

The IDEA 04 defines assistive technology (AT) 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 the functional capabilities of a child with a disability.

*AT service* is considered "any service that directly assists a child in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device."

An AT service can include an AT evaluation; repairing or replacing AT devices; training or technical assistance for the child or, where appropriate, the family and other individuals who "provide services to, employ, or are otherwise substantially involved in the life functions of the child".

The AT evaluation process should involve parents and service providers equally to determine which tool, if any, will help a child. The process focuses on the question: "What functional task do we want this child to be able to do that he/she is unable to do at a level that reflects his/her skills and abilities?" The evaluators must also discuss the expectations of the short term and long term use of AT.

Office of Special Education Services (OSEP) has clarified that the IEP team makes the AT decision based on whether the individual child needs the device and or service in order to receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and that, if so, it must be in the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Some examples of AT that may increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability are:

### *The Mechanics of Writing*

- Pencil/pen with adaptive grip
- Slantboard
- Portable word processor

### *Alternative Computer Access*

- Keyboard w/accessibility options
- Word prediction
- Track ball/track pad
- Voice recognition software

### *Composing Written Material*

- Word cards/word book/ word wall
- Pocket dictionary/thesaurus
- Writing templates
- Talking word processing

### *Communication*

- Communication board/book
- Eye gaze board/frame
- Voice output device
- Device w/speech synthesis for typing

### *Reading*

- Predictable books
- Changes in text size, spacing, color
- Use of pictures/symbols with text
- Electronic books

### *Learning and Studying*

- Print or picture schedule
- Pagers/electronic reminders
- Palm computers

# ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

## *Math*

- Abacus/Math line
- Enlarged math worksheets
- Money calculator or Coinulator
- Talking watches/clocks

## *Recreation and Leisure*

- Toys adapted w/Velcro or single switch
- Adaptive sporting equipment
- Universal cuff/strap
- Computer software

## *Activities of Daily Living (ADLs)*

- Nonslip materials to hold things in place
- Adaptive eating/drinking utensils and/or devices
- Adaptive dressing equipment
- Adaptive devices for hygiene

## *Mobility*

- Walker
- Grab bars and rails
- Powered mobility toy
- Powered wheelchair w/joystick or other controls

## *Environmental Control*

- Light switch extension
- Use of interface and switch to turn on electrical appliances
- Radio/ultrasound to remotely control appliances

## *Positioning and Seating*

- Non-slip surface on chair
- Bolster, rolled towel, blocks for feet
- Adapted/alternate chair, sidelyer, stander
- Custom fitted wheelchair or insert

## *Vision*

- Magnifier
- Large print books
- Screen reader, text reader
- Braille translation software

## *Hearing*

- Computer/portable word processor
- Signaling device
- Personal amplification system/hearing aid
- Closed captioning

*Adapted from Reed, P. & Walser, P. (2000)  
Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative*