

07 | AT Assessment

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AT Assessment

The processes for “Consideration” and “Assessment” are different. The most obvious differences between AT Consideration and AT Assessment are those of depth and duration. AT Consideration is a short discussion that takes place during the IEP meeting using known information and results in the decision to continue something already being used or to try or not to try assistive technology. Assessment goes into much more detail, looking closely at the student’s abilities and difficulties and the demands of the environments and tasks. AT Assessment also includes the acquisition of new information.

Assessing Students’ Needs for Assistive Technology
5th Edition, June 2009. Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative

Differences Between Consideration and Assessment

Consideration	Assessment
Can occur within an IEP meeting – may take under 10-20 minutes	Is completed over the span of days, weeks, or even months outside of the IEP meeting.
Can be completed with information the team already knows	Involves obtaining new information to make a decision about needed supports.
Looks at the student’s ability to achieve with/without assistance to receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education	Takes multiple interactions with the student, family, school staff and involves demonstrations and trials of AT to find a match.
	AT assessment is ongoing and should be a continual part of the student’s education planning.

AT assessments are conducted within the student's customary educational setting by a multidisciplinary team knowledgeable about AT devices and services. If at least one team member is not knowledgeable about AT, the team must know where/how to seek assistance.

When outside assessments have been conducted, the IEP team must consider the results in any decision made with respect to the provision of a free and appropriate public education.

08 | AT Assessment Process

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AT Assessment Process

AT Assessment is a process driven by identifying specific needs of the individual and matching AT devices and/or services to help that individual complete a task. AT assessment is not standardized, but should:

- Be systematic - LEAs have identified a systematic approach that everyone follows.
- Be replicable - LEAs should document the AT assessment process and tools used to conduct individual student assessments. This not only provides a roadmap of how the IEP team arrived at its AT assessment decision but allows another IEP team to replicate the results if needed.
- Provide accountability - LEAs will want proof that a piece of AT works before following through with funding.
- Be performed by a team familiar with AT populations and issues - LEAs need to ensure that IEP team members are knowledgeable to make decisions or know where to seek assistance by receiving the appropriate training.

Having operational procedures in place enables school districts to provide consistent, quality AT assessments for all students who may need one.

[See Appendix B to view and print AT Assessment forms](#)

[See Appendix C for AT Assessment Resources](#)

There are 6 basic steps to an AT Assessment:

1. Consideration and Referral
2. Problem Identification
3. Observation
4. Solution Generation
5. Solution Selection
6. Implementation/Follow Up

The following pages will explain each step in detail.

