

# Assistive Technology

Assistive technology (AT) is any item that supports a child's ability to participate actively in his or her home, childcare program, school, or other community settings. It is a broad term that includes items ranging from something as "low tech" as a foam wedge for positioning to something as "high tech" as a power wheelchair for independent mobility or augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices, and more.<sup>1</sup> AT can help a child play with peers, communicate, make choices, move independently and participate more fully with their family, peers or caregivers. All children who are eligible to receive early intervention services are also eligible to receive assistive technology, if it is included as part of their Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) [34CFR§ 300.324\(a\)\(2\)\(v\)](#).

## The IFSP Team process:

The IFSP team uses the Child and Family Assessment to have a discussion about the family's concerns, priorities and resources. The team uses the information generated by this process to identify outcomes. Those outcomes *may* require Assistive Technology services and devices as strategies to assist the child and family to meet their outcomes. Funding services and supports may differ based on whether a child also has private or public insurance, is DDD eligible, ALTCS eligible or ASDB eligible. All IFSP teams are responsible for having the expertise to work with the family as part of the IFSP Team to identify, access, provide and support the family to use assistive technology services and devices to meet IFSP outcomes when appropriate.

## Documenting the IFSP Team's Decision

If the team has determined that AT services or devices are necessary to support an outcome, the IFSP must document that discussion and those services on the following pages of the IFSP:

1. **Child and Family Assessment** – any reader should be able to understand the everyday routines and activities that the team anticipates that the AT service/device will support.
2. **IFSP Outcome for Child and Family** –any reader should be able to understand how the team anticipates that the AT service/device will support the identified outcome(s).
3. **Services Needed to Make Progress Towards Outcome** – this page must document the services that will be needed to support the acquisition and use of the identified AT service/device to support the outcome. IFSP teams must identify the appropriate team member to complete the AT assessment, and once completed the specific AT equipment that will be acquired. The IFSP team must identify the frequency and intensity of the visits that that team member will provide support to the family and the Team Lead (if that person is not the TL) to assess, acquire and use the AT device/service within the family's everyday routines and activities.
4. The IFSP team must also determine whether or not the core team has the expertise to complete the AT assessment and/or to support the family to use the AT device or service. If the team

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<sup>1</sup> Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center website <http://www.ectacenter.org>

does not have the expertise to complete the AT assessment the AzEIP provider can subcontract with other providers, but must bill AzEIP and/or DDD through the TBEIS contract. If the team does not have the expertise to complete the AT assessment the team should contact Denise Dombrowski at AzEIP for AzEIP-only or ASDB children or Frank Rutledge at DDD for DDD eligible children.

### Acquiring and Paying for Devices:

Once the AT assessment is completed the team may need to purchase specialty equipment to support the outcome(s):

- For children with private insurance, if the family has consented to bill their private insurance, the team should first use the insurer's processes to purchase the AT device.
- For children with AHCCCS (e.g. an acute plan), the team should first use the health plan's processes to purchase the AT device, if the child has not been determined ALTCS eligible, either DDD or Elderly/Physically Disabled (EPD), the team should also submit an ALTCS application to support the funding of the support/device.
- When the family has not consented to use their private insurance, or public or private insurance does not authorize the purchase of the identified equipment:
  - For children who are AzEIP eligible the team should contact Denise Dombrowski, [DeniseDombrowski@azdes.gov](mailto:DeniseDombrowski@azdes.gov)
  - For children who have services funded through DDD the team should contact Frank Rutledge [FRutledge@azdes.gov](mailto:FRutledge@azdes.gov)
  - For children who have services funded through ASDB, the team must coordinate with the ASDB team member to purchase the equipment.