

## What are Assistive Technology (AT) Devices?

Assistive Technology (AT) Devices are items, pieces of equipment or products which are used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of students with disabilities. AT devices can be standard "off the shelf" items or modified, or customized to meet the individual needs of the student. Many AT devices are "no tech" or "low tech" and require little accommodation and minimal expense. Some examples of "no or low tech" devices include magnifiers, raised line paper, pencil grips, an adapted cup with large handles, or colored reading filters. These easy to obtain items can help students with visual and physical difficulties be more independent in their school work. There are also many other low tech options that can help students who have other disabilities. AT devices can also be very high-tech. High tech items can be things such as electronic communication aids, screen reading software, or mobility devices. Whatever the technology (no, low or high tech) The need for AT devices should be documented in a student's Individual Education Program (IEP).

## What are Assistive Technology (AT) Services?

Assistive Technology (AT) Services are the services that need to be provided so that a child with a disability is able to use an AT Device. Services can include an evaluation to see if AT is needed, acquiring the device, adapting it to the individual needs of the student, coordinating the use of the device and providing necessary training to the student, family and professionals.

## The Facts you should know:

- ✓ Students may require more than one type of AT device depending upon their individual needs.
- ✓ AT must be considered during the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process for each student.
- ✓ If an IEP team determines that AT devices are necessary to provide the student a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), the devices and services must be provided at no cost to the family.
- ✓ If an IEP team determines that AT devices are necessary to provide the student FAPE, the devices and services must be documented on his or her IEP.
- ✓ If AT is documented on a student's IEP, the school is responsible for providing the device(s) and/or services and for repairing or replacing it if needed.
- ✓ If an IEP team determines that a student needs AT to participate in district or state testing, the need for AT must be included in his/her IEP.
- ✓ IEP teams are not required to identify a specific name-brand of assistive technology on an IEP.
- ✓ AT devices supplied by the school may be taken home and used in the community if the IEP team determines that it is necessary for the student to receive FAPE.
- ✓ Assistive technology (AT) devices are available in many categories, including:
  - Academic and learning aids – calculators, spell checkers, word processors, computer software, etc.
  - Aids for daily living – devices to help with eating, bathing, cooking, dressing, toileting, etc.
  - Assistive listening devices – amplification devices, close captioning systems, environmental alert systems, etc.
  - Augmentative communication – electronic and non-electronic tools that help students communicate
  - Computer access – modified keyboards, switches, special software, alternative access aids
  - Environmental control – switches, adapted appliances, environmental control units
  - Mobility – wheelchairs, walkers, scooters, and other devices that help the student move around
  - Work – adapted timers and watches, adapted knobs, picture-based instructions for how to do a job, etc.
  - Recreation and leisure – adapted books, switch-operated toys, leisure computer software, etc.
  - Seating and positioning – corner chairs, wedges, prone standers, wedge seats, adapted/alternative chairs, etc.
  - Visual aids – magnifiers, talking calculators, Braille writers, screen reading software, Braille note-taking devices, etc.

## Tips for Families:

- ✓ Talk with your child's IEP team if you have questions about assistive technology for your child.
- ✓ Share ideas about items or devices that you may use at home and think could be adapted for the classroom.
- ✓ To get ready for an IEP meeting where assistive technology will be discussed, review the Georgia Project for Assistive Technology's [Assistive Technology Consideration Checklist](#) a [Assistive Technology Resource Guide](#).
- ✓ T the following questions when preparing to talk about AT with your child's IEP team:
  - What does your child need to do but cannot do because of his/her disability?
  - What are your child's biggest educational challenges?
  - Can your child communicate effectively? Can your child sit, stand, and walk independently? Is your child able to feed himself/herself? Be sure to think about your child's physical, communication, cognitive, social/emotional, and academic strengths and needs.
  - What assistive technology tools are available that might help your child rise above these challenges?
  - Will assistive technology help your child become more independent? Can assistive technology help your child to more fully participate in school?
  - Can your child achieve his or her IEP goals without access to AT?
  - How will we know if the AT has helped your child in his/her educational program?
- ✓ If you think your child could benefit from assistive technology, you can ask the school to evaluate your child's AT needs.
- ✓ You may know what type of device you want your child to use, but it is important to be willing to try out different devices at school and at home, before deciding on one device.
- ✓ As much as possible, include your child in discussions and decisions about assistive technology. Your child may not want to use a device or AT that he/she thinks makes him/her look different from the other students in the class. Ask your child what he/she wants to use.
- ✓ If your child brings his/her AT home, ask the school to have someone show you how to use it.
- ✓ It could happen that you disagree with the IEP team's decision about AT for your child. You could learn that your child's school is not providing the AT devices or services that are written in his/her IEP. If you cannot solve the disagreement or problem informally, you may want to ask for mediation, a due process hearing, or you may file a formal complaint.
- ✓ Remember that your child's AT needs will change as he or she grows.
- ✓ Start preparing for your child's future technology needs in advance!! Think about what technologies your child might need to use beyond school!!

## Where to go for more information:

**Parent to Parent of Georgia**  
770 451-5484 or 800-229-2038  
[www.p2pga.org](http://www.p2pga.org)

**Georgia Department of Education, Divisions for Special Education Services and Supports**  
404 656-3963 or 800-311-3627 and ask to be transferred to Special Education  
[http://www.gadoe.org/ci\\_exceptional.aspx](http://www.gadoe.org/ci_exceptional.aspx)

**Georgia Project for Assistive Technology**  
[www.gpat.org](http://www.gpat.org)

**Family Center on Technology and Disabilities**  
[www.fctd.info](http://www.fctd.info)

Additional resources: Contact the **Special Education Director** for your school system.