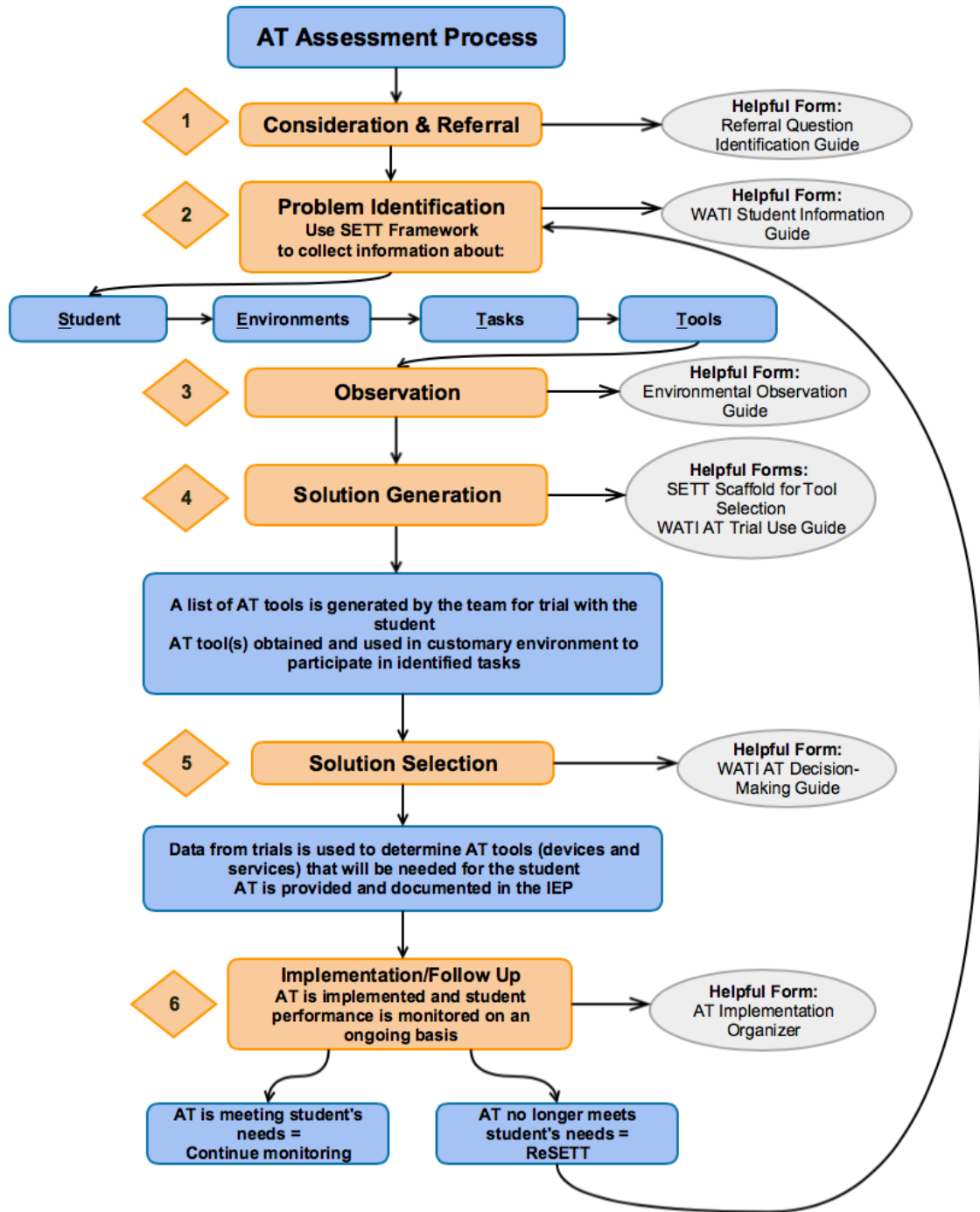
The flow chart on the next page depicts the AT Assessment Process and includes references to helpful forms.

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09 | AT Assessment Flowchart

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See [Appendix B](#) to view and print AT Assessment forms

See [Appendix C](#) for AT Assessment Resources

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10 | Consideration and Referral

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Consideration and Referral

Referral

When should a student be referred for an AT assessment? There are many signs that can indicate whether or not a student requires an AT assessment. Many times it starts from a parent or educator's concern for the way the student is (or is not) able to participate in educational activities. When a student is already on an IEP, the IEP team may go through the AT Consideration Process then refer for an assessment when the following is true:

The student..

- is not using AT, but the IEP team decides it is needed
- is not using AT, and the IEP team does not have enough information
- is using AT but has new/changed needs that may require additions or changes to current AT

School personnel or parents may refer a student for an AT Assessment if one or more of the following is true as well:

The student..

- is being removed from the regular education classroom for any part of the instruction and the student's use of AT would allow them to stay in the regular education classroom
- has difficulty accessing educational materials like textbooks, worksheets, workbooks, novels, etc.

The Wisconsin AT Initiative (WATI) has a Referral/Question Identification Guide that LEAs may adopt and use if desired. [The Referral/Question Identificaiton Guide can be found here](#)

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11 | Consideration and Referral (cont.)

