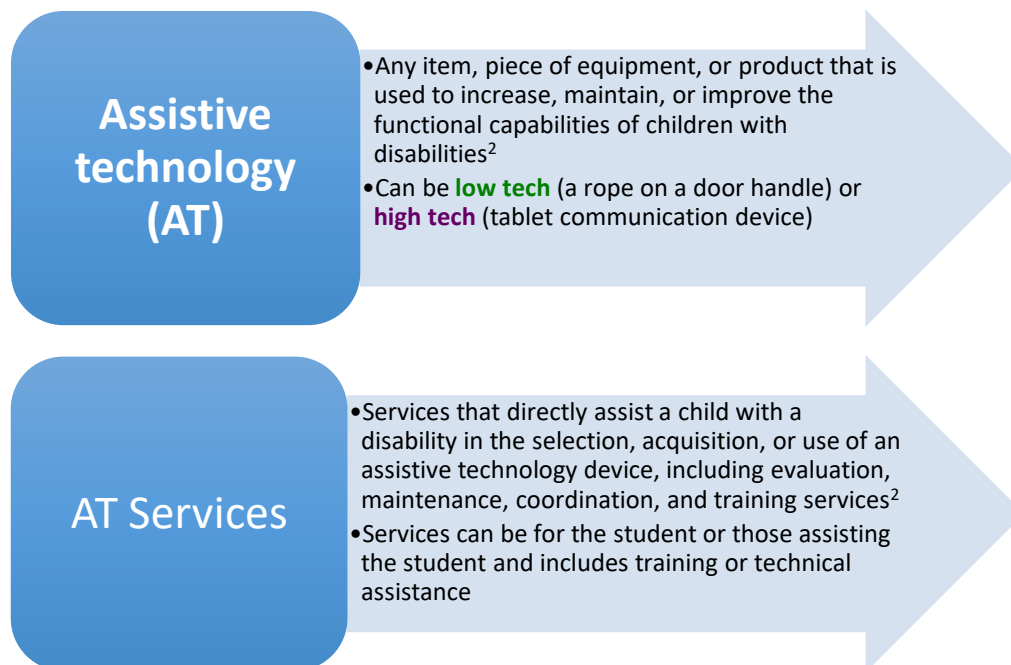


# ACADEMY OF PEDIATRIC PHYSICAL THERAPY

## Assistive Technology and the Individualized Education Program

The use of assistive technology (AT) and AT services is designed to support students to more effectively and independently participate in their educational activities and be fully included in their educational program<sup>1</sup>. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA, 2004) has provisions to ensure that AT and AT services are available to students who need it to access their education<sup>2</sup>. IEP Team members including physical therapists are required to “...**consider** whether the child requires assistive technology devices and services...” when creating or reviewing Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals.

### What are Assistive Technology and Assistive Technology Services Under IDEA?



The combination of AT and AT services is vital for the success of AT to meet student needs.

## What Does “Consider AT” Mean<sup>3</sup>?

The IEP team has a collaborative discussion around some guiding questions in relation to the student and IEP goals; for example:

Question	Team Discussion Considerations
What does the student need or want to do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How does the student meet expectations now?</li><li>• What are the student’s difficulties or barriers?</li><li>• What are the student’s likes and preferences?</li></ul>
Can AT help the student?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How does the student do with expectations without AT?</li><li>• Is there any part of the academic skill, routine, function that AT can help make the student more independent?</li><li>• Remember, think <b>low tech</b> first</li></ul>
If AT can help, what kind?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Has any AT helped in the past?</li><li>• Who on the team has expertise to determine AT needed?</li><li>• Is an AT evaluation and assessment necessary?</li></ul>
Is AT currently used?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If so, is it working?</li><li>• Would another type of AT be better?</li></ul>

Based on these questions and discussion, the team may decide that 1) AT is not necessary; or 2) The current AT is working; or 3) AT is needed and/or further AT assessment is needed to determine the AT that is best for the student and the task.

### If AT is Needed, How Should it be Included in the IEP?

The AT and the AT services needed should be recorded. Note: The term “assistive technology” may not be the one used in your state. Check your state guidelines for the term used in your IEP process.

The AT is included in the annual goal with specific outcome criteria for measurement of skill progress while using the AT. Record

- the specific device
- any features required;
- the duration, frequency, and location of use

Specify any AT services required, including evaluation, trial of devices, training, customizing, data collection, maintaining, and coordination for the student who will be using the AT or helping the student use the AT.

