



The Consideration of Assistive Technology in the IEP

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Assistive Technology (AT) has come a long way and is giving people, who at once were unable to speak, read, show emotion, and write the ability to do so. We are seeing it more and more now thanks to the advancement of modern technology. AT has even made its way to TV in the show, "Speechless," where the eldest son JJ that has Cerebral Palsy, is nonverbal, and in high school. He uses a laser that is mounted to his eyeglasses and points it by moving his head to a communication board connected to his wheelchair. The board has letters, numbers, words, and other things to help him communicate. These technological

breakthroughs are changing people's lives and giving them the ability to live a more enriched life.

Using AT in the school can enable children with disabilities to participate more fully in all aspects of life. It can also help them access their right to Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). There must be careful consideration from the IEP team in order for your child to be able to use AT in school.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) defines Assistive Technology 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 children with disabilities”. This means that schools just cannot say, “Well, I don’t think that will work for your child.” They must carefully consider whether a student needs AT as part of FAPE. The consideration should be about what the student needs to accomplish the task and if and what kind of AT can aid in enabling the student to meet his/her goal. Some other areas of consideration are but not limited to, communication, seeing, mobility, cognitive processing, spelling, reading, math, self-care, daily organization, written organization, and recreation.

The IEP team should include a member that is informed about different types of devices and AT that can be used and where to find it. In addition, consideration should be made about support for the student, e.g., how will the student learn to use the equipment or if there will be training to the student and family if the AT will be going home with the student? There may also be the need for modifications or customizations if the device needs to be attached to a wheelchair, so the person on the IEP team will know whom to contact in the school district in order to have those things done.

AT has done wonders for people and while it is rather new, it has really changed the lives of so many. With the everyday advancements of technology, I cannot even imagine what the future will look like when it comes to AT but I am excited to see what will be in store.

For more information on consideration of assistive technology in the IEP, please visit the [Center for Parent Information Resources](#). Some examples of assisted technology can be found at [Understood.org](#).



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