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AT Assessment Team

The Assistive Technology assessment team may or may not have the same members as the student's IEP team; however, best practice is for the IEP team to make up the foundation of the assessment team. These are the people who know the student the best and have potentially been working with him or her for years. The function of an AT assessment team is to develop a shared understanding of the student, the educational environments in which the student regularly participates, and the tasks that the student is expected to be able to complete and/or participate in as an active member of his/her educational environment. The AT assessment team should be able to provide specific information about the Student, Environments, Tasks and potential assistive technology Tools that can help the student receive a free and appropriate public education. The team should be multidisciplinary, with at least one member having a working knowledge of assistive technology as it relates to the student's educational needs.

The assessment team includes persons with knowledge about:

1. The Student - Examples: family members, regular and special education teachers, paraeducators
2. Motor Development - Examples: Occupational Therapists (OT) or Physical Therapists (PT)
3. Curriculum - Examples: Regular education teachers
4. Committing District Resources - Examples: Principal, Special Education Director, Counselor
5. Language - Examples: Speech Language Pathologists (SLP)
6. Assistive Technology Options - Examples: OT, PT, SLP, other AT Specialists

The team is charged with determining when and where to gather additional information about the student, environments, tasks, and tools. There are many resources to help teams in filling out student referral information as well as gathering preliminary information about the student.

[See Appendix B to view and print AT Assessment forms](#)

[See Appendix C for AT Assessment Resources](#)

When teams do not have a person who knows about AT related to the student's needs, a consultation may be opened with Oklahoma ABLE Tech to assist the team in completing the AT Assessment. Consultation forms may be submitted online, faxed, or mailed. Once received ABLE Tech staff with AT knowledge related to the needs of your student will contact your team. [A consultation form may be opened by clicking here.](#)

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12 | Problem Identification: Gather Info about the Student Environments, Tasks, and Tools

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Problem Identification: Collect Information about the Student, Environments, Tasks, and Tools

The following are techniques and tools team members may utilize when gathering information:

- **Observations** - Observe the student in his/her natural settings in various activities. Note the participation patterns of peers. Compare work samples from the student as compared to his or her peers.
- **Interactions** - Interact with the student. Engage him/her in tasks similar to what is required in the classroom. Create opportunities for the student to try assistive technology and/or modifications that might be helpful.
- **Interviews** - Ask the student, family, and/or school personnel specific questions regarding the needs, abilities, interests, and participation patterns of the student.
- **Record Review** - Review past history, medical, or specialized assessment information.
- **Informal and Formal tests** - Formal assessments are NOT required, but may be used when possible and applicable.
- **Protocols and Profiles** - Pre-made forms teams use to record information about a student's abilities and needs. The following are examples of forms teams may use:
 - Georgia Project for Assistive Technology (GPAT) Protocols
 - Protocol for Accommodations in Reading by Don Johnston
 - Written Productivity Profile
 - Pragmatics Profile of Everyday Communication Skills
 - Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative (WATI) Student Information Guide

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13 | Problem Identification (cont.)

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The SETT Framework (Joy Smiley Zabala, Ed. D., ATP) is a systematic process that LEAs may use to conduct an AT assessment. “SETT” is an acronym that stands for: Student, Environments, Tasks, and Tools. The SETT Framework assists teams in exploring and recording information about each of the following areas:

SETT Framework

Student	Environments	Tasks	Tools
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SETT Framework

<p>What is/are functional area(s) of concern? What does the student need to be able to do that is difficult or impossible to do independently at this time?</p>	<p><u>Arrangement:</u> Instructional and physical. <u>Support:</u> Available to both the student and the staff.</p> <p><u>Materials and Equipment:</u> Commonly used by others in the environments, currently being used by the student.</p> <p><u>Access Issues:</u> Technological, physical and instructional.</p> <p><u>Attitudes and Expectations:</u> Staff, family and others.</p>	<p>What SPECIFIC tasks occur in the student's natural environments that enable progress toward mastery of IEP goals and objectives? What SPECIFIC tasks are required for active involvement in identified environments, related to communication, participation, productivity and environmental control?</p>	<p>Teams explore tools after information gathered on the Student, Environments, and Tasks is analyzed and used to address the following questions: Is it expected that the student will not be able to make reasonable progress toward educational goals without assistive technology devices and services?</p> <p>If yes, describe what a useful system of supports, devices, and services for the student would be like if there were such a system of Tools.</p> <p>Brainstorm specific Tools that could be included in a system that addresses student needs.</p> <p>Plan the specifics of the trial(expected changes, when/how tools will be used, cues, etc.)</p>
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SETT Framework

