

# EARLY INTERVENTION AND ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

## What is Assistive Technology?

### Legal Definition

An Assistive Technology device means 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 an infant or toddler with a disability. The term does not include a medical device that is surgically implanted, including a cochlear implant, or the optimization (e.g. mapping), maintenance, or replacement of that device. (92 NAC 52 003.06B1).

### What does this mean?

Assistive technologies (AT) are tools that help a child do a developmentally appropriate task that he/she could not otherwise do. If a child has difficulty seeing, hearing, communicating, sitting, standing, moving around, playing or other age-appropriate activities due to the impacts of his/her disability, he/she may use AT to help make progress toward the goals on his/her IFSP.

### Key Questions

- Does that technology allow a child to engage in a developmental activity that he/she is not otherwise able to do?
- Does the child need a single tool or a system of tools to engage in the developmental activity?

## What are Examples of Assistive Technology?

Playing	Sitting, Lying, Standing, and Moving	Eating	Communicating	Reading	Writing, Drawing, Cutting, and Painting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Puzzles with adapted grips</li> <li>• Switch adapted toys</li> <li>• Switches</li> <li>• Adapted playground equipment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapted seats</li> <li>• Wedges</li> <li>• Walkers</li> <li>• Wheelchairs</li> <li>• Standers</li> <li>• Go Baby Go Car</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utensils with larger grips</li> <li>• Bowls/Plates with suction cups and/or higher lips</li> <li>• Nosey cups or sipper cups with adapted grips</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Picture communication boards</li> <li>• Recordable voice output communication devices</li> <li>• Computer voice communication devices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Books with page-turning aids</li> <li>• Tactile reinforced books</li> <li>• Apps for stories with audio output</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Big crayons</li> <li>• Adapted scissors</li> <li>• Large grip paint brushes and markers</li> <li>• Slant boards and easels</li> <li>• Tactile coloring books</li> </ul>

Sensory	Hearing	Seeing	Social Skills and Behavior	Dressing and Self-Care	Computer/ Tablet Access
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noise-canceling headphones</li> <li>• Weighted blankets</li> <li>• Fidgets</li> <li>• Mouthing Devices</li> <li>• Rocking seats/swings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hearing aid loops</li> <li>• FM systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enlarged text/pictures</li> <li>• Text/pictures with enhanced contrast</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video models</li> <li>• Social stories</li> <li>• Visual schedules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Larger grip zippers</li> <li>• Adapted toothbrushes</li> <li>• Adapted toilet seats</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stylus for pointing/typing</li> <li>• Mounts to hold tablet</li> </ul>

## Understanding Low, Mid, and High-Tech Assistive Technology

Low-Tech AT	Mid-Tech AT	High-Tech AT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easily Available</li> <li>• Easy to Use</li> <li>• Easy to Replace</li> <li>• Lower in Cost</li> <li>• May be Fabricated/Created</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Somewhat Available</li> <li>• Moderately Easy to Use</li> <li>• Replacement is Easy but May Take some Time</li> <li>• Mid-Range in Cost</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More Specialized</li> <li>• May be More Complex to Use</li> <li>• Replacement May Take Longer</li> <li>• Higher Cost</li> </ul>

## Assistive Technology Devices vs Assistive Technology Services

AT Devices	AT Services
AT Devices are the tools, or systems of tools, that allows a child to engage in a developmental activity that he or she could not otherwise do.	AT Services are the processes that support the (a) selection and acquisition of the AT devices, (b) the training of the family, staff and child to use the AT devices, (c) the set up and implementation of the AT Tools and (d) the evaluation of the degree to which the AT devices are effective for the child.

## What are Examples of Assistive Technology Services?

What Are AT Services Included in the Law? (92 NAC 52 003.06B2)	What Does This Mean?
The evaluation of the needs of an infant or toddler with a disability, including a functional evaluation of the infant or toddler with a disability in the child's customary environment;	An AT evaluation is a data collection process to help determine the AT needs of a child. This may be part of a child's initial evaluation, reevaluation, or a standalone evaluation. An AT Evaluation may include a review of existing data, observations, and engaging in trials of AT devices to determine what AT devices meets a child's needs. AT devices may be borrowed from the ATP Education Program (EDUCATION.AT4ALL.COM) for trials. An AT Evaluation may inform decisions of an IFSP Team but is not required prior to providing AT devices and AT services as part of the child's early intervention services. (US Dept of Education, 2024)
Purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of assistive technology devices by infants or toddlers with disabilities;	If one or more AT devices are needed for a child to engage in a developmental activity, then it is the school district's responsibility to provide the AT devices to the child and child's family.
Selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing assistive technology devices;	AT devices may need to be adjusted to meet the individual needs of the child and family. This may include adjusting the way the child operates the device or adding content to the device (e.g., vocabulary). School districts are required to ensure that the AT devices written into the IFSP are working and available for the child to use as well as, if necessary, repair or replace them when they are broken.
Coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs;	Multiple service providers may be involved in the selection, acquisition, implementation, and evaluation of AT devices. Service providers should coordinate the use of AT devices within the services being provided to the child and family. This may also include coordination with private services the child and family are receiving that involve AT devices.
Training or technical assistance for an infant or toddler with a disability or, if appropriate, that child's family	The child and the child's family often need training and support to effectively use AT devices within the context of developmental activities. Service providers should work with the child and family to build their knowledge and skills in using the AT devices so that the child can engage in developmental activities.
Training or technical assistance for professionals (including individuals providing education or rehabilitation services) or other individuals who provide services to, or are otherwise substantially involved in the major life functions of, infants and toddlers with disabilities	Service providers – and other caregivers (i.e. child care providers) - in the child's natural environments – may need training and support to learn how to use AT devices to help facilitate the child's engagement in developmental activities. Therefore, training and supports for those working with the child and family may need to be included in the IFSP.

## AT and Transition from Part C (Birth-3) to Part B (School-Aged) Services

AT **must** be considered when a toddler is transitioning from early intervention services to special education services, regardless of whether the child currently receives AT services through an IFSP (US Department of Education, 2024).

Key Questions for the IFSP and IEP Teams:

- How will the AT that the team has already identified as needed through the IFSP be written into the child's IEP?
- Are there additional or new AT tools/systems that are needed for the child in the program to which the child is transitioning?
- If the child needs additional or new AT tools/systems, what is the plan for obtaining them?
- Who will train the new staff about the child's AT devices?
- What existing AT services or additional AT services need to be included in the child's IEP?
- What AT devices need to be used at home and what AT devices need to be used in school? What is the plan for ensuring AT is supported and maintained in both locations?

