

## Assistive Technology & the IEP

*Juanita has pervasive developmental delays, including low muscle tone. She is unable to sit without support. The school bought her a special chair to use when doing work in school.*

AT can help children with disabilities to do things more independently, productively and efficiently.

### What is assistive technology?

Assistive technology—called AT—is any device or service that helps a person be more independent at home, at work, at school, or at play.

AT devices include everything from pencil grips to computers and wheelchairs. AT services assist the child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, use and maintenance of an AT device. Services include specialized evaluations and training for students, teachers and parents in the use and maintenance of AT.

### How can AT help my child learn?

AT can help children with disabilities to participate more fully in school and preschool by helping them to do academic and other activities more independently, productively and efficiently.

### How do I get AT in my child's IEP?

First, ask your child's team for an evaluation to see whether your child would benefit from AT and, if so, what type of AT is appropriate. You and your

child's team must then determine whether your child needs AT to help meet goals or objectives, to benefit from their special education program or to be in the regular classroom.

If the team agrees that AT is necessary, the AT device and/or service must be included in your child's IEP.

### What if I disagree with the team decision?

If the disagreement cannot be resolved in a cooperative and informal way, you can request an independent evaluation at school expense, mediation or a due process hearing. You may also file a complaint with the Vermont Department of Education.

### Who pays for AT?

If AT is included in your child's IEP, the device or service must be provided at no cost to you. School districts can bill the cost to Medicaid with your permission. Parents cannot be required to use private or public insurance to pay for AT.



**Vermont  
Family  
Network**

To order copies of this fact sheet, or to learn more about VFN's materials and services, contact the Vermont Family Network  
600 Blair Park,  
Suite 240,  
Williston, VT 05495  
1-800-800-4005  
You can also contact us via e-mail at [info@vtfn.org](mailto:info@vtfn.org). And don't forget to visit our website at [www.vtfn.org](http://www.vtfn.org).

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**Can my child take AT devices home?**  
Generally, yes. If the school paid for the AT device, use at home or in the community must be tied to the education needs of the student, such as completing homework or reinforcing skills. If the AT was paid for by Medicaid or private insurance, then it is the property of the student and its use cannot be restricted.

**What happens when my child finishes school?**  
Transition plans must be developed for students on IEPs by age 16. Your child's need for AT should be discussed as you plan for the transition from school