Helpful Form: The WATI Student Information Guide forms

are great to use when collecting information about the student's abilities and needs.

Helpful Form: The WATI Environmental Observation Summary may be used to collect information about the student's environments and tasks as compared to his/ her peers. This form looks at ways in which the student participates as well as barriers to participation. It can be found at this link on pages 48-49.

Helpful Form: The WATI Environmental Observation Summary may be used to collect information about the student's environments and tasks as compared to his/ her peers. This form looks at ways in which the student participates as well as barriers to participation. It can be found at this link on pages 48-49.

Helpful Form: Joy Zabala's SETT Scaffold for Tool Selection is an excellent form that assessment teams can use to compare specific tool features then narrow down choices to see what AT might be used during a trial. The form can be found at this link.

14 | Observation and Solution Generation

okabletech-docs.org/homepage/at-ta-document-part-b/07-at-assessment/14-observation-solution-generation/

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Observation

Using a form that leads you through an observation can be extremely helpful. Tips for your observation include: Up until now teams may find that they have much of the information about the student's abilities, environments, tasks, and current tools just by reflecting on their past interactions with the student. Since doing an assessment requires obtaining new information, teams will want to complete observations of the student in the environment(s) where the student needs to complete tasks that may require assistive technology. This is another opportunity for teams to share responsibilities!

Using a form that leads you through an observation can be extremely helpful.

One form that may be used is the [WATI Environmental Observation Summary Guide found here.](#)

Tips for your observation include:

- Asking multiple team members to complete the same observation form in their own environments.
- Observing how much/often and in what ways the student is participating.
- Observing how much/often and in what ways the student's peers are participating.
- Noting whom the student is interacting with: Students vs Adults.
- Noting if there are any noticeable barriers to the student's participation.

Assign a deadline for observations to be completed and schedule a meeting to compare team notes.



Solution Generation

Once team members have gathered sufficient information on the student's needs and abilities, environments where AT may be needed, and tasks that must be completed, it is time to brainstorm and research possible solutions that may help the student increase independence and participation in the least restrictive environment and ultimately reach those IEP goals! Since devices are phased out of production and new technology comes out on an almost daily basis, it is very important for teams to know the features of the device a student needs above knowing the exact names of devices (at this stage). The goal of Solution Generation will be to make a list of the features a device(s) must have and then determine which device(s) match well with the student.

One form that may be used is the [SETT Scaffold for Tool Selection found on this page.](#)

The SETT Scaffold for Tool Selection form will first walk team members through listing features of a device. Examples of features include: portability, durability, word prediction, external or onscreen keyboard, text-to-speech, dictation, etc. After listing needed features, team members will need to ensure that someone on the team knows the names of specific devices that have these features or they will need to do independent research and/or consult with an outside entity - like Oklahoma ABLE Tech - to generate solutions that may work for the student.

To view ABLE Tech's [AT Discovery pages for device ideas, click here.](#)

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15 | Solution Generation (cont.)

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Solution Generation (cont.)

Trial Device(s)

Once a list of specific AT tools is generated, the AT Assessment Team should prepare to complete AT trials with the student. To prepare for a trial with an AT device, the AT assessment team may use a pre-made form to ensure preparations are adequate/complete for each student.

