

# Assistive Technology

## Assistive Technology Devices and Services

Many children with disabilities have difficulties with reading, writing, and math. Some children have problems with vision, hearing, listening and/or communicating. Others have physical, mobility, and motor problems. Assistive technology helps children use their strengths to compensate or "work around" weaknesses caused by the disability. Assistive technology includes "devices" and "services."



**IDEA 2004 requires IEP teams to consider the assistive technology needs of all children with disabilities.** (20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(3)(B)(v))

The IEP team makes decisions about assistive technology devices and services based on your child's unique needs so that he can be more confident and independent. The law requires schools to use assistive technology devices and services "to maximize accessibility for children with disabilities." (20 U.S.C. 1400(c)(5)(H))

If the IEP team determines that your child needs assistive technology devices and services, the school district is responsible for providing these and cannot use lack of availability or cost as an excuse.

**Note:** Assistive technology is **not** a substitute for teaching your child to read and write.

**IDEA defines an 'assistive technology device' as...**

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 functional capabilities of a child with a disability. (20 U.S.C. 1401(1))

**IDEA defines an 'assistive technology service' as...**

any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. Such term includes -

(A) the evaluation...

(B) purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of assistive technology devices...

(C) selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing...

(D) coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices...

(D) training or technical assistance for such child, or ...the family of such child...

(F) training or technical assistance for professionals... (20 U.S.C. 1401(2))

IDEA 2004, [Wrightslaw: Special Education Law, 2nd Edition](#), p. 49.

## Assistive Technology Training

**IDEA 2004 also requires schools to provide assistive technology training for the teachers, child, and family.** (20 U.S.C. 1400(2)(E) & (F))

Your child's teachers may need training so they know how to use a device. Your child and your family may need A.T. services so you can learn to use a device. Assistive technology services, **including training**, need to be written in your child's IEP.

## Assistive Technology Evaluation

If you think your child needs assistive technology, you need to request that the IEP team refer your child for an evaluation by an assistive technology specialist. If the IEP team refers your child, the evaluation is at no cost to you. An assistive technology evaluation may include a functional evaluation of your child in school or at home. Be sure to include the evaluation in the IEP, including the expected date to start and finish the evaluation.

Assistive technology specialists have special knowledge and expertise. If your child's needs are complex or you anticipate resistance, ask the assistive technology specialist to join the IEP team.

- See more at: Wrightslaw <http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/atech.index.htm#sthash.OPdzSaMX.dpuf>