.
- Collect information about the adaptations, accommodations, and AT options that have already been tried to help the student overcome barriers to learning and participation.
- Respond to formal requests for AT from parents or other team members using a prior written notice.
- Try new adaptations, accommodations, and AT options if they are readily available in the student's school environment. Collect data and information about the results of informal trials to share with the IEP team during the meeting.
- Collect information regarding other school on-site resources and options which might be considered to help the student to overcome barriers to learning. (Think about mapping the resources.)

During the IEP Meeting

- Describe the student's present level of educational performance.
- Identify areas of concern.
- Identify annual goals and short-term objectives.
- Continue to recommend on-site resources and interventions until the student's needs are met or until it is determined that school-site personnel lack the necessary expertise to make further recommendations and more information is needed.
- Document any AT decisions/considerations made during the meeting.
- Document the special education services, related services, supplementary aids and services, program modifications, and supports for school personnel that will be provided to meet the student's needs including AT. This includes the frequency, location, and duration of all of these services.

When the Team Needs More Information

- Document the results of the AT consideration, using [an agency-provided consideration](#).
- Obtain permission to further evaluate the child's need for AT.
- Develop [an AT assessment plan](#).

After AT Is Included in an IEP

- Arrange for any needed AT to be obtained.
- Develop [an implementation plan](#), which includes student training, staff training, device maintenance, and ongoing evaluation procedures.
- Implement the plan OR
- Implement the assessment plan.
- Reconvene the IEP meeting to review progress and modify the program if necessary.



USING THE ACTION CHECKLIST

The Assistive Technology Action Checklist was developed to help teams identify the steps they need to take in order to ensure that students who need AT receive due consideration, assessment, and implementation of the AT program. In this section of the Guide, we'll meet two students whose teams used the checklist to guide them through an AT process. Before we look at the checklist in more detail, let's meet Devon and Maria.

Meet Devon

Devon has a learning disability in reading and was overwhelmed with the reading assignments in his fifth-grade class. He was never able to complete the assigned reading at school and brought home a backpack full of books each night so his family could read to him. Even his big sister got into the act and helped read textbooks. His parents reported that Devon spent three or more hours each night trying to understand the texts and do his homework.

Everyone wondered if there was something that could help Devon get information from his textbooks and educational materials more independently and more quickly. The IEP team decided to look for ways that reading assignments could be changed to help Devon learn the curriculum with less difficulty.

Meet Maria

Maria had just entered kindergarten. Maria had been enrolled in Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education programs from a very early age because she was born with cerebral palsy (CP). Maria's CP made it necessary for her to use a wheelchair, and she had some difficulty using her hands. The new school had provided a lot of accommodations for Maria's physical disability, and her parents, Diana and Dave, were very pleased with the fact that she was attending an inclusive general education kindergarten class.

Despite their excitement about Maria's kindergarten placement, her parents were concerned about her speech. The CP made it hard for her to use the muscles she needed to produce speech, so her speech was slurred and difficult to understand. Diana and Dave understood her most of the time, but they were pretty sure that her new classmates would not know what she was trying to say.



PRIOR TO THE IEP MEETING

Every individualized education program (IEP) team member participates in the consideration of a student’s need for assistive technology (AT). For that consideration to be valid, information and documentation about the child’s strengths and functional needs are collected prior to the IEP meeting. The team includes information about the adaptations, accommodations, and AT options that have already been tried and their effectiveness. IEP team members also attend the IEP meeting with knowledge of school-site resources and other available AT options that could be considered during the IEP meeting.

Parent Request for an Assistive Technology Evaluation

Parents have a right to request an evaluation of their child. Including an evaluation of the need for AT. When a parent makes such a request, the following procedures are followed. If the team strongly believes that an evaluation is not necessary, parents should be informed in writing using a “Prior Written Notice”.

School personnel complete the “Prior Written Notice,” specifying the area of need (i.e., AT for writing, AT for oral communication, etc.). The IEP team completes this to plan for an AT evaluation and to confirm that action will be taken in response to the parental request. Further guidance is provided in the [Kansas Special Education Process Handbook](#) (p. 112).

Assistive Technology Trial Periods and Data Collection

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) lists “functional evaluation of the child in the child’s customary environment” (34 C.F.R. § 300.6) as one of the AT services that may be provided. Usually referred to as a trial period, this functional assessment allows students to try AT tools in their customary environments to determine their relative match to student needs and their overall effectiveness (Parette et al., 2007). Trial periods may be completed before an IEP meeting if the technology is readily available in the student’s environment, and results of a trial period can be brought to the IEP meeting to provide the team with additional information about the student’s performance. AT trials as part of aal evaluation should be completed in a reasonable time period (QIAT Leadership Team, 2015) but be long enough to evaluate the potential match (Wojcik, 2011). Trial periods during informal assessment oral evaluation provide the IEP team with data to determine the effectiveness of an AT tool compared to other potential tools and strategies.



Before Devon's IEP Meeting

The IEP team agreed to let Devon try using text-to-speech software in the classroom and at home to find out if it would be useful to him for longer assignments. They asked for the help of an AT specialist who knew about read-aloud technology to recommend which specific tools might work best for him. The specialist told the team that the computer that Devon used in his classroom came with an app that could read text aloud. That meant the school would not need to purchase any new technology. But they would need to get digital files of Devon's textbook. The AT specialist said she could get those files within the week. All she needed from the teacher was specific information about the title of the book and also information about any other materials that would be used in Devon's class.

The resource room teacher said he felt it was important for Devon to try text-to-speech software for a longer period of time and with real assignments before they decided it was the right approach for him. Since everything that Devon would need was already available in the school, they decided to help him try it all out for two weeks before they made a decision.

Everyone agreed to keep data on how often Devon used text-to-speech software and how well it was working. They made an agreement that the trial period would be successful if three things happened:

1. Devon would be able to correctly answer more comprehension questions at the end of the chapters in his social studies book.
2. Devon would spend less time on homework after school every night than he had been spending before he started using AT.
3. Devon expressed satisfaction with the results of using the AT.

The team agreed to keep data at school and at home, and they made a plan about the kinds of information each team member would collect.

Devon did receive his social studies reading assignments in digital text format for two weeks. Within the first few days of that two-week trial, he did less actual reading because he was learning to use the computer, but even with a steep learning curve, he had a better understanding of the material the computer read aloud to him.

Devon began to score better on quizzes, tests, and class discussions. He was excited about using the computer for reading at school and reported that he would like to try it for classes other than social studies. When the trial period was over, Devon's parents talked to his teacher. They discussed the results of the trial, and based on the discussion, they hoped that AT for reading could be included in Devon's IEP. The team scheduled an IEP meeting.



Before Maria's IEP Meeting

Maria's parents talked to several people on her team about her need to be understood. The speech-language pathologist (SLP) suggested exploring augmentative alternative communication systems to supplement Maria's communication. Diana and Dave even researched communication systems and spoke with parents of other children with severe speech difficulties and gathered more information.

After they investigated things as much as they could, Diana and Dave talked to the special education teacher. Maria's special education teacher had a communication book created by the SLP available to help Maria communicate with people who did not know her well. While the communication book was helpful, it did not support Maria's independence, and her IEP team knew she had more to say. They decided to schedule an IEP meeting to talk about supporting Maria's communication. Maria's parents asked the team to identify a list of tools and strategies to aid her communication at school. They also asked questions about the benefits and drawbacks of a technological device that would speak for Maria.



DURING THE IEP MEETING

Assistive technology (AT) is different than many other educational strategies and services that the individualized education program (IEP) team may discuss, because it has the potential to be used for different purposes. AT may help a student with any academic difficulty or may help a student's functional performance, such as increased participation and independence. There are multiple ways to document AT services in a student's IEP. For this reason, each agency should determine and outline how AT services will be documented within the required sections of an IEP document.

- Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance:** Present the information gathered prior to the IEP meeting and record that information in the present Level of Performance section of the IEP as appropriate. Identify specific areas of the curriculum (e.g., reading, writing, math, oral communication, listening, study skills, orientation and mobility, activities of daily living) which are of concern for the student, indicating any type of AT which is currently used by the student.

Example:

[Student] has fine motor weaknesses, which results in difficulty and illegible writing. The classroom teacher has provided them with primary pencils, a slant board and wide-lined paper to facilitate writing with a pencil. Using these tools, [Student] has improved their ability to produce legible writing. The IEP team recommends continued use of these of AT for writing.

Frequency/Location/Duration Statement for This Accommodation:

Accommodation	Frequency	Location	Duration	Date
Provide primary pencils, a slant board, and wide-lined paper.	All writing assignments of more than 5 words	All settings that include writing assignments	Until the assignment that requires writing is completed	Start date: 9/5/2023 End date: 9/4/2024

- Measurable Annual Goals:** As annual measurable goals, benchmarks, and short-term objectives are included in the IEP, the team discusses whether the considered AT will be needed for the child to make progress toward goals. If the team determines that AT is required to ensure progress towards the measurable annual goal, the AT is part of the condition.

Example:

Measurable Annual Goal: By the end of the IEP year, when using an augmentative alternative communication system, [Student] will use 3 or more functions of language (request, comment, question, negation, greet, etc.) per day on 4 of 5 days.



- Supplementary Aides and Services, Including Accommodations:** The IEP team determines what supplementary aids and services and other supports are to be provided in regular education classes, other education-related settings, and in extracurricular and nonacademic settings “to enable children with disabilities to be educated with children without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate” (the least restrictive environment; K.A.R. 91-40-1(ttt)). The supplementary aids and services are to be based on peer-reviewed research to the extent that they are available. Examples of supplementary aids and services include paraeducator services, AT devices and services, and other accommodations as appropriate. If a child needs AT to remain in the general education class or other education-related setting to enable the child to be educated with children without exceptionalities, then AT must be listed as a supplementary aid or service on the IEP, including the frequency, location, and duration. Further guidance is provided in the [Kansas Special Education Process Handbook](#) (Chapter 5 Section C).
- Program Modifications and Supports for School Personnel:** Schools must consider the supports that all general and special education teachers and related services personnel need to maintain a child in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Such support might include training for the general education teacher, paraeducators, and other personnel about AT. (34 §§ C.F.R. 300.119 and 300.320(a)(4)). For example, if the general education teacher needs instruction to learn how to use an AT device that the child will use in the classroom, this service would be included in the IEP for the child. Further guidance is provided in the [Kansas Special Education Process Handbook](#) (Chapter 5 Section D).