One form that may be used is the [WATI Trial Use Guide found here](#)

The guide leads the IEP team to answer questions like:

- Who is going to coordinate the trial to help acquire the device(s)?
- What training may be needed for the student, family, and/or team members on how to use the AT?
- Who will set up, troubleshoot, recharge, and otherwise manage the AT during the trial?
- Where, when, and during what tasks will the student use the AT during the trial?
- What outcomes will determine success of the trial, whether or not additional AT should be trialed, and/or whether the trial should be discontinued?

Where to Get AT Devices for Trial

- The LEAs AT inventory
- Visit device manufacturers' websites for information about trials and local sales representatives
- Oklahoma also has two state-specific resources for obtaining trials with AT devices:
 1. AIM Center at the [Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped](#) (www.olbph.org)
 2. [Oklahoma ABLE Tech](#): Oklahoma's statewide Assistive Technology Act Program (www.okabletech.org)

See [Appendix B to view and print forms](#) and [Appendix C for a link to Choosing Specific AT to Trial Resources](#)

Collect Data

The IEP team will need to collect data about each device trial to provide objective information about student performance and to help the team make a decision about which AT device(s) are appropriate for the student. This may be recorded on the WATI Trial Use Guide. There are a variety of data collection tools that can be used to document a student's progress during an AT device trial. It may be necessary to consider the funding source during the trial as some entities require a video of the student using the device as criteria for funding it.

See [Appendix B to view and print Data Collection forms](#) and [Appendix C for a link to Data Collection Resources](#)

After completing trials and collecting data, the team should know which device(s) will meet the student's needs. If more than one device meets the same need, the team may need to consider additional questions to select the best device.

- Will a no- or low-tech solution work just as well as a high tech solution?
- Will the technology work in all necessary settings or environments?
- If it will be moved regularly, how portable is it?
- How easy is it to learn and operate?
- How reliable is it under school and/or home conditions?
- Does it need to work with other technologies?
- Are there sufficient technical resources available at the school or district level to support the technology?

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16 | Solution Selection

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Solution Selection: AT is Provided and Documented in the IEP

Making a Decision

Once trials are completed and information is gathered, it must now be utilized, but making unanimous decisions as a team can be very challenging. Having a prescriptive process can help team members know what to expect, understand their roles, and allow them to duplicate the steps while serving on other teams. Remember: All members of the team must have equal say in decisions that are made.

Roles and responsibilities during team meetings should be determined before starting and should be shared. In each team meeting, there should be at least one facilitator, a recorder, and a timekeeper.

What should team members bring to their meetings?

- The SETT process and trial information that has been gathered
- Chart paper and markers
- Pre-made forms and other resources that were used in gathering the information
- Web access as available to use online resources
- Knowledgeable person in his or her area of expertise as needed

Start by confirming the meeting's time frame, make introductions, and provide an overview of the process that is about to take place. Let members know that ALL input will be written and displayed.

Steps of Decision-Making

1. Problem Identification – Completed during the Student, Environments, and Tasks part of the SETT process - Address both strengths and needs of student, consider demands of the environment and tasks that need to be accomplished. Before generating solutions, select one task on which to focus.
2. Solution Generation – Completed during the Tools part of the SETT process – Follow brainstorming rules and use resources as needed, pre-made forms, online supports, product catalogues, etc.
3. Solution Selection – Encourage discussion, combining, sequencing, and prioritizing. Seek to obtain a consensus.
4. Implementation – What device(s) will be needed? What service(s) will be needed? Who will set the tool(s) up for use by the student, train the student/staff, and maintain/repair the device? Who will monitor the student's use of the device?
5. Follow-Up – Over time things change with the Student, Environments, and Tasks which may lead to changes in the Tools. There may also be new people involved, new questions may come up, or new technology may be available. Reevaluating the situation or ReSETTING is NOT starting over.

The [WATI AT Decision-Making Guide](#) can be used to collect team thoughts on the assessment process.

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17 | AT is Provided

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AT is Provided

Once the team decides what tool(s) are needed (devices and services), it is the Local Education Agency or LEA's responsibility to ensure the needed AT is provided at no cost to the student and family. Depending on the type of AT required, there are many funding sources available to the student including Medicaid, private insurances, and additional private sources.

The following are basic actions needed to obtain AT devices:

1. Identify the source of equipment and associated costs.
 - a. Locate vendor or manufacturer.
 - b. Obtain a price quote in writing.
2. Identify possible funding sources.
 - a. Determine person(s) who will seek funding sources.
 - b. Determine requirement for each funding source.
3. Order equipment (consider obtaining a maintenance agreement, warranty, or other safeguard).
4. Plan for training as needed.
5. Set up equipment.
6. Establish technical support system (include a plan for repairs including, obtaining loaner equipment).

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18 | AT is Documented in IEP

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AT is Documented in the IEP

The law is very clear that assistive technology is to be included in a student's IEP. Documenting AT in the IEP ensures there is a clear understanding of the AT devices and services that are needed for the student as identified by the IEP team. There are several places in the IEP that are appropriate for documenting AT. However, it is more important that the information regarding AT be included in the IEP than *where* that specific information is included. The following are areas that can include AT:

- A. Overall Objective Statements
- B. Goals & Objectives
- C. Supplementary Aids and Services

AT devices may also appear as specially designed instruction, related services, assistive technology, modifications, accommodations, support for school personnel, transportation, transition planning, and participation in state and local assessments.

When the IEP team recommends an AT device as part of the IEP, a brand name of the specific device need not be specified on the IEP. It may be more beneficial to list the needed device features as more than one specific device may meet the student's needs.

AT as Special Education

When assistive technology is included as Special Education on the IEP, the team will discuss its need in the Overall Objective Statements and/or incorporate it into the annual goals and/or short term objectives. How AT will contribute to the functional performance of the student (overall objective statement) or to achieving the goal and objectives must be clearly stated. The inclusion of AT in the IEP requires an explanation of how and why the child will use the technology to accomplish a particular goal and/or participate in the educational setting. The device could be part of the conditions needed to accomplish the goal and objectives.

IEP Examples: Overall Objective Statement

Dillon has the academic ability to do grade level work but when the assignment involves writing, he is unable to complete the work. Dillon currently uses an application on a tablet to take pictures of worksheets and type answers. He transitions to a word processing program or device to complete assignments of multiple sentences.

IEP Examples: Goals and Objectives

Using a word processor program with a spell checker, Dillon will compose a 3 paragraph paper using at least 15 sentences, with 80% accuracy in the use of punctuation, capitalization and grammar for 5 assignments in a grading period.

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19 | AT as Supplementary Aids and Services

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AT as Supplementary Aids and Services


The IDEA requires that special education and related services be made available to all children and youth with disabilities². School districts may provide students with disabilities AT devices and services in conjunction with other related services. School districts must provide related services to a student with a disability at no cost to the parent. In EdPlan, AT as a related service comes under Supplemental Aids. AT can be a supplementary aid or service to facilitate a student’s participation in a general education class or other appropriate education-related setting. Students with disabilities have the right to an education in the least restrictive environment. To be successful in the least restrictive environment and to benefit from their education, students may need supplementary aids and services. Supplementary aids, which may allow a student to successfully participate in a general education class or other education-related setting, include a variety of assistive devices that compensate for the disability and allow the student to perform the required tasks.














AT is necessary as a supplementary aid and service if its use (along with other necessary aids) supports the student sufficiently to succeed in the current educational placement, and in the absence of the aid, requires the student’s removal to a more restrictive setting.

For students to be successful with AT devices, they need to receive training on the use of the equipment. Classroom staff also need to be knowledgeable on how and when to use the device and may also require training. When including AT as a supplementary aid and service, it may be necessary to indicate services for assistive technology training and for implementation of the assistive technology device.

IEP Example: Supplemental Aids

Add Supplemental Aids

 Please describe how and when each supplementary aid will be used. Include time spent training the student on use of the device (who will train, number and length of sessions) as well as how the device will be implemented into the student’s curriculum (i.e. the educational areas and types of activities for which the device would be used).

