



Arc Guide to Assistive Technology (AT) for Students Receiving Special Education Services

Some students with disabilities receiving special education services may need Assistive Technology (AT).

In special education, AT may be a device or a service.

- A device can be
 - An item or piece of equipment to help a person with a disability keep or learn skills.
 - Something anyone can buy, something made only for the student, or something adapted for the student
- A service can be
 - Help with choosing, getting and/or using a device
 - Designing, adapting, repairing, fitting, and/or maintaining a device
 - Training the student or others on how to use a device

AT does not always mean an electronic device. Examples of AT devices:

- Pencil grips
- Highlighters, colored paper, adapted scissors, graphic organizers
- Devices for dressing, eating,
- Visual schedule, picture board
- Electronic devices - computer, switch, control unit, voice output devices, electronic books, adapted keyboard, Smart Pen

AT devices and services should be considered for all students receiving special education. In considering, the team may:

- Decide it is not needed
- Decide it is needed and is already being used effectively
- Decide it is needed but doesn't know what device should be used; then the team must explore options
- Be unsure what it is; then the team must find out what it is

After considering AT, the team may decide to do an evaluation to get more information. If the team does not recommend an evaluation and you think an evaluation should be done, ask the team to do an AT evaluation. If you made this request verbally, follow-up with a written request.



A student's need for AT is determined through an evaluation. The evaluation* must be done in the student's school environment(s). The evaluation looks at the needs of the student with a focus on what task children do throughout the school day. The evaluation determines if the student needs AT to do that task. When it is determined that the student needs AT to do the task, the AT assessment recommends devices and services.

One way to gather information for an AT assessment is the SETT framework. This framework is used by many schools to make good decisions about AT. The SETT framework collects information about:

- The Student
- The Environments - where the student is
- The Tasks - what the student needs to do
- The Tools - the AT device(s)

If the evaluation determines the student needs AT, the need and the device/services must be documented in the student's Individual Education Program (IEP).

- The school must give the student the device when the IEP team decides it is needed. This does not mean the school must pay for
- The IEP must state
 - The device(s) to be used
 - What training is needed for the student and staff to use the device
 - Where the device will be used and where the service will be provided
 - What will happen when the device isn't available
 - AT devices and services may be listed within the modification and accommodations section of the IEP
 - There may be a goal or objective within the IEP related to using AT devices and/or services

Additional information:

- A school purchased device should be able to be used in the student's home and/or community if the student needs the device at home or in the community to receive a free, appropriate public education (FAPE). Discuss and document on the IEP where school purchased devices can be used.

Additional Resources:

Minnesota Department of Education Assistive Technology Manual
<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/sped/tech/>



For further information or advocacy services, contact The Arc Minnesota at 952-920-0855 or toll-free at 833.450.1494 or visit www.arcminnesota.org. (Please note: *This document is not legal advice, and should not be construed as such. Thus, no information herein should replace the sound advice of an attorney.*)

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