Supports for School Personnel	Frequency	Location	Duration	Date
Training of general education teacher of the child on the use of the AT device	Once a week for the first 4 weeks of the school year	In the general education classroom	For 30 minutes	Start date: 9/5/2023 End date: 10/4/2023

- IEP Team Special Factors Considerations:** There are several special factors, including AT, that the IEP team must consider. Each agency will determine how to document the consideration and need of AT in the student’s IEP. Based on this process, the student’s team will indicate if AT devices and services are required or if they have been considered.

In the IEP, the team indicates if there is an identified need for AT. If the IEP team determines that the student does not require AT devices or services, indicate this in the IEP plan. In addition, record the decision in the IEP meeting minutes or on an agency’s “AT Consideration”.



Example of AT Questions:

Does the student need assistive technology devices or services?

Yes, services/devices addressed in IEP No

(Ensure that the AT is mentioned in appropriate area(s) of the IEP.)

Does the student need assistive technology devices or services?

Yes, services/devices addressed in IEP No

Document the reasons for the decision in IEP meeting minutes or in the agency's "Consideration of Special Factors" form.



During Devon’s IEP Meeting

Devon’s team scheduled a midyear IEP meeting so that all the IEP team members could begin to share ideas and information. At the meeting, Devon’s team discussed the data they had gathered. As they began to talk about how to include AT in Devon’s IEP, it was clear that everyone was excited about the results of the information they had collected. Since all the equipment Devon needed was already available in his school, the team decided to write a plan for daily computer use into Devon’s IEP right away. ***The team agreed Devon would use the computer to help him read text in social studies classes and continue to work on his reading and language arts skills during reading instruction time.***

Someone in the IEP meeting asked whether Devon could use some kind of mobile tablet device instead of a computer. The team decided to write about the features Devon would need, rather than naming a specific device in the IEP document. This decision supported the team in making changes to his AT device while still maintaining the features he needed as they explored new AT. Features noted included text to speech and word highlighting as text was read. The IEP indicated that, for the first grading period, this accommodation would be provided for social studies reading assignments only, but other classes would be added in the second and third quarters as Devon learned the technology.

Here is how Devon’s IEP team summarized his use of AT in his IEP document.

Accommodations	Frequency	Location	Duration	Date
Text to speech with each word highlighted as it is read	All reading assignments of more than two paragraphs	Social studies class	Until required reading is completed	Start date: 9/5/2023 End date: 9/4/2024
Text to speech with each word highlighted as it is read	All reading assignments of more than two paragraphs	English & Science Class	Until required reading is completed	Start date: 10/15/2023 End date: 9/4/2024

Support for staff

None needed at this time. The teachers know how to operate text to speech on classroom devices. Textbooks are available in digital format.

When the Team Needs More Information

Initially, IEP teams consider AT options that are universally provided to students in the school, such as tablets, laptop computers, and other devices that are commonly available in the school. Many AT considerations can be completed by IEP teams as they collect data and information prior to the IEP. Consideration stops when the team agrees that the student’s AT needs can be met or it is determined that more information is needed. The IEP team, at this time, may decide to complete an AT evaluation.

Additional team members can be added when the IEP team determines that help is needed in exploring additional AT options. If the IEP team has exhausted on-site resources and expertise, they may need to solicit more information or outside



support to complete an AT evaluation. Further guidance is provided in the [Kansas Special Education Process Handbook](#) (p. 53).

In order to do this, the team should:

- Complete a “Prior Written Notice for Reevaluation and Request for Consent” form for the specific performance area, describing the student’s present level of performance and listing any instructional strategies, accommodations, and specialized equipment that have been tried and the results of the trials.

Example:

The classroom teacher has used a variety of devices to help [Student] improve skills in the performance area of writing. The student has used primary pencils, a slant board, and wide-lined paper. Strategies have included a reduction in the number of task items, increased time to complete tasks, and hand-over-hand assistance in writing. The student’s written work continues to be below grade level. The team will conduct an AT evaluation to determine if the student can benefit from additional devices or services.

- Complete [an AT evaluation plan](#) in collaboration with any additional internal or outside experts. The school-site evaluation team shall consist of the classroom teacher and/or special education teacher and the appropriate related services provider(s).
- When the evaluation is completed, an IEP meeting is held to review the completed evaluation results. If the IEP team recommends that the student needs AT devices or services, an amendment to the IEP must be completed.



During Maria’s IEP Meeting

During Maria’s IEP meeting, the IEP team shared communication tools and strategies readily available at the school. After consideration, the team agreed to request an AT/AAC evaluation to determine whether Maria needed a more robust communication system. They completed a “Prior Written Notice” to obtain permission requesting an AT/AAC evaluation in the area of communication. They began to develop an evaluation plan after the IEP meeting and realized that while the team members knew an evaluation was needed, they felt they did not have the knowledge to complete the evaluation without additional support. They decided to reach out to their district AT team for help.

After reaching out to the AT team, the IEP team determined that a district speech-language pathologist (SLP) serving on the AT team would join their team for the evaluation. The AT team member coached the team through a review of records and supported the team to identify features in a communication system that would meet Maria’s needs. The team considered communication systems with features the team identified as important and created a trial plan to collect and analyze data.

While she waited for a trial device, Maria continued to use the communication book that she had been using. The team also used this as an opportunity to collect data on Maria’s use of the communication book as a baseline of her communication skills for the evaluation.

After the SLP and team members determined they had enough data, they scheduled an IEP meeting to finalize the evaluation. Maria was using the device well during free play activities within the classroom, and the system supported her progress toward her IEP goals. The team decided that Maria’s IEP should be changed to include the use of an AAC device. Within the IEP, the team listed the features of the communication system and outlined the frequency, location, and duration of the system use. Then they identified supports for school personnel, which included coaching and training for Maria’s school team. The team, including the parents, decided that, until she was more independent, Maria would only use the device at school; however, the team would revisit using the device at home as her independence with the device increased.

Maria’s revised IEP explained, in several places, her need for and use of AT/AAC, including the present level of academic and functional performance, her annual goals, and the section about support for staff (which included training they would need to support Maria’s AAC device use). It also documented her need for continued speech language services to support communication and language growth.

Accommodations	Frequency	Location	Duration	Date
Tablet-based speech-generating device with synthesized voice and a core vocabulary that is embedded with categories and activity pages	When communicating	All subjects & activities throughout the school day	Duration of communication interaction.	Start date: 11/1/2023 End date: 10/31/2024

Support for staff

Staff will be provided 30 minutes of professional learning and coaching on aided language stimulation to support Maria’s continued learning of the communication device during the first quarter.

AFTER AT IS INCLUDED IN AN IEP

The individualized education program (IEP) administrator/designee is responsible for sending a copy of the IEP with documentation and meeting minutes to the appropriate locations, based on district or agency policies, immediately after the conclusion of the IEP meeting:

Once an IEP team determines that a student requires an assistive technology (AT) device or service, it is the responsibility of the school to:

- Provide or arrange for the provision of the device(s) as soon as possible.
- Contact [an AT equipment program](#) for further assistance if the device(s) cannot be secured at the school site.
- Notify all staff expected to implement or monitor the use of the AT device to ensure they know when it should be used so that the IEP is implemented as written to ensure a free appropriate public education (FAPE).
- Provide or arrange for the provision of any needed staff development regarding the use of the device(s).
- Provide or arrange for the training of the student and/or family in the use of the device(s).
- Maintain the device(s) in good working order.
- Arrange for the transport of the device(s) when the student transfers or transitions to a different school within the district or when the device(s) are needed for participation in the Extended School Year (ESY).
- Evaluate and document the effectiveness of the device on an ongoing basis and present such information at the IEP review. If further action is needed to determine the effectiveness of AT, then develop an evaluation plan signed by the parent which indicates the functional area of need (i.e., AT for writing, AT for oral communication, etc.).

After Devon's IEP Meeting

As Devon began to use the computer with his textbooks on a more regular basis at school, his parents kept track of what they saw at home. At first, Devon was excited about his computer use. In addition to trying the new device, he was getting lots of attention from his friends and the adults who were helping him. He was more relaxed at home, and he had less homework to read every night. Everyone in the family was happy about that.

The teachers were so pleased with Devon's progress that they decided they wanted to offer other students that option to listen to their chapters. As they were looking into this, they discovered that the social studies textbook was provided by the company in an online version that had both the read-aloud and dictionary features Devon needed. Everyone on the team was thrilled. This meant all the students in Devon's class had the option of reading their book in the traditional way or hearing and reading the material on the classroom computers.



After Maria's IEP Meeting

The district's equipment loan program was able to loan the device to Maria's school for the rest of the year but said in first grade that one would have to be purchased for her exclusive use. Dave and Diana were interested in learning if their private health insurance might fund a communication device for Maria. The AT team SLP and school SLPs offered to help them with an application to the insurance company. The district administrative representative agreed if insurance did not cover the device, the district would purchase one for Maria to use at school and home that had the features they had identified and put in her IEP.

Even though Maria was scheduled to use the AAC device on a regular basis at school, things got off to a rough start. Her parents came to observe one day and noticed that the AAC device never left the charging station. They were disappointed and concerned that Maria still did not have an effective way to communicate with the other children. They asked for another meeting.

During this meeting, it became clear that more planning was needed for Maria's use of the AAC device. The AT team SLP provided the team with an implementation organizer worksheet that helped them assign responsibilities for the implementation of Maria's program (see [Implementation Form](#)). The team worked through the questionnaire and found a number of things they needed to support Maria's AAC use. With a more complete implementation plan in place, Maria's device was available to her more often, and she began to make rapid progress in understanding how and when to use it.



SECTION THREE: SAMPLE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY TEAM PROCESS & DOCUMENTS



STUDENT-CENTERED ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY PROCESS

Like any other strategy used to help educate children with disabilities, assistive technology (AT) decisions are the responsibility of the individualized education program (IEP) team. AT planning is a collaborative student-centered process. The team that considers AT should also be the IEP team, expanded as needed to include additional members who have information or special expertise about the AT solution the team is considering. An effective team includes people who have sufficient knowledge about the child, the tasks the child needs to complete, and the environments where those tasks must happen as well as people who know about AT that might help the child.

All actions regarding a child's educational program begin and end with the IEP team members. People with additional expertise are added to the team if the existing team members do not have information to develop a program that meets the student's educational needs.

The following pages offer a variety of forms which can assist an IEP team in the consideration of a child's need for AT and in the development, implementation, and evaluation of a plan. Sections are included for each of the actions that a team might take. Each section also has information to guide the team if they have difficulty completing the identified step.



STEPS FOR IEP TEAMS

The ways an individualized education program (IEP) team should think when considering a child's need for assistive technology (AT) are the same as the steps the team would take when considering any other educational need. IEP team members need to know about an agency's approaches to implementing the AT requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), and questions of how to proceed with AT services like assessment, consideration, and implementation can only be addressed at the local education agency (LEA) level because they address expectations for district educators.

Here are some guiding questions to understand district AT policies and processes:

1. What are the district's resources to help with AT if an IEP team feels there is a need for additional information about AT?
2. What should be done when someone formally requests an AT evaluation for a child?
3. When an IEP team considers AT, what kind of evidence should be used to make a decision?
4. How should AT that is identified as necessary be written into the IEP?

A more complete description of questions that require agency-level answers, entitled "[Assistive Technology Questions for Administrators](#)," is included in the Appendix.

The following pages offer sample approaches to steps that the IEP team may take in order to develop and implement an effective AT plan. These forms and descriptions are in the public domain and may be customized to address each agency's resources and processes.

- Creation of a Shared Vision
Determine what is known and what the team needs to know about the student's strengths and barriers.
Tool for the team: [Framing the Question Form](#)
- Consideration of Need
Consider the need for AT and document the team decision.
Tool for the team: [QIAT Assistive Technology Consideration Worksheet](#)

Additional steps that may be needed:

- i. Evaluation
Review available information and collect new information that is needed.
Tool for the team: [QIAT Assistive Technology Assessment Process Planner](#)
 - ii. Trial Period
Provide the student with the opportunity to use AT device(s) in real settings.
Tool for the team: [WATI Assistive Technology Trial Use Guide](#)
- Implementation
Plan interventions and training.
Tool for the team: [Implementation Form](#)
 - Periodic Review
Evaluate the effectiveness of AT to overcome barriers.
Tool for the team: [QIAT Plan for Evaluation of Effectiveness of AT Use](#)



CREATING A SHARED VISION

When individualized education program (IEP) teams begin to look at the assistive technology (AT) needs of an individual student, they sometimes ask questions that are too general, such as “Does this student need assistive technology?” They sometimes ask questions that are too specific, like “How can this student use an iPad to communicate?” A poorly framed question can cause an IEP team a lot of trouble.

AT questions should be framed around the barrier that keeps a student from meeting IEP goals and objectives, from having access to the school curriculum, or from remaining in the general education classroom for instruction. When the team begins to examine the possibilities of a student’s use of AT, team members should discuss the functional capabilities of the student and the barriers created by the student’s disability.

A good referral question should be crafted so that everyone on the team knows what is going to be assessed to create a shared vision for the student. A good initial AT question should include the following information:

1. What is the task the student needs to accomplish?
2. What is the student’s present level of performance on that task?
3. How is the student’s disability affecting his/her performance?
4. Where (in what environments) does this task need to be done?
5. Are there environmental concerns or other issues that the team needs to know about?
6. Are there specific tools or strategies that someone on the team thinks should be considered?

To develop a useful AT question, team members must agree on the issue that they are addressing. By focusing on specific tasks in customary environments, the team can begin to discover appropriate solutions for a student. Good questions consider educational strategies as well as AT options.

The worksheet on the following page can be used as a tool to help the team identify their vision for the student’s use of AT to achieve IEP goals.



Assistive Technology Question Worksheet

Student Name

What is the task the child needs to accomplish?

In what environments?

What is the child's present level of participation and/or performance on this task?

Are there environmental concerns or other issues that need to be taken into consideration?

Are there specific tools or strategies that a team member believes might be of help with this functional life skill?

Question to be Addressed:

If the Team Needs Help to Develop a Shared Vision

The question that an IEP team asks directs the entire AT process. The team's vision is both specific to the child and open to a variety of effective solutions. The vision is neither too vague nor too specific. Teams for some children are easily able to identify their vision and begin to collect the information they need to plan for a child. Other teams may need help from a person who is more knowledgeable about AT before they begin the process.

The team's vision for the new tasks a child will be able to accomplish directs the rest the process. The team may revise the initial question based on the new knowledge, but the question should always remain task focused.

A strength-focused vision based on data-driven decisions will make a significant difference in the student's learning.

Teams can review the state and national resources provided in Section Four for additional ideas on creating a shared vision.



CONSIDER THE NEED FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) includes a list of special factors that every individualized education program (IEP) team must consider. One of those special factors is consideration of the child's need for assistive technology (AT). AT considerations occur during the student's IEP meeting. IEP team members review the student's present levels of both academic and functional performance, the impact of the student's exceptionality on academic and functional performance, to develop goals and objectives in the student's IEP and determine what services are necessary to allow the student to achieve those goals. They may determine that the student needs AT to meet the student's needs and/or to achieve those goals.

Consideration of the need for AT is usually a brief process during an IEP meeting. At least one person on the team must have knowledge of AT for the team to make an informed decision. AT is considered in the areas of instructional need, developmental milestones, and access to the educational program (curriculum) and participation in the general education class (least restrictive environment, LRE) as they are addressed by the IEP document.

When AT is considered, there are four possible conclusions the team can reach:

1. The student is making adequate progress and does not need AT at this time.
2. The student has been using AT devices and services that have proven effective. These devices and services have been included in the IEP.
3. AT is needed, but the team is not clear what device or service would best meet the student's current needs. In this case, the need for AT is documented in the IEP, and plans for an AT evaluation or assessment are implemented.
4. The team does not know if the student needs AT, and further evaluation is planned. Following the completion of the evaluation, the IEP team reconvenes to review the results.

On the following pages is a form that the team can include with a student's IEP to record the results of their AT consideration.





ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY CONSIDERATION GUIDE

Student _____ Student ID _____ School _____ Date _____

Participants: _____

IEP teams may use this form to guide discussion when considering whether Assistive Technology devices and services may be necessary for the student to make progress in IEP goals and curricular tasks.

A. Instructional Area	B. Completes Tasks with Accommodations/Modifications and/or Assistive Technology (AT)		C. Consideration Outcomes – Document outcome in the IEP
<input type="checkbox"/> Initial IEP <input type="checkbox"/> Annual IEP Based on the student's previous performance or IEP goals and objectives, check the curricular area(s) or tasks in which the student is not making adequate progress. <input type="checkbox"/> Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Written Expression <input type="checkbox"/> Handwriting <input type="checkbox"/> Computer Access <input type="checkbox"/> Oral Communication <input type="checkbox"/> Organization and Planning <input type="checkbox"/> Math <input type="checkbox"/> ADL <input type="checkbox"/> Behavior <input type="checkbox"/> Transition <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ Move to column B I → <input type="checkbox"/> Student is making adequate progress with current accommodations, Move to column C →	B I. Since the last IEP, what Accommodations/Modifications have been tried? List: 1) 2) 3) Results of above: 1) 2) 3) Circle Accommodations and Modifications that are currently used. <input type="checkbox"/> Student is not making adequate progress with current accommodations/modifications. List other Accommodations and Modifications to explore: <input type="checkbox"/> No Accommodations and Modifications have been tried. Move to column B II →	B II. Since the last IEP, what Assistive Technology has been tried? List: 1) 2) 3) Results of above: 1) 2) 3) Circle the AT that is currently used. <input type="checkbox"/> Student is not making adequate progress with current AT List other AT to explore: <input type="checkbox"/> No AT has been tried. Move to column C →	<input type="checkbox"/> Student independently accomplishes tasks in all instructional areas with current accommodations and modifications. No assistive technology is needed at this time. <input type="checkbox"/> Student accomplishes tasks in all instructional areas with currently used assistive technology. Assistive technology is needed. <input type="checkbox"/> Student does not accomplish tasks in all instructional areas. Additional solutions including Assistive Technology may be needed. (Document the nature of the assistance that is needed and follow agency procedures.)



Assistive technology (AT) must be considered for every student with an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) to comply with IDEA

- Consideration is an ongoing process. As the student's needs change, teams may rethink/revise AT, tools and services, and provide documentation in the IEP.
- It may be necessary for IEP teams to use additional resources such as checklists, matrices, web sites, and/or AT consultative services to determine the student's needs and provide support.

Additional resources regarding Consideration of AT are listed below.

Websites

Georgia Project for Assistive Technology: www.gpat.org

GPAT has developed numerous resources to assist educators and families in providing assistive technology services to students with disabilities. These resources are organized by various process topics including narrative documents, PowerPoint presentations, forms, on-line videos, and web links.

OCALI Assistive Technology Training Module: www.atinternetmodules.org

Based on the mandates of the IDEA 2004, assistive technology devices and services must be considered for all students with disabilities in the development of the Individualized Education Program (IEP). This module will assist educational professionals and IEP team members in considering and determining student need for assistive technology.

Oregon Technology Access Project: www.otap-oregon.org

The Oregon Technology Access Program (OTAP) provides training, information, technical assistance and resources regarding the uses of technology for children with disabilities.

Quality Indicators of Assistive Technology: www.qiat.org

The QIAT Consortium, a nationwide grassroots group, provides input into the ongoing process of identifying, disseminating, and implementing a set of widely-applicable Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology Services in School Settings that can be used as a tool to support school districts, assistive technology service providers, consumers, universities and professional developers, and policy makers.

Texas Assistive Technology Network: www.texasat.net

TATN has numerous resources to support the use of assistive technology in the state of Texas. Training modules include: consideration, legal, administration, evaluation and reading.

Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative: www.wati.org

Sponsored by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, this site offers process and downloadable forms to support the assistive technology assessment process.

If the Team Needs Help with Consideration

Some teams need help to make a decision as they consider a student's need for AT. Generally, this is because not enough information is available to the team. Another reason consideration may be difficult is because there is disagreement among team members about how AT will benefit the child. In either of these two cases, the best way to operate is for the team to develop a plan to try some of the AT devices they have discussed in the environments where the child needs them.

In the trial section, there is a form that teams may use to plan a trial period of one or more AT devices. This form asks the team to discuss, ahead of time, the goals for the child's AT use, the progress team members hope the child will make, and the results the team hopes to see during the trial. It is important to remember that a trial period is simply one way to collect more information about the child's performance and use of AT. It is not likely that a child will become fully competent to use an AT device during a trial period. However, a trial period can show the benefits and disadvantages of using a particular AT device so that the team can make an informed decision about which tool or strategy to use.



EVALUATION

If the team is unsure of the student's need for assistive technology (AT), an evaluation may be necessary to gather more information. An AT evaluation process involves a series of steps to help a team collect information. The team creates a formal evaluation plan by reviewing available information, identifying what more information is needed and, if necessary, adding new team members with expertise.

The ***QIAT Assistive Technology Assessment Process Planner***, on the following page, is a tool teams can use to help plan evaluation activities and to determine whether additional help or resources will be needed. The process planner identifies the following steps:

- Create a written AT evaluation plan.
- Gather information.
- Analyze information to identify tools and strategies for trials.
- Conduct the trials with identified tools.
- Analyze data.
- Document team recommendations.
- Reassess as needs change.

More information clarifying an AT formal evaluation and informal assessment is provided in [the Frequently Asked Questions](#).





Assistive Technology Assessment Process Planner

Student Name: _____ Planning Date: _____

Referral for AT assessment is made by any member of the student's team when classroom strategies and tools do not meet the student's needs.	By Date	Person
AT assessment is completed by a collaborative team sharing responsibilities		
Determine team members		
Create a written AT assessment plan including:		
Determine the assessment question(s)		
Identify expected results and outcomes (e.g. <i>Student will be able to</i> _____)		
Determine what will be measured (e.g. speed, quantity, quality, rate, accuracy, endurance)		
Assign responsibilities		
Set a timeline		
Gather information from multiple sources including previous information (e.g. educational reports, assessments, background interviews and other records)		
Student's strengths		
Student's needs		
Environmental expectations		
Tasks (e.g. required curricular work, testing, homework, projects, in-class work, materials, statewide testing and other school functions)		
Current levels of performance for identified tasks (baseline data)		
Barriers to participation and independence		
Analyze information to identify tools and strategies for the trials		
Determine the features needed		
Choose tools with appropriate features		
Determine source of trials from demos, loaners, and rental programs		
Set timelines		
Prepare recording method and strategies for data to be collected		
Conduct the trials with identified tools		
Have student use tools in customary environment for identified tasks		
Collect data		
Analyze Data		
Report the results of the trials		
Revisit the assessment question(s) to determine the outcomes		
Determine the most appropriate tool(s) and strategies or if additional trials are necessary		
Document recommendations in written form following district assistive technology procedural guidelines		
Summarize student performance while using AT tools, including tools that were and were not successful		
Document appropriate tools and potential impact on student achievement		
If needed, include specific language for procurement of AT, and possible funding sources (Refer to Quality Indicator for Administrative Support for AT)		
Document required tools and strategies in student's plan (e.g. IEP, 504 Plan) (Refer to Quality Indicator for Documentation in the IEP)		
Develop Implementation Plan		
Describe instructional/access areas which were explored during the trial		
Create a summary of specific skills assessed		
Write action plan including team member roles and responsibilities (refer to Quality Indicator for AT Implementation)		
Reassess as needs change		
Monitor the student abilities, environment, tasks, and barriers as well as effectiveness of current AT on an ongoing basis		

If the Team Needs Help with Evaluation

IEP team members assess a student's need for AT by reviewing the student's present level of performance and the goals and objectives in the student's IEP. The team may need to add members who can enhance the group's collective knowledge of the student and provide information about AT devices and services. Each person brings a different expertise to the discussion. One person may be very knowledgeable about the student's cognitive abilities. Another may be concerned with motor skills, and yet another about how the child is moving forward in his/her educational program. When the team completes an AT evaluation, it may be necessary to add people who have knowledge of AT processes and tools that can support that student. This ensures that the whole student is considered when the team looks at whether to fit AT tools into that student's educational program.

Here is a general picture of how some team members can contribute to a student's AT program:

Occupational therapists (OTs) know about fine motor development, visual, sensory and spatial perception, and independence in daily living activities. OTs are key in recommending the location or position of AT devices and determining the most likely means of accessing devices.

Physical therapists (PTs) are knowledgeable about gross motor development, posture, seating/positioning, functional mobility, gait training, wheelchair skills, and muscle strengthening. In AT, the physical therapist recommends devices and implements training related to mobility needs.

Speech-language pathologists' (SLPs') role centers around language development and use. In AT, they are the key source of information and expertise about augmentative/alternative communication devices.

Special education teachers know about academic demands of the educational program, cognitive development, play/social development, behavior management, pre-vocational and vocational skill development, and academic instruction. They identify opportunities for use of AT in a child's daily schedule, implementing, supervising, and training the student to use the device.

School psychologists provide suggestions about a student's learning style, cognitive ability, and behavioral expectations in relation to AT device selection and use.

General education teachers are knowledgeable of the general curriculum expectations, appropriate activities of typically developing peers, and ways a child's disability affects their participation (involvement and progress) in the curriculum or appropriate activities. General education teachers can help determine where and when AT might be used as an accommodation during instruction, independent seatwork, assessment, and other activities in the classroom.



School district administrators are authorized to commit resources to purchase equipment, assign staff, and provide training and are responsible to ensure that all services, including the use of AT are provided as written in the IEP. They may make other administrative decisions needed to implement the use of AT.

The **AT professional or team member** has spent extra time and effort to learn the use and operation of a variety of AT devices. The AT professional or team member, if one is available, can be instrumental in determining specific technologies that may be appropriate because of their knowledge of unique features, limitations, and compatibility of various hardware and software.

For staff self-assessments on AT responsibilities by roles, review [the Alt-Shift resource](#).



TRIAL PERIOD

If the individualized education program (IEP) team is unsure of the student's need for assistive technology (AT), a trial period may be necessary to gather more information. A trial period with one or more AT options in the student's customary environment helps to determine what might best meet identified the student's needs (Best et al., 2010). While it may be possible to determine whether a student can operate an AT device during a short training session with an evaluator, trial periods provide specific information regarding unique aspects of the student's skills and abilities and the ways the AT solutions might work to address barriers to performance. During a trial period, students are given the opportunity to use AT for real tasks that are performed in the context of everyday routines and activities.

When a team determines that a student needs AT, then the features of the devices that the student needs are described. Teams try specific devices until they find the one that has the features that match. The purpose of a trial period is to give the student an extended period of time to use a tool in functional activities during everyday routines in order to make sure that it helps the student to overcome identified barriers posed by the disability. Several technology tools may be examined, and data may be collected on each of them to determine which one is the better solution. The data collection aspect of trials helps the IEP team to consider the need for AT based on actual performance of the student. A district's resources, procedures, and support systems determine how trial periods are implemented and documented.

On the following pages is a form that teams may use to plan a trial period of one or more AT devices. This form asks the team to discuss ahead of time the progress team members hope the child will make and the results the team hopes to see during the trial. Trial times are dependent on a student's strengths and needs. It is important to remember that a trial period is simply one way to collect more information about the child's performance and use of AT. It is not likely that a child will become fully competent to use an AT device during a trial period. However, a trial period can show the benefits and disadvantages of using a particular AT device so that the team can make an informed decision about which tool or strategy to use.



WATI Assistive Technology Trial Use Guide

Student: _____ Age: _____ Placement/Classroom: _____

AT to be trialed: _____ Length of trial: _____

If trial is successful, we expect to see the student be able: _____

Acquisition of AT for Trial:

Source of the AT to be Tried	Person Responsible	Date(s) Available	Date Received	Date Returned

Operation and Training:

Person primarily responsible to operate (or learn to operate) this AT: _____

Others to be trained	Nature/Content of Training Required	Date Begun	Date Completed

Management/Support:

Locations where AT is to be used	Support to be provided (e.g. set up, trouble short, recharge, program, etc.	Person Responsible And Contact Information

Student Data from AT Trial:

Date	Time Used	Location	Task(s)	Outcome(s)

If the Team Needs Help with Trial Periods

Teams discuss, ahead of time, the goals for the student's AT use, the progress team members hope the child will make, and the results the team hopes to see during the trial. It is much like a test drive of the AT. A trial period can show the benefits and disadvantages of using a particular AT device so that the team can make an informed decision about which tool or strategy to use.

During a trial period, teams can ask questions like these (Reed et al., 2004, p. 25):

- **What aspect of the student's performance do we hope will change?** Will the student do things faster? With more accuracy? Will the student's performance be of better quality? Will the quality of the student's work increase? Will the student be more independent?
- **How will we collect information?** There are multiple ways for a team to collect information and data about AT use (e.g., interview, product review, process observation, video). Team members can interview the students, family, and educators about AT use. If the goal is for a student to produce more or better results, the team can review products like compositions or test scores to determine if AT use helps the student improve performance. Teams may also collect observation data before and after AT is introduced to evaluate the type of difference AT supports. Finally, the use of video can help a team visualize the kinds of changes and allows for review from multiple perspectives.
- **What level of achievement is reasonable to expect during the trial period?** Because each child's goals, performance, and need for AT is unique, teams must identify unique expectations for the use of AT. If a team determines that the trial period will last for six weeks, it's important to establish expectations for how much change they believe the child will be able to make during that time. For example, a student who is using an alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) device for the first time may only be able to use a few words or phrases, while a student who has some expressive language may be able to show much more progress during the same time period. Each child is unique, so the plan for each trial period must also be unique.
- **How will we know if the trial is not working?** Occasionally, a team plans a trial period of an AT device, and the student is not able to use the device in the ways that were expected. One common error that teams may make is to continue the trial period even though the student is not able to use the AT or clearly does not like it. When this happens, the team may see a change in the student's behavior or the quality or quantity of work they are able to complete. It can be valuable for an IEP team to discuss this possibility in advance so that everyone knows what should happen if the use of a specific AT solution is not effective.



IMPLEMENTATION

When an individualized education program (IEP) team decides that a student needs assistive technology (AT), that decision is only the first step in the process of the student becoming an effective AT user. A great deal of planning takes place after the IEP meeting. The team must decide how, when, and where the student will use AT. A sequence of instruction must be developed so that everyone knows just how the student will learn to use the AT and to overcome educational barriers. Developing an implementation plan ensures that a student's AT use is as valuable as possible.

AT planning can be facilitated if the team revisits the work that has already been completed. When a student begins to use a new tool, everything changes. The student develops new skills and abilities. The environment must be adapted to accommodate the AT. The tasks that the student is expected to do change.