Adding Services from a List					
Supplemental Aids	Number Sessions	Session Length	Start Date / End Date	Training	Implementation
Speech-Generating Device ▼	3 per week ▼	20 min	09/01/2017  08/31/2018 	Student and teacher will receive training by SLP for 3 sessions per week from 09/01/2017 to 10/31/2017. 	Device will be implemented daily for class discussions and student presentations beginning 09/01/2017 
-none- ▼	per week ▼	min			
-none- ▼	per week ▼	min			
-none- ▼	per week ▼	min			

Add More

Additional information regarding AT devices and services that need to be included in the IEP can be included as Supplementary Aids and Services under “LRE and General Education.”

20 | AT as Supplementary... (cont.)

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Under the IDEA, a student must be receiving special education to receive related services. However, under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 the student may receive auxiliary services without qualifying for special education. Some examples of auxiliary aids and services include:

Notetaking device	Specialized gym equipment
Digital/audio texts	Assistive listening devices
TV enlargers	Voice synthesizers
Braille calculators, printers, or typewriters	Telecommunications devices
Closed caption decoders	Interpreter

[See Appendix B to view and print forms for AT in the IEP and Appendix C for a link to AT in the IEP Resources](#)

There is truly no wrong way to record AT in the IEP. The most important point is to capture the process the team plans to pursue or is currently pursuing and record pertinent information related to the student's needs and use of AT.

Remember, it is best practice for schools/districts to develop operational procedures for how those completing IEPs should record AT in the IEP.

[See Appendix B to view and print sample operational procedures for AT in the IEP and Appendix C for a link to AT in the IEP Resources](#)

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21 | Implementation / Follow up

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Implementation / Follow Up

Once the needed assistive technology has been acquired and devices/services have been included in the IEP as required, there is still much to determine as a team. There are three areas of concern regarding implementation of AT:

1. Inclusion of AT in classroom instruction
2. Student and staff training
3. Equipment management

Students will have much more success using AT in the classroom to accomplish educational tasks when a good implementation plan is developed and used. Schools should also develop a contingency plan in order to ensure that a student has access to the AT tool or system in the event that the primary AT malfunctions.

The following areas should be noted when evaluating how well the AT is being implemented:

- Tools/Strategies - Identify the specific AT tools or systems that will be used.
- Specific Tasks - Identify specific tasks for which the AT will be used by the student and to what extent the student will participate. Teams want to see student participation increase with the use of AT.
- Environments - Identify when and where the student will be using the AT. Determine how the AT will be transported from one environment to another.
- Related IEP Goals - Identify where the use of the AT correlates with the IEP.
- Develop a system for recording implementation activities and participation results- This will help to communicate information about the student's AT use to all team members and help the team make decisions about the types of AT and supports the student may need in the future.
- Maintenance, Training, and Customization - Identify what components of the AT need to be maintained (i.e. the battery charged, cleaned, replaced). Ensure all personnel working with the student and his/her AT are trained (include content on which personnel need to be trained and timelines for training). Determine who will customize the AT (i.e. The speech pathologist will program new vocabulary on the speech generating device when needed).
- Repairs and Contingency Planning - Note information about repairs (i.e. who to contact for repairs and how they will be funded). Develop a contingency plan to stipulate how the student will be provided with a temporary replacement or low-tech backup while the primary AT tool or system is being repaired (i.e., use ABLE Tech's educational loan program to borrow a device during repairs).

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22 | Implementation / Follow up (cont.)