### Who Pays for the AT?

- The school is responsible for providing the device if it is identified as part of the student’s IEP
- Families who prefer to purchase the device have some funding options:
  - Public sources
    - Medicaid
    - State Child Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)
    - State Assistive Technology Centers
  - Private sources
    - Medical Insurance
    - Civic and Volunteer Organizations
    - AT Manufacturers

## What Is the Role of a Physical Therapist in AT Consideration and Implementation?

AT consideration:

- Identification of the what the student needs or wants to do
- Identification of barriers to function and expectations
- Identification of if and what AT can be used to increase student independence
- AT assessment or referral for AT assessment

AT implementation:

- Coordination with IEP team, caregivers, and AT service providers (if necessary)
- Selection and purchase of AT
- Training of family, child, teachers, and other service providers on use
- Evaluation of effectiveness of the AT
- Assistance and coordination with maintenance of device and repairs if necessary
- Recognition for the need for changes or discontinuation

### Laws and Regulations<sup>4</sup>

Although this fact sheet discusses AT in the context of the IEP, there are other laws and regulations related to the use of AT in educational settings that are helpful and listed here.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**, Title II or Title III <https://www.ada.gov/>

**The Assistive Technology Act**

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-108publ364/html/PLAW-108publ364.htm>

**Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)** <https://www.ed.gov/essa?src=ft>

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

Part B <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/b/300.105>

Part C <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/c/a/303.13>

**Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act**

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html>

### Where Can I Learn More About AT?

**Assistive Technology for Young Children: Creating Inclusive Learning Environments [Book]**

<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED517300>

A guide and resource to support early childhood providers of all disciplines in best practices to selecting, purchasing, and implementing AT and AT services embedded into children's natural learning environments.

**Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs** <https://www.ataporg.org>

Organization of the State Assistive Technology Programs. Their website has the listing of the state programs, resources, and information on loan programs, financing, events and training on AT.

**CAST** <http://www.cast.org/>

Organization dedicated to reducing barriers to learning through universal design for learning, assistive technology and more.

**Center on Technology and Disability** <https://www.ctdinstitute.org/>

Online resource center of the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to support effective use of instructional and assistive technology. This website contains resources, training modules, handouts, and more on AT. There are portals for all audiences including teachers, service providers, families, etc.

**Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center: AT for Infants, Toddlers, and Young Children**

<http://ectacenter.org/topics/atech/atech.asp>

Online resource for definitions, laws & regulations, state contacts, funding sources, best practices and training resources for assistive technology and other early childhood education needs.

**Innovations in Special Education Technology** <http://www.isetcec.org/>

A division of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), formally known as Technology and Media (TAM), focused on instructional and assistive technology foster inclusion and participation of students with disabilities in their education. Online resource for advocacy, practice, clearinghouse and publications on AT including the Journal of Special Education Technology (JSET).

**National Assistive Technology Act Technical Assistance and Training Center (AT3)**

<https://www.at3center.net/>

Online resource center for information about the Assistive Technology Act, State Assistive Technology Program and other AT specific information.

**Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North American (RESNA)**

<https://www.resna.org/>

Professional organization for AT professionals that provides AT standards, AT certification, and information including the [Assistive Technology Journal](#), a blog, and continuing education.

**Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology: Guiding the Provision of Quality AT Services**

<https://qiat.org/>

This website has links to resources, templates, and an active list serve on all things related to assistive technology in educational environments. They have published a book [entitled Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology: A Comprehensive Guide to AT Services](#) through CAST publishing.

*There are numerous Web sites and publications available on this subject; this list is not meant to be all inclusive. Many of the listed sites have links to additional resources.*

## References

1. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, 20 U.S.C. Retrieved from <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/b/300.105>

2. The QIAT Community (2012). Quality indicators for Including Assistive Technology in the IEP. Retrieved from <https://qiat.org/docs/3%20QIs%20for%20Including%20AT%20in%20the%20IEP.pdf>
3. The QIAT Community (2012). Quality Indicators for Consideration of Assistive Technology. Available at <https://qiat.org/docs/1%20QIs%20for%20Consideration.pdf>
4. ECTA Center (2019). Federal laws & regulations for AT. Retrieved from <http://ectacenter.org/topics/atech/laws.asp>

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