

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY OVERVIEW

What is Assistive Technology (AT)?

The term “assistive technology” includes a wide array of devices and services that may allow a student with a disability to participate more fully and successfully in their education. Included under the category of assistive technology are equipment and instructional strategies needed by students to successfully perform a variety of educationally related tasks. These include the motor aspects of writing and composing written material, reading, math, and organizational skills. These needs arise from sensory, motor, cognitive, language or social impairments.

What are some examples?

“AT is 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 does not include a medical device that is surgically implanted, or the replacement of such device. Assistive Technology Devices range from simple modifications to highly sophisticated aids or devices”. AT can be “No Tech” also referred to as “low tech” (pencil grips, slant boards, picture schedules); “Mid Tech” (calculators, alternative keyboards, screen magnifier) and “High Tech” (computer with specialized software and input devices, tablets with apps, etc.). U.S.C. 1401(1)).

What are AT Services?

“Any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. This includes:

- (A) the evaluation of needs including a functional evaluation, in the child’s customary environment;
- (B) purchasing, leasing or otherwise providing for the acquisition of assistive technology devices;
- (C) selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing of assistive technology devices;
- (D) coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs;
- (E) training or technical assistance for a child with disabilities, or where appropriate that child’s family; and
- (F) training or technical assistance for professionals (including individuals providing education and rehabilitation services), employers or others(s) who provide services to employ, or are otherwise, substantially involved in the major life functions of that child.” [Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1401(2))

When Is AT Required?

IDEA-R states that “assistive technology devices and services” must be provided by school districts to eligible children if necessary to ensure the provision of a free appropriate public education [http. Assistive Technology](http://www.acts-at.com) should be considered if its use will help the student perform a skill (read, write, communicate, etc.) more easily or efficiently, in the least restrictive environment or with less personal assistance.

AT is necessary for students with

- a motor impairment-difficulty using traditional writing tools
- a hearing or vision impairment
- difficulty with reading or written language
- specific challenges with math
- organization and/or attention deficits
- Austim (verbal and nonverbal)