Implementation is a shared responsibility among team members (general education, paraprofessionals, related service providers, the student, and families), which is why it is important to include everyone in the planning.

The form on the following page can help the team to discuss all the things that should be included in an effective implementation plan and to collectively develop a plan for the student based on the student's use of new AT devices and services. The list of questions at the top of each page is meant to be a starting point to help team members think of the AT services the student will need to do in order to ensure effective use of AT.



AT Management Questionnaire

Date of Plan: _____

Student: _____

Assistive Technology Device: _____

Team Members:

Review Date: _____

Support Task	Person(s) Responsible	Schedule	Evidence of Completion
Initial Student Training			
Ongoing Student Training			
Daily/Regular Support of Student Use			
Daily/Regular Maintenance Activities			
Staff Training			
Consultation with Staff			
Communication with Family			
Parent/Family Training			
Repairs and Modifications			

Student Training Questions to Consider

1. What will this student use the assistive technology device to do?
2. What specific technology use skills will the student need to learn?
3. How much training does the student require?
4. When will training be provided to the child?
5. How will the child learn to use the device in customary environments?
6. What kind of direct supervision and help will the child need in order to use the device in a functional manner?

Results of Team Discussion:

Equipment Considerations

1. Who will provide the device and any consumable supplies needed?
2. In what environments will the child use the assistive technology?
3. How will the device be made available in each environment (i.e. move with the child, child will go to the device, on request, etc.)
4. Where will the device be located when the child uses it?
5. Will the student need to use this device at home? If no, will an alternative device be needed?
6. Will adaptations or modifications to the device be needed to help the student access the device?
7. Who will be responsible for device repairs?

Results of Team Discussion:

Staff and Family Training Questions

1. Which adults in the child's environments will require training in the use of the device?
2. What will various staff and family members need to know about the device and how it works?
3. Who will provide the needed training for these people?
4. Who should be called if technical assistance is needed?

Results of Team Discussion:

If the Team Needs Help with Implementation

Sometimes planning for the implementation of an AT program can be complicated. This is particularly true when the AT device is itself complicated or the student will need to use the device in a variety of environments. When the team needs help in planning for a student's use of AT, they may want to call upon someone who has experience in teaching a student to use that particular device.



PERIODIC REVIEW

Individualized education program (IEP) teams are required to review the student's plan at least annually to update the present levels and establish new annual goals. When teams meet to review a child's IEP, they also review the student's progress in using assistive technology (AT).

There are several aspects to developing competence in AT use. Using the following framework, a team can look at a student's AT competence from four different perspectives (adapted from Binger & Light, p. 2):

Operational Competence: Operational competence describes whether the student has learned to make the device work. Can the student turn it on? Can the student make it do the things that it was designed to do? How well can the student operate the device?

Functional Competence: Functional competence describes how well the student is able to use the device to overcome educational barriers. If the student uses a portable word processor for writing, has the student's writing improved? If the student uses an augmentative communication device to talk to friends, are friends better able to understand what the student has to say? How does the AT device help the student with functional life skills?

Strategic Competence: Strategic competence describes whether the student understands when to use the AT device. Is the device used for all writing or only for longer written assignments? Does the student actually use the augmentative communication device to get attention when a gesture will not work? Does the student know when the device will be helpful and when some other approach to eliminating the barrier should be applied?

Social Competence: Social competence describes how a student uses the AT device around other people. Is the student able to explain how the device makes communication possible? Does the device restrict social interaction in any way? If it does, what does the student do to overcome this AT-imposed barrier? How does the device help the student in social and real-world contexts?

The form on the following page can be used by teams as they plan to review the student's progress in using AT to overcome barriers in real-world settings. This information can be used again to revise the AT plan or to add new goals and short-term objectives as the student meets milestones.



If the Team Needs Help with Periodic Review

Sometimes when the team makes an implementation plan, things don't go as well as they had hoped. When this happens, it is a good idea to collect additional data regarding the student's use of AT.

There are four common ways to collect data.

The team can interview the student or the people in the student's environment to get information about what is going on and how people think about the situation.

The team can look at products (like written work or language samples) created by the student and evaluate the quality of the product.

The team can observe the student. If observation is used, data can either be anecdotal data or event recording. Anecdotal data is often used when something occurs only infrequently or if a specific data target has not been identified. Event recording is best used to collect general information, identify factors that cause the event to happen, and record the number of times something happens. Event recording tracks each event as it happened and shows how different conditions affect the student's performance.

The team can use video recordings. The advantage of this is that the student or other team members can review the recording and talk about what happened. Video recordings are really a combination of the other three data collection strategies and have the benefit of allowing for detailed analysis of the student's performance, detailed behavior needs to be analyzed or compared over time or analyzed in several diverse ways, such as rate and type of change (Reed et al., 2004).



SECTION FOUR: ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES



RESOURCES

This section of the *Kansas Assistive Technology Guide* is intended to provide information regarding state and national resources available to support the provision of assistive technology (AT) devices and services.

Kansas Equipment Resources

Assistive Technology for Kansans (ATK)

ATK connects people with AT. People with disabilities and health conditions of all ages have the opportunity to identify the AT they need to learn, work, play, and participate in community life safely and independently.

2601 Gabriel
Parsons, KS 67357
(620) 421-8367 Voice/TTD
Lead Agency: Kansas University Center on Disabilities

Assistive Technology Access Sites
Kansas Equipment Exchange Networks
1-800-KAN-DO-IT

Western Assistive Technology Access Site

The Assistive Technology Department
of Northwest Kansas Education
Service Center
703 West Second Street
Oakley, KS 67748

Contacts:

Karin Rasmussen,
krasmussen@nkesc.org

Tina Steinert, tsteinert@nkesc.org

Jamie McEachern,
jmceachern@nkesc.org

North Central Assistive Technology Access Site

OCCK, Inc.
Solution Outreach Center
PO Box 1160, 1605 Schilling Road
Salina, KS 67401
(785) 827-9383 (voice/TTD)

Contacts:

Nancy Bolden, nbolden@occk.com

Cassie Ramon, cramon@occk.com

Brenda Henry, bhenry@occk.com

Kara Mannebach,
kmannebach@occk.com

Baylee Kohman, bkohman@occk.com



**Southwest Affiliate Office
KEE-AT affiliate for NKESC**

Clark, Finney, Ford, Grant, Greely,
Haskell, Hodgeman, Kearny, Meade,
Morton, Scott, Seward, Stanton,
Stevens, & Wichita Counties

302 Fleming Street, Suite 8E
Garden City, KS 67846

(785) 673-9609

Contacts:

Jamie McEachern,
jmceachern@nkesc.org

Barb Blevins, bblevins@nkesc.org

**Northeast Assistive Technology
Access Site**

Topeka Resource Center for
Independent Living (TILRC)

501 Southwest Jackson Street
Topeka, KS 66603-3300

(785) 233-4572

Contacts:

Mikel McCary, mmccary@tilrc.org

Judie Korbelik, jkorbelik@tilrc.org

Troy Purvis, tpurvis@tilrc.org

Jolene Benham, jbenham@tilrc.org

Debbie Wright, dwright@tilrc.org
Assistant Executive Director, TILRC

**South Central Kansas Assistive
Technology Access Site**

Southeast Kansas Independent Living
(SKIL)

3033 West Second Street North
Suite 106
Wichita, KS 67203

(316) 942-5444

Contacts:

Mindy Bowdre,
mindyb@skionline.com

Aaron Brown, aaronb@skionline.com

Lexi Kaddatz, lexik@skionline.com

**Southeast Assistive Technology
Access Site**

Southeast Kansas Independent Living
(SKIL)

1714 Main Street, PO Box 957
Parsons, KS 67357

(620) 421-6551

Contacts:

Heather Griffin,
heatherg@skionline.com

Heather Forshey,
heatherf@skionline.com

Kerri Colburn, kerric@skionline.com

[Kansas State School for the Blind Services \(KSSB\) Services](#)

[Kansas Instructional Resources Center for the Visually Impaired \(KIRC\)](#)

KIRC assists Kansas local education agencies in the procurement of braille, large print, recorded, or digital textbooks and other educational materials for Kansas students who are blind/visually impaired so they can remain and succeed in the most appropriate educational setting, whether public, private, or parochial.



Contact:
Toni Harrell
(913) 305-3071
tharrell@kssdb.org

Kansas School for the Deaf (KSD) Hearing Assistive Technologies (HAT)

KSD provides remote microphone hearing AT equipment on a lease basis to local districts. Normal repair of equipment is covered under the terms of the lease. For districts leasing equipment, KSD's audiologist is available to provide in-service training and/or consultation to those programs that do not have audiological services locally.

Contact:
Gail Sprecher, Au.D., CCC-A, FAAA
Audiologist
(913) 210-8149 (voice)
<https://www.ksdeaf.org/hat>

Kansas Infnitec Coalition Member Equipment

Agency must be a member of the Kansas Infnitec Coalition

The primary goal of the Infnitec Assistive Technology Equipment Rental Program is to ensure that member agencies have current equipment when needed for trial usage prior to the purchase of equipment.

Contact:
Beth Zillinger, MS, CCC-SLP
Program Director, Kansas Infnitec
(785) 205-0639
bzillinger@ucpnet.org

National Agencies That Provide AT Resources

U.S. Department of Education Assistive Technology Devices and Services for Children with Disabilities under the IDEA

The Office of Educational Technology and the Office of Special Education Programs are pleased to share the below guidance in support of children with disabilities who need AT devices and services for meaningful access and engagement in education:

A [Dear Colleague Letter](#) (PDF) on the provision of AT devices and services for children with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Myths and Facts Surrounding Assistive Technology Devices and Services

(PDF) is designed to increase understanding of the IDEA's AT requirements, dispel common misconceptions regarding AT, and provide examples of the use of AT devices and services for children with disabilities and to highlight the different requirements under Parts B and C of IDEA.



[Infinitec Coalition](#)

Since 1997, Infinitec has been on a mission to advance independence and promote inclusive opportunities for children and adults with disabilities through technology. Infinitec helps people with disabilities get access to information, technology services, training, assistive equipment, and specialists. By creating partnerships with other organizations, the Infinitec staff makes these services and technologies more widely available to everyone who can benefit from them.

[Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology Services \(QIAT\)](#)

The QIAT consortium offers resource information and a national forum to discuss AT service questions and share information. Resources are based on the use of a set of widely applicable Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology Services areas in school settings that can be used as a tool to support school districts and service providers working to improve the systematic use of AT in educational settings.

