

Assistive Technology for Students

An Assistive Technology (AT) **device** means any item, piece of equipment or software, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a student with a disability.

AT off-the-shelf refers to any services that directly help a student with a disability in the selection, purchase, or use of an assistive technology device. AT services includes an evaluation of needs, coordination with other therapies and services, the selection and purchase of AT devices and training for the student and/or if appropriate that student's family.

When considering AT take a close look at:

- **Student:** Look at strengths, abilities, preferences, learning style, motivation, and challenges. What is preventing him/her from independent participation in the curriculum? What "works" for this student?
- **Environment:** Where does the need exist? Consider the classroom, cafeteria, home, recreation, and employment.
- **Task:** What are the goals for this child? Can the task be completed efficiently in the same manner as his/her peers?
- **Technology:** What item will achieve the task? Technology can address needs in the areas of writing, communication, reading, studying, math, recreation and leisure, activities of daily living, vision, hearing, work, positioning and seating.
- **Strategies:** Define where and how the technology will be included in the student's day – life. Decide what training is necessary for the child to be successful. Does that include parents, teachers, classroom aides or other professionals?

How to Identify Tasks

- Gather information about the child's disability.
- Identify what the child can or cannot do in relation to non-disabled peers.
- Consider the learning standards and goals the child is working towards.
- Develop realistic expectations.

Assistive Technology is found throughout an Individualized Education

- Present level of performance
- Goals and objectives
- Special education and related services
- Supplemental aids and services

Did You Know?

- Millions of Americans with disabilities use special equipment, aids, or assistive technology.
- Millions of Americans with disabilities need special equipment or aids (AT) to perform basic activities of daily living such as bathing or showering, dressing, eating, getting in and out of bed or chairs, walking, getting outside and using the toilet (including getting to the toilet).
- Assistive technology can be low tech (pencil grip) and high tech (apps on an iPad or computer).
- The responsibility of technology is a team effort. Consider the future and keep goals functional.

References and information provided by:

-www.p12.nysed.gov

-www.ncddr.org

Visit parentnetworkwny.org for more info.