

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY Fact Sheet



Definitions

Assistive Technology: 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.

Assistive Technology Service: Any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology (AT) device. Assistive technology services may include evaluations, purchasing of AT, customizing or adapting equipment, coordinating with other team members, and/or training or technical assistance for the child, the child's family, and/or other professionals.

Consideration: Every Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team is required to "consider" the student's need for assistive technology. This "thoughtful look" should include a brief discussion about challenges faced by the child in accessing educational goals and whether assistive technology may be helpful. The team should discuss possible assistive technology options as well as accommodations, modifications, and/or services that may be needed. Form 1: Assistive Technology Consideration and Appendix B: AT Consideration Companion Guide, from the WVDE guidance document Assistive Technology: Guidance for West Virginia Schools, may be used to support the team's discussion.

Consideration Process

- » **Brief:** If it takes longer than 10-15 minutes, then an assistive technology evaluation should be recommended.
- » **Informed:** At least one team member should have sufficient knowledge of AT to recognize when an evaluation is needed.
- » **Based on IEP Goals:** The majority of the IEP should be developed before considering assistive technology. The discussion should focus on the annual goals and whether AT might support the student in achieving those goals.
- » **A Team Process:** All team members should contribute to the discussion. Data on previously used devices and/or strategies should be included.

When to Consider AT

- » **Initial Evaluation:** The Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team may determine that an assistive technology evaluation should be recommended based on the SAT's concerns.
- » **IEP:** Every time an IEP is written, assistive technology must be considered.
- » **Transition:** When the student transitions into the school system (from Birth to Three) or out of the school system (Division of Rehabilitation Services).

Areas to Consider

- » Mobility, Seating, and Positioning
- » Fine Motor and Technology Access
- » Vision
- » Hearing
- » Communication
- » Executive Functioning
- » Daily Living and Self-Help Skills
- » Sensory Regulation
- » Reading
- » Math
- » Written Expression
- » Recreation and Leisure
- » Vocational and Independent Functioning

Possible Team Conclusions

- » No Assistive Technology is needed.
- » Current Assistive Technology is working.
- » Assistive Technology Evaluation is needed.
- » Assistive Technology should be trialed.
- » Current Assistive Technology is not working. Team may recommend new equipment to trial or an assistive technology evaluation.
- » IEP Team does not have enough information to make an informed decision and may recommend an AT evaluation or reconvene after needed information is gathered by a knowledgeable team member.

Documenting AT in the IEP

When the IEP Team determines that assistive technology (AT) devices or services are needed, the Team must document the device or service in the student's IEP. IDEA does not specify where AT should be recorded within the IEP, so the IEP Team is responsible for including the information in the section(s) that best align(s) with the specific device or service being provided.

The critical requirement is that the need for AT is documented clearly within the IEP. Descriptions of AT devices or services must be included, but brand names should not be used unless a specific brand is required.

IEP teams may choose to include AT in any or all of the following IEP sections:

- » In the Considerations section
- » as the part of a Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance
- » within Goals or Objectives
- » in the Services and Accommodations sections
- » Secondary Transition

[View Assistive Technology Guidance for West Virginia Schools](#) for more information.

Responsibility for Use

The purpose of assistive technology is to support the student's access to education. AT must accompany the student wherever it is needed, and all individuals who interact with the student must be familiar with its use and committed to integrating it into daily routines. AT is not the responsibility of a single teacher or service provider.

To ensure the student receives the full benefit, there must be shared commitment from all involved—teachers, families, service providers, bus drivers, and other staff. For this reason, both consideration and implementation of AT must be a collaborative team effort.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are LEAs (Local Educational Agencies) required to pay for assistive technology devices and services?

Yes. It is the responsibility of the LEA to provide the equipment, services or programs included in the IEP. The LEA maintains ownership of devices that they purchase.

Can LEAs require parents to use their private insurance to pay for necessary assistive technology devices and services?

No. The IDEA requires schools to provide FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education) to students with disabilities. All special education and related services must be provided "at no cost to the parents." Any decision by the family to allow the LEA to access their private insurance must be strictly voluntary.

Are LEAs responsible for customizing, maintaining, repairing, and replacing assistive technology devices?

Yes. LEAs are responsible for the customization, maintenance, repair, and replacement of AT devices they provide. These services are essential to ensure the technology remains functional and meaningful for the student. If a family-owned device is documented in the IEP and is necessary for providing FAPE, the LEA assumes responsibility for its upkeep as well.

All related responsibilities and services should be clearly outlined in the IEP and AT implementation plan.

May the student take home AT devices purchased by the LEA?

Yes, if the IEP Team determines that the child needs access to AT devices at home or in other environments outside the school. The IDEA regulation 34 CFR 300.308 (b) states, "On a case-by-case basis, the use of school-purchased AT devices in a child's home or other settings is required if the child's IEP Team determines that the child needs access to those devices to receive FAPE."

Scan to view Assistive Technology Guidance for West Virginia document or visit links.wvde.us/4djBqGI