[Assistive Tech Tools](#)

The Assistive Tech site is managed by Daniel Cochrane. Information regarding AT tools in the areas of reading, writing, math, and organization are provided. Specific technology tools are listed that provide support in overcoming specific tasks related to each category.

[QIAT-PS](#)

QIAT-PS provides a set of indicators about AT for the [postsecondary institution](#) as well as for the [individual student](#). Together they offer a coordinated framework to support students with disabilities in postsecondary education. The indicators are an extension of the QIAT K–12 transition guidelines and respond to the civil rights legislation of the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) and Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, which guide the provision of accommodations in postsecondary education.

[Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology within 504 Plan \(QIAT-504\)](#)

QIAT-504 is a set of statements that describe the characteristics of high-quality AT services provided to preschool, elementary, and secondary students with disabilities who are entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) but do not require specially designed instruction. They receive protection under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act for K–12.

[CAST](#)

CAST is a multifaceted organization that helps educators and organizations apply insights from the learning sciences and leading-edge practices to educational design and implementation. CAST is the original developer of Universal Design for Learning and provides multiple resources and references on this topic through the website.

[Closing the Gap](#)

Closing the Gap offers an online platform of on-demand professional development, resources, and tools for individuals, school districts, rehabilitation centers,



nonprofit organizations, and universities who are using AT to support children and adults with disabilities. Its goal is to help members build capacity, grow their AT skills, and enhance their instruction using today's best practices and implementation strategies.

[Alt-Shift](#)

The Assistive Technology Skills Inventory's primary intent is to assist administrators, as well as those involved in coordinating AT services, to identify and support professionals who can contribute knowledge and skills related to the provision of AT.

[Coalition for Assistive Technology in Oregon \(CATO\)](#)

CATO is a charitable 501(c)(3) organization formed to increase access to AT for children with disabilities. The resources tab of the website provides a variety of forms and resources that IEP teams can use for the provision of AT services in the areas of consideration, referral, evaluation, trial periods, IEP development, implementation, periodic review, and transition. All resources on this website are in the public domain.

[Assistive Technology and Accessible Educational Materials \(AT & AEM\) Center](#)

The Ohio AT & AEM Center provides resources to ensure access for all people with disabilities. The center promotes accessibility and personalization, creates and disseminates accessible materials, and offers specialized training and technical assistance.

[Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative](#)

The Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative website offers a variety of forms and information resources which can guide an IEP team through a variety of AT processes.

[Progress Center](#)

The Progress Center provides information, resources, tools, and technical assistance services to support local educators and leaders (kindergarten through transition age) in developing and implementing high-quality educational programming that ensures students with disabilities have access to a FAPE. The center provides many practical resources and IEP tip sheets to assistive IEP teams.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **What is assistive technology (AT)?**

AT is any item that a student uses to increase, maintain, or improve a functional capability. Sometimes technology is used in ways which do not change a student's ability to function (e.g., a computer program which helps a student to practice math facts). This would not usually be considered AT but would be called *instructional technology*. A calculator used by the same student could be considered AT because using the tool provides the student with a way to do the real task of using numbers.

- **What are the general Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requirements for AT?**

In developing each student's individualized education program (IEP), the team must consider whether a student needs AT devices and services (34 CFR § 300.324(a)(2)(v)). Education agencies must ensure that AT devices or services or both are provided to a student with a disability if the IEP team determines they are required in order for the student to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). AT must be provided at no cost to the parents of a student with a disability who requires AT devices or services. On a case-by-case basis, the use of school-purchased AT devices in a student's home or other settings is required if the IEP team determines the student needs those devices to receive a FAPE (34 CFR § 300.105).

- **What kinds of AT devices do IEP teams consider?**

Many commonly used products can be used as AT for students with disabilities. Examples of simple, low-tech solutions include calculators, laminated communication boards, pencil grips, and spell checkers. In addition, there are over two thousand specialized AT devices which are specifically designed to enhance the functional skills of people with disabilities (Closing the Gap, 2023). A full range of AT devices should be considered for every student who has an IEP. Often the simplest tool that will fill the need is the most effective.

- **Who might use AT?**

All students with disabilities, both students who receive services under IDEA and those who need accommodations and modifications under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, may be able to benefit from the use of AT to meet educational goals. The need is determined if the student cannot receive a FAPE in the LRE without the use of AT.



- **Are Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) a type of AT device?**

AEM are print- and technology-based educational materials, including printed and electronic textbooks and related core materials (e.g., print, digital, graphic, audio, video) that provide the same information to students with disabilities but in specialized formats that help to overcome barriers to learning posed by a disability (Perez & Ali, 2010). Some AEM formats, such as recorded text or electronic braille, are AT because they require a device in order for a student to have access to them. Other formats, such as large print texts or printed braille, may be considered an accommodation. AEM must be provided to students with disabilities who need it in a timely manner, meaning at the same time as other students receive instructional materials (34 CFR § 300.172).

- **Is Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) a type of AT device?**

AAC is a set of tools that allows a student to communicate using an alternate format of communication so that the student can access, engage, and make progress in age- and grade-level curriculum, instruction, environments, and activities. Whether an augmentative communication device, playback devices, or other devices could be considered an AT device for a student depends on whether the device is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a student with a disability and whether the student's IEP team determines that the student needs the device in order to receive a FAPE. If the IEP team determines the student needs an AAC device to receive a FAPE, then AT must be documented in the student's IEP program summary and provided as specified.

- **Do students with learning disabilities need AT?**

IDEA requires that every IEP team consider a student's need for AT. This includes the IEP teams of students with learning disabilities. Students with learning disabilities often use AT to help them read, write, or use math. Some common AT tools used by students with learning disabilities include calculators, word processors, text-to-speech applications, and word-prediction software. Many of the built-in accommodations in commonly used technology can act as AT for these students.

- **What factors should an IEP team take into consideration to determine a student's need for AT?**

When an IEP team considers a student's need for AT, members should first review the student's goals and ability to access curriculum. If the team identifies an area of performance where progress will be difficult or impossible because of the student's disability, the team considers AT along with other strategies, such as modification of the task (e.g., shortened assignments, dictation of written work) or additional instruction.



- **What are the differences between AT assessment and an AT evaluation?**

An AT assessment is one strategy that can be used to gather information on a student's performance in relation to AT devices and services. In certain situations, tools that may prove beneficial to a student are readily available in the student's educational environment. In much the same way a teacher or service provider may introduce new strategies or adjust interventions to facilitate a student's progress toward his/her IEP goals and in the curriculum, these readily available tools may also be introduced. Data collected regarding a student's performance while using these tools should be collected and shared with the IEP team to inform the AT consideration process.

Like all good teaching practices, AT assessment can include integration of a variety of instructional practices, review of delivery, trial of different instructional practices, or change in instructional approach to improve student outcomes. An AT assessment could include ongoing assessment of student performance in relation to any AT needs, review of AT instructional supports, or the need for specialized instruction using an AT device. It may be conducted by those instructional staff that work with the student most often and are those most appropriate to assess a student's skills (Bowser, 2020, p. 23). An informal AT assessment does not require parental consent.

Sometimes an IEP team determines that a student may need AT, but the team needs additional information about the potential AT and AT services that would provide the student with sufficient benefit to make reasonable progress in the educational program. When an IEP team begins to collect this targeted information, then they have begun an AT evaluation. Should a team decide to gather additional data about AT tools and services as part of an evaluation, the IEP team must obtain parental consent and follow procedural timelines (Bowser, 2020, p. 22).

- **When should a team evaluate a student's AT needs?**

Whether an AT evaluation is required as part of a comprehensive special education evaluation or re-evaluation depends on identified concerns and how much is already known about a student's strengths and disability-related needs. Any time a student seems to have the cognitive skills to complete a task but encounters barriers because of a disability, an AT evaluation may be indicated. If a member of the team identifies a task or functional life skill for which the student may need AT, the team should examine the strategies and accommodations already in place for the student. If these strategies and accommodations are not sufficient to allow the student to overcome barriers, an AT evaluation is warranted.

- **What are AT services?**

IDEA specifically lists six AT services. These services are actions which are required to help a student with a disability to select and effectively use AT. AT services listed



in IDEA include evaluation, provision of AT selection and maintenance of devices, coordination with other therapies, training of students and families, and training of professionals. Other services may also be provided if the IEP team determines that they are needed.

- **Who is qualified to complete an AT evaluation?**

AT evaluation involves all members of the student's educational team. IDEA states that evaluation of the student's AT needs should include a "functional evaluation in the student's customary environment." When an AT evaluation is conducted, at least one member of the student's team must have knowledge about the AT devices and services that the student could use to overcome barriers the team has identified. In some cases, the IEP team may have enough information to complete the evaluation without help. When the team requires additional information about AT, the services of an AT specialist or other knowledgeable person may be needed.

- **What information should be gathered during an AT evaluation?**

During an AT assessment, the team should gather information about the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance in the area of concern, the tasks the student needs to accomplish, and the environments where those tasks need to be done. The assessment should consider tools and strategies to help the student with the identified tasks, including low-level technology solutions and nontechnology strategies as well as high-tech devices. In most cases, a trial use period of the most promising technology solution(s) should also be implemented in the student's customary environments.

- **What should an IEP team do when members agree that a student may need AT, but is not sure what is available?**

When the IEP team identifies areas for which the student may need AT, but does not have enough information to decide about what that technology should be, the team may add additional team members who are knowledgeable about technology that can be used for those areas. A formal AT assessment may be conducted. When an AT assessment is initiated, the team develops a plan for how the assessment will be conducted so that it can be completed within the sixty-day timeline required by Kansas Administrative Rules. Once the assessment is complete, the IEP team should meet again to consider the student's needs for AT and, if warranted, include it in the student's IEP.

- **When an outside expert recommends AT, must the education agency provide it?**

The IEP team is required to consider all available information when planning a student's specially designed instruction. If an outside expert recommends a particular AT device for a student, it is important that the team consider this recommendation along with all other information about the student. However, the agency is under no obligation to agree with the outside evaluation. At this time,



the district should determine if the parent is requesting a formal AT evaluation and provide prior written notice (PWN) if so. If the school is planning to or is conducting the AT evaluation, communication on the AT decisions should be reflected in IEP documentation. For further guidance see the [*Kansas Special Education Process Handbook*](#) (p. 64).

- **What documentation is required when a team considers AT and determines that it is needed in a student’s educational program?**

IDEA requires that every IEP team consider a student’s need for AT, but the law does not mandate specific documentation regarding that team’s consideration. Most Kansas IEP systems forms provide options for documenting decisions regarding a student’s need for AT. A checkbox for teams can be used during an IEP to document the decision when the team determines that a student needs AT. That technology should also appear elsewhere in the IEP as special education, related services, and/or supplemental aids and service. The IEP team should clearly document in the IEP a description of the device or service, the frequency, amount, location, and duration of the AT to ensure availability. The IEP must include information about the amount of service that will be provided to the student so that the level of the agency’s commitment of resources will be clear to parents and other IEP team members and so that the IEP can be implemented as written.

- **What documentation is required when a team considers AT and determines that it is not needed in a student’s educational program?**

While it is not required in Kansas rules, teams may also want to document their decisions when AT is considered but is not needed. This is especially true when one or more team members disagree with the team decision.

- **Where should AT devices and services be described in the IEP?**

IDEA states that AT can be considered as special education, related services, or supplemental aids and services. Neither IDEA nor Kansas rules specify how AT devices and services should be listed in a student’s plan. School districts may develop operating guidelines that help IEP teams to include AT in IEPs. No matter how the devices and services are listed, it is important that everyone who reads the plan can understand the team’s intent in providing AT devices and services.

- **Should specific AT devices be named in the IEP?**

In most cases, the features of an AT device, rather than a specific device name, should be described in the IEP. This allows for more flexibility if the student moves to another district or if the IEP team discovers that a device like the one initially considered better meets the student’s needs. In rare cases, the team may name a specific AT device in the student’s plan. This is generally necessary when the student is required to learn unique ways to operate the device that cannot be generalized to other similar devices.



- **When AT is listed as needed on the IEP, must that technology be available in all classes?**

Students generally use AT to accomplish specific tasks. The IEP should describe the conditions under which the student needs AT. This might be done in the statement of Present Level of Educational Performance (PLEP), as a condition in goals and objectives, or in the description of the student's accommodations and modifications. The AT should be made available to the student as described in the IEP.

- **Can students use their AT during state and district assessments?**

Each IEP team must determine how a student will participate in state assessments and what accommodations and modifications that student will need in order to participate. Kansas's state assessment administration manuals list those accommodations which are considered standard assessment and describe eligibility for modified assessment procedures. In some cases, AT may only be used in standard state assessments if it is listed as needed for the assessment on the student's IEP. The IEP team should consult the state assessment administration manual when a student uses AT.

- **What should the IEP team consider when determining whether AT is needed in the student's home or other environments?**

The purpose of providing AT in the home is to make sure that the student can accomplish the specially designed goals developed by the IEP team. When considering the student's need for AT in the home or other environments, the IEP team reviews the student's IEP goals and objectives. If AT provided at school is needed at home for the student to make progress on goals, the team plans for it to be used in the home. In some cases, the team may decide to provide an alternative AT device in the home setting or to provide additional opportunities for the student to complete needed activities at school as an alternative. The school may set up specific arrangements with the family that address issues of liability and care of the AT as well as responsibilities of the family (e.g., charging the AT at home so that it is ready for school use).

IEP teams must ensure that students with disabilities have the services they need to access and engage in nonacademic and extracurricular activities available to all students. The local education agency (LEA) must ensure that each student with a disability participates with nondisabled students in extracurricular services and activities to the maximum extent appropriate. The LEA must ensure that each student with a disability has the supplementary aids and services determined by the student's IEP team to be appropriate and necessary for the student to participate in nonacademic settings (34 CFR § 300.117). AT as a supplementary aid and service is provided in regular education classes, other education-related settings, and in extracurricular and nonacademic settings to enable students with



disabilities to be educated with nondisabled students to the maximum extent appropriate (34 CFR § 300.42).

- **What if an AT device is sent home and damaged?**

On a case-by-case basis, the district permits the use of district-purchased AT devices in the student's home or in other settings if the student's IEP team determines that the student needs access to those devices to receive a FAPE. Parents cannot be charged for the use and normal wear and tear of AT devices. School districts may make policies regarding the parent's responsibility for equipment damaged due to misuse or neglect. When developing such a policy, it is recommended that education agencies refer to their policies for loaning students other equipment, such as band instruments and football uniforms.

- **If a team decides that a student needs AT, who is responsible for purchasing it?**

The LEA has the final responsibility to provide all parts of a student's educational program as listed on the IEP. In some cases, LEAs make agreements with other programs (e.g., special education cooperatives, regional programs) to help provide the AT that students need. LEAs may also look to other sources of funding, such as insurance, charitable organizations, and grants to help provide students with AT. Parents may but cannot be required to use insurance or other private funding for AT. If they do use private funding, the technology belongs to the family.

- **If an education agency purchases AT for a specific student, who does the technology belong to?**

If an education agency purchases AT, the technology is the property of that agency. It is often desirable that a student's technology be the property of the student and family. When this is the case, LEAs may assist the family in obtaining funding from a source such as medical insurance or a charitable organization if such funding is available.

- **Depending on the individual situation, could a school be required to provide a computer or other AT for a student with a disability in order to allow that student to remain in the LRE?**

Students with disabilities are entitled to special education and related services as well as supplementary aids and services. As such, if an AT evaluation demonstrated that the student needs an AT device (e.g., software, computer, writing aids, prone stander) to remain in the LRE, the IEP team would list that service on the IEP, and the school must provide it or ensure that it is provided.

- **Once AT is included in a student's educational program, what actions should be taken to make sure that AT use is successful?**

As with any other educational activity, the inclusion of AT in a student's IEP is only the beginning. The educational team that serves the student must plan for training



the student, the student's family, and educators, who will need to know how the technology works. Plans must also be developed for assuring the student's regular use of the technology as indicated in the IEP.

- **Who is responsible for maintaining AT devices? What if the device belongs to the student?**

If AT is included in a student's IEP, the education agency must ensure that it is available. If AT requires repair or maintenance, the LEA must ensure that an alternative device is made available to the student as described in the IEP. This is true even when the device belongs to the student's family. In some cases, the LEA may choose to repair a device belonging to the student as an alternative to the purchase of a duplicate device.

- **What is the education agency's responsibility if the IEP of a student who transfers in from another district includes AT that the receiving district does not own?**

When a student enters a district with an active IEP from another agency, the receiving district must review the entire IEP to determine whether it is appropriate in the new setting. Any AT devices or services included on the IEP must be reviewed to determine whether they are still appropriate in the new educational environment. If the program designed for the student is still appropriate, then the education agency has a responsibility to provide the AT devices and services listed. If a change in the AT portion of the IEP is warranted, the district must reconvene the IEP team and make the appropriate in the student's educational program.

- **How can educational agencies budget for AT when it is impossible to predict the needs of new students?**

District personnel who are responsible for developing a budget which includes funds for the purchase of AT may need to collect information from a variety of sources. Educators who work with students who use AT may be able to predict the need for future expenditures. Discussion about AT needs should be part of the conversation whenever a student transfers from one educational setting to another, and this discussion can help administrators plan for future expenditures. As with any other school expense, a contingency should be planned in the case of unexpected AT needs.

- **Are students who have plans under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act eligible for AT? If so, who is responsible for providing this technology?**

Students who have Section 504 Plans may be eligible for AT devices and services if they are needed for the student's access to the general curriculum. When a student's 504 Plan includes AT, it is the responsibility of the 504 Coordinator and the student's general education team to make sure that these devices and services are provided.



- **If a family requests an independent educational evaluation for AT for a student, what steps should the education agency take?**

Families have the right to an independent educational evaluation (IEE) when they disagree with the results of any education agency's evaluation. This is true for AT evaluations as well as other IEEs. If the family of a student with a disability requests an IEE, refer the family to the agency's Director of Special Education. If an independent AT evaluation is completed, the IEP team reconvenes and discusses the results to determine the next steps.

- **Artificial Intelligence, Virtual Reality, and Other Emerging Technologies**

Emerging technologies continue to play a major role in the field of AT, and in education and in society in general. Technological advancement is constantly offering opportunities as well as challenges to teaching and learning. By understanding AT as a specific support and intervention connected to a student's IEP goals, teams can apply the same process to evaluate emerging technologies as they do any other type of support available. It's important for IEP teams to be aware of new potential technology that may be positively beneficial for students' outcomes.



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APPENDICES

The forms and policies on the following pages are offered as examples of the wording and guidance that an educational agency might use for specific instances where an action about assistive technology (AT) should be documented. They are entirely optional. None of these examples should be considered to be a requirement of the Kansas State Department of Education. They are offered in response to educational agency requests for information about how other agencies have addressed these specific situations.

Sample individualized education program (IEP) wording is also provided. Kansas Statutes Annotated (K.S.A.) require that each IEP be developed by a team knowledgeable about the student and individualized to ensure annual progress. IEP are also offered in response to requests for additional information and should not be considered as required language for any student's IEP.



ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY IN DEVON’S IEP: FULL DESCRIPTION

Devon’s team considered his need for AT and determined that he would benefit from the use of text to speech to read his textbooks. Here is how his AT was included in his IEP.

Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAPF)

Devon is in the fifth grade. He has a learning disability in reading, which causes him to read very slowly. He is not able to complete assigned readings during the school day and brings home a backpack full of books each night. His parents read to him for three or more hours each night and help him do his homework.

AT Success Criteria

Devon will be able to finish his assigned reading either at school or at home in one hour or less using text to speech to listen to the text as each word is highlighted for him.

Program Modifications/Support Chart

Accommodations	Frequency	Location	Duration	Date
Text to speech with each word highlighted as it is read	All reading assignments of more than two paragraphs	Social studies class	Until required reading is completed	Start date: 9/5/2023 End date: 9/4/2024
Text to speech with each word highlighted as it is read	All reading assignments of more than two paragraphs	English & Science Class	Until required reading is completed	Start date: 10/15/2023 End date: 9/4/2024

Support for staff

None needed at this time. The teachers know how to operate text to speech on classroom devices. Textbooks are available in digital format.



ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY IN MARIA’S IEP: FULL DESCRIPTION

Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)

Maria has just entered kindergarten. She has cerebral palsy (CP), which makes it necessary for her to use a wheelchair. She has some difficulty using her hands. She attends an inclusive general education kindergarten class. The classroom has an accessible bathroom, and an instructional assistant has been assigned to the class to help cover the physical accommodations that Maria needs.