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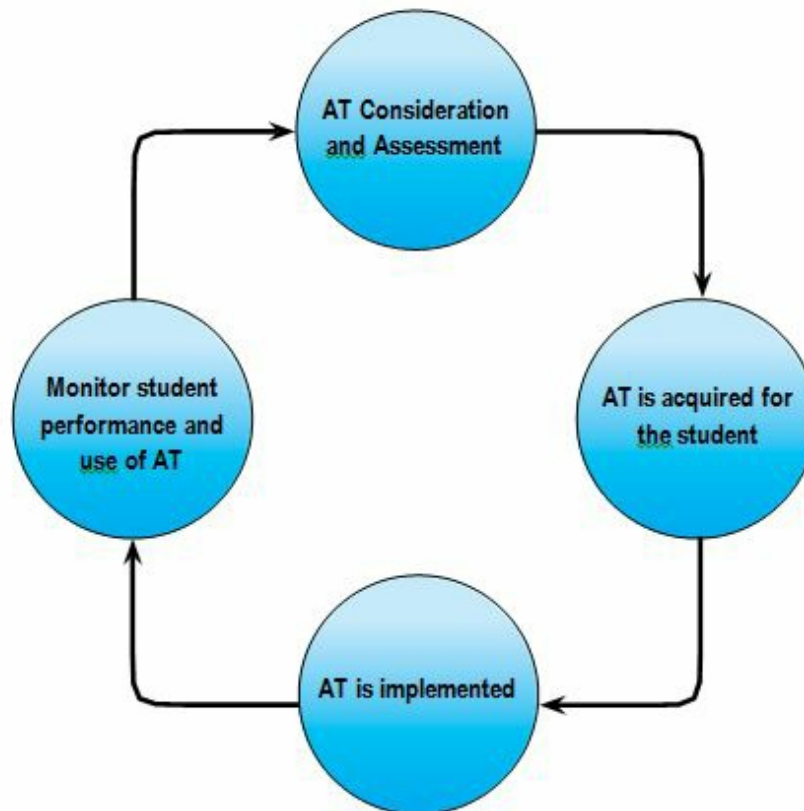
Students will need to be instructed in all aspects of AT use including:

1. Operational – Skills needed to make the AT device work
2. Functional – Skills needed to use the AT to complete real tasks
3. Strategic – Skills involved in knowing when to use the AT device in the real world and when to use other accommodations
4. Social – Skills needed to use the device appropriately around other people

Janice Light (1989) Toward a definition of communicative competence for individuals using augmentative and alternative communication systems, Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 5:2, 137-144, DOI: 1080/07434618912331275126; <https://doi.org/10.1080/07434618912331275126>

ABLE Tech has an updated Implementation Organizer to help your team include all necessary information about the student in development of his/her implementation plan.
These forms can be found in Appendix B.

AT in the school setting is a process and can be started at any point on the student's educational path.



23 | AT Assessment Process (cont.) & Periodic Review

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When true systems change is desired, Gayl Bowser and Penny Reed explain in their guide *Education Tech Points: A Framework for Assistive Technology* the action items necessary to improve AT implementation and ensure administrators are involved.

1. Maintain an inventory of frequently needed and commonly used AT devices.
2. Provide staff training in implementing IEPs that include AT.
3. Develop recommended district procedures for implementation plans.
4. Develop a system to ensure that supervisors are informed.
5. Release staff to attend planning meetings.
6. Provide information regarding the district's technical assistance resources.

It is critical for school districts to actively participate in the development of implementation procedures (as well as other AT procedures) for their districts. For teams that need a starting point for developing these procedures, see Appendix C: Local School System Assistive Technology Guidelines and Procedures. Districts may use this and edit to meet the needs of students and staff in the local school system.

Periodic Review



It is important to periodically review a student's progress in all areas of AT use. This can happen at the student's annual IEP team meeting or when requested by a team member. Having data on the student's use of the AT will be essential in determining the continued need and use of specific AT tools. Using the SETT process at this point to ReSETT or look at the student's current abilities, needs, environments, tasks and tools will serve as a great way to determine if the student's implementation plan is working and can stay the same or whether the plan needs to be changed to better meet the student's educational needs.

[See Appendix B to view and print AT Implementation forms](#) and [Appendix C for a link to AT Implementation Resources](#)

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