Frequently Asked Questions
Assistive Technology and the IEP

1. Are there prerequisite student skills that must be met in order for a team to consider assistive technology?

There are no prerequisite student skills necessary for a student to be considered for assistive technology and the students do not “qualify” for assistive technology devices or services. Decisions to implement assistive technology are based on observable needs and the potential for a particular tool or strategy to meet those needs. The IEP team considers assistive technology as part of the multidisciplinary evaluation process and through formative assessment that is inherent to high quality instructional practice. Failure at tasks or mastery of certain academic, communicative, or technology skills, (e.g. use of low-tech tools before high-tech ones are considered) should not be used as artificial prerequisites for exploring solutions along the assistive technology spectrum.

2. What questions should the IEP team discuss regarding Assistive Technology during the development of the IEP?

Does the student need assistive technology:
- to meaningfully participate in the general curriculum?
- to participate in academic or functional activities?
- to access print materials?
- to access auditory information?
- for written communication and/or computer access?
- for augmentative/alternative communication (AAC)?
- to participate in state and local assessments (is it addressed in Section VI of the IEP (SDI))?

Does the student require AT services for:
- evaluation of needs?
- purchasing, leasing, or providing for acquisition?
- selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, etc. AT devices?
- coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with AT devices; i.e. who will charge/maintain device and provide updates?
- training or technical assistance for student, family, professional (if YES, then document these training/technical assistance needs in section VI C (Supports for School Personnel))?

3. What does this mean for schools?

School districts are required under law to provide appropriate AT to students with disabilities when it supports their acquisition of a free and appropriate public education. All IEP’s developed for children identified as needing special education services, must indicate that AT has been considered to “provide meaningful access to the general curriculum”. The team discussion may decide that AT is not needed, then the “no” box is checked in the consideration section. The team may decide that there is AT in use and that it is effective and sufficient. In this case the yes box would be checked and the Assistive Technology would already be specified
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in the IEP. The team also may decide that they do not have enough information to make this decision. In this case, they may introduce trials of assistive technology. Loaer equipment may be borrowed from the PaTTAN short-term loan program, from the Pennsylvania Initiative on Assistive Technology lending library, or from demo software or loans from vendors. This may be specified in the specially designed instruction. Should the team decide that an assistive technology consultation is necessary to help plan a child’s IEP, the request may be made to IU08 using the form on the Assistive Technology page.

4. Who determines what assistive technology is appropriate and necessary?
Assistive technology determinations are the sole responsibility of the IEP team as a result of data collection and review. Determinations are not made by the IU08 Technology consultant.

5. Once the decision to implement assistive technology is made, what should be written into the IEP?
Assistive Technology should be listed in Section VI, Part A of the student’s IEP—Program Modifications and Specially Designed Instruction (SDI). Teams should utilize generic terminology rather than specific product names when writing a student’s IEP. Attached is a list of generic terminology that may be used. This allows the team to clarify the essential features of the technology rather than naming specific products that may change or not be available during the course of the IEP. AT devices and services may also be documented in present levels, participation in State and Local Assessments, Transition Services, Annual Goals, Related Services and Support for Personnel. There does not need to be a goal for AT, however, AT is typically going to be a tool for achieving a goal.

6. Why are there sometimes so many recommendations offered by the Assistive Technology Consultant?
The students needs during the academic year cross a variety of environments and tasks. The recommendations of the AT Consultant intend to suggest a range of low, middle and high tech tools that may be used in trials. When a high tech option is chosen, it is also necessary to plan for no tech or low tech alternatives should the device fail or need repair.

Sample List of AT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table Device</th>
<th>World prediction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speech generating device</td>
<td>Keyguard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication board with pictures</td>
<td>Arm or chair supports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye gaze frame with pictures</td>
<td>Track ball, joystick or other alternative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portable keyboard or computer</td>
<td>mouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External speakers</td>
<td>Head mouse or pointer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stylus</td>
<td>Voice recognition app or software</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switch to activate device</td>
<td>Enlarge work materials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample List of AT, Cont.

- Calculator with enlarged keys or speech output
- Tactile measurement tools
- Formatted paper
- Markers, removable tape or acetate to highlight text
- Paper organizers
- Electronic organizers
- Altered word or line spacing
- Symbol writing software
- Audio books
- E-Books

- Daisy formatted text and readers
- Tactile cushion
- Supportive or adjustable chair
- Tile tray or modified table
- Large print
- Raised line materials
- Tactile graphics
- Handheld magnifiers
- Personal amplification devices
- Screen reading software or application
- Adapted grips, pencils, pens
- No-slip surfaces
- Slantboard
- Printed labels or name stamp
- Video pen and paper

Quick Links

Universal Design for Learning
http://udltechtoolkit.wikispaces.com

PaTTAN
http://www.pattan.net/category/Resources/PaTTAN%20Publications/Browse/Single/?id=4dc09560cd69f9ac7fe00000

http://www.pattan.net/category/Resources/PaTTAN%20Publications/Browse/Single/?id=4dc09560cd69f9ac7f050000

Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology Service
http://natri.uky.edu/assoc_projects/qiat/

SETT Format
www.joyzabala.com