Maria’s CP makes it hard for her to produce speech, so it is slurred and difficult for unfamiliar listeners to understand. An AAC evaluation was completed, noting that Maria required a communication system to support her expressive language. Maria is using a tablet-based speech-generating device with a synthesized voice and core vocabulary that is embedded within category and activity pages, allowing easy generation of language from the main core page as well as within specific topic-based pages. Core words remain consistent in terms of placement and access, providing a natural bridge between core and fringe words.

She uses the icons built into the system along with actual pictures of her family, teachers, and classmates. The system is allowing her to demonstrate and have access to more functional and appropriate vocabulary, and she is using academic-specific vocabulary. Maria is currently using a page set with 48 icons on a page; however, the team continues to collect data to determine the best number of icons per page to ensure a robust vocabulary that supports Maria’s expressive language.

Maria uses her AAC device to repair communication breakdowns when she is talking during group discussions with her classmates. She will use a combination of her natural speech and a device during the day.

Measurable Annual Goal

Baseline: Currently, 25% of Maria’s communication messages are understood using verbal speech and gestures, as measured by SLP observation during classroom activities.

Annual Goal: In 36 instructional weeks, Maria will increase her intelligible communication to 75% of the observed messages using a combination of speech, gestures, and AAC device, as measured by the SLP during classroom observation one time a week.

Accommodations	Frequency	Location	Duration	Date
Tablet-based speech-generating device with synthesized voice and a core vocabulary that is embedded with categories and activity pages	When communicating	All subjects & activities throughout the school day	Duration of communication interaction	Start date: 11/1/2023 End date: 10/31/2024

Support for staff

Staff will be provided 30 minutes of professional learning and coaching on aided language stimulation to support Maria’s continued learning of the communication device during the first quarter. They will also be provided with links to training resources from the AAC company’s website that have videos on a variety of topics they may encounter.



AGREEMENT FOR USE OF PARENT-OWNED ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AT SCHOOL

Agreement between Parent and District to Use Privately Owned Assistive Technology or Augmentative Communication Equipment at School

Effective Dates of Agreement
_____ to _____

Student Name:

Parent/Guardian Name:

Address:

Telephone:

School: ID#:

Description of Privately Owned Assistive Technology/Augmentative Communication Equipment:

Description of District’s Offer of a FAPE Regarding Assistive Technology/Augmentative Communication:

1. “Privately owned equipment” means assistive technology or augmentative communication equipment owned by the parent(s) or augmentative communication equipment not owned by the parent(s) but provided by the parent for the student to use at school.
2. I, the undersigned, agree with [insert district name] that my child may use at school the privately owned equipment described above.
3. I agree that [insert district name] will not be responsible for any damage or loss of any privately owned equipment while such equipment is in the care, custody, or control of [insert district name].
4. [Insert district name] agrees that it will take reasonable precautions to protect the privately owned equipment but that it is in no way responsible for damage to or loss of this equipment.
5. [Insert district name] staff have explained to me that the school is required to offer my child a free appropriate public education (FAPE) under the law, which includes providing necessary assistive technology equipment. I understand that the District’s offer of a FAPE for assistive technology equipment is described above. I also understand that the privately owned equipment I am authorizing my child to use at school may be more technologically advanced than that which the District is required to provide to my child under the law.
6. I understand that at any time I may revoke my consent for my child’s use of privately owned equipment at school and that this revocation must be in writing. I may then request that [insert district name] provide appropriate assistive technology equipment to my child in accordance with the law. I understand that the assistive technology equipment [insert district name] offers may be different than and may be a lower level of technology than the privately owned equipment my child has been using at school.
7. I agree that [insert district name] staff have sole authority to decide how the privately owned equipment is used at school.
8. I understand that this Agreement will be in effect until my child’s annual IEP meeting. At that time, a new Agreement will need to be executed by me and the District in order for my child to continue to use privately owned equipment at school.

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Date Signed

Signature of Authorized District Staff

Date Signed

Position of Authorized District Staff



ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY QUESTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATORS

Gayl Bowser, M.Ed.
Independent Special Education Consultant
gaylbowser@gmail.com

I often get the chance to offer professional learning opportunities about the assistive technology (AT) mandates in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA, 2004). Many of them are overview sessions designed to help groups of teachers and other direct service providers to understand what IDEA says about AT and to give them strategies for implementing the law's AT requirements. We talk about the fact that education agencies are required to consider whether *every* child who has an individualized education program (IEP) needs AT. Inevitably, someone begins to ask a series of questions that I can't answer.

What providers of special education services most want to know is how they should respond when certain things happen. The question of how to proceed with AT questions stems from educators' desire to offer legal, equitable, and effective services. Many resource room teachers, speech and language clinicians, OTs, PTs, and general education teachers are new to AT. They are asked to consider AT for *every* child, and they want to address the IDEA requirements responsibly.

The kinds of questions that I can't answer are process questions. Process questions are almost always answered at a district level, and the processes are monitored by administrators. Supervisors do not have to know a lot about AT to address them. It is important that supervisors understand the definition of AT, the district's responsibilities to provide AT, and the limits of those responsibilities. Armed with this basic information, a supervisor can begin to answer, for the entire agency, many of the process questions that arise as IEP teams consider every child's need for AT.

Here's a list of some of those process questions:

1. What should educators do when they believe a child needs AT?

Your district probably has a pre-referral process for addressing the educational needs of children with disabilities. Does this process also apply to questions of AT need? What data should accompany a referral for AT assessment that is initiated by a teacher? If a team wants to try some AT tools, should they initiate a formal referral and evaluation process? Should AT assessment referrals come from the entire IEP team, or can an individual initiate the referral? Are the answers to these questions different for children with mild disabilities than they are for children with more severe disabilities?

2. What should educators do when a parent requests an AT assessment during an informal conversation?

An initial request for an AT assessment is like other requests for services. AT requests must receive the same mandated attention. When a parent requests an AT assessment during an informal conversation, what action should educators in your system take? Is there a form they should complete? Should they get permission from the parent to initiate an evaluation? Should they take the request to a team meeting? Is there a person in your building or district who takes referrals for AT evaluations?

3. What should educators do when a parent asks for a trial of a specific AT device?

When specific AT has been requested, how should staff respond? Should they try to help the parent reframe the question to identify the problem the child is experiencing? Do you want a referral form to list things that have been tried already? When the request is made for a specific AT device, should that device be listed on the referral or permission to evaluate form?

4. What are the district's resources to help with AT assessments? If an IEP team feels the need for additional information, where can team members get that information?

If the AT tools a child needs are tools that are commonly used in the classroom, an educational team may be able to assess that child's need for AT without outside help. Almost anyone can help a child try a calculator or use a word processor and collect data about its effectiveness. However, if a team needs information about a particular kind of AT or if the tools the child needs are complicated, outside help may be necessary. What help is available in your district? Who are the people who might provide information to a child's IEP team? If you do not have the kind of resources the team needs within your district, what outside resources can be used? How do you want your staff to contact them? When do you want to be notified or involved? You probably already have processes in place for using other outside services. Do these same processes apply to AT questions?



5. If an educator or an IEP team wants to recommend a particular kind of AT for a child, how and when do you want to know about it? What information do you need?

While administrators cannot interfere with the IEP processes established by law, they can ask to be informed when certain events might be recommended by the IEP team. Do you want to be informed every time AT is recommended? If an AT recommendation requires a small expenditure, do you need to know? What should educators in your system do if a device recommendation might cost more than \$500? Your answers to these questions will depend, in part, on the way you create a budget and distribute funds for classroom materials. Do you have a budget line for AT purchases, or will you fold this expense into other budget categories?

6. When an IEP team considers AT during an IEP meeting, what data should be used to decide on the need?

What evidence will the team use to say that AT may be beneficial to a student. Is a short-term trial period required for every student whose IEP includes AT? How much change in the student's performance should the team look for? How will they document the changes and demonstrate the need. This is probably the most difficult question an administrator will have to answer. It requires some knowledge of how AT assessments are completed and knowledge of how AT data can be collected and interpreted.

7. How should AT that a child needs be written into the IEP?

If the IEP team has decided that a child needs AT, how should that decision be documented? What is your district's guidance about listing the names of specific devices on an IEP? What are the conditions where devices should be listed by their features? When should a child have specific goals for device use? When should the use of AT be listed as an accommodation or strategy? Many districts have extensive guidelines for staff about writing IEPs. Those guidelines may help to answer specific questions about AT in IEPs as well. In some cases, like listing device names, additional guidance may be needed.

8. If AT is sent home with a student and it is damaged due to neglect, what is the district's policy?

IDEA requires that AT must be provided at home if the child needs it to benefit from the educational program and accomplish IEP goals. Educational agencies make policy about what should happen if there is damage due to neglect. Agency policies about other expensive things like band instruments and sports equipment that are loaned to students can often be applied to AT as well.

9. What is the district's policy about provision of AT to students in private schools?

IDEA requires that districts have policy and guidelines regarding the provision of services to students with disabilities who attend private schools. Sometimes a child who attends a private school may benefit from the use of AT. When this happens, there is often a question of whether the public agency or the private school will provide the AT. Whatever policy your district has developed regarding services in private schools may likely be applied to AT questions as well as other services the agency offers to those students. It is important that services to students in private schools be offered equitably, so educators may need help with the specifics.

10. If there is conflict about AT at any point in the process of assessment, consideration, or implementation, what should educators do?

When should supervisors be informed about an AT disagreement? If it is a disagreement with a parent, is the answer to this question different than if the disagreement is among staff? When conflicts arise, who should be told? You probably already have answers to these questions for other issues. They may help you with disagreements about AT too.

There are no "correct" answers to these ten questions. Each agency is unique because it has resources in personnel, facilities, students, and budget that can only be identified and used locally. An agency's procedures, belief systems, and history impact what processes are used. The outside resources an agency can use to support AT efforts differ from those of other districts. Even the geography of a district may affect the ways that AT services are provided.

The answers are not all found in one place and may change over time. There are probably other questions that aren't listed here. One excellent way to find answers is to listen to the stories of the people in your district who participate in IEP meetings. They can tell you about times when they made an AT decision and had concerns about it. They can tell you about the current situations involving AT that they worry may develop into conflicts. They can share their success and the successes of children in your district who use AT. From these stories, you can begin to identify answers that may lead you to an effective and responsive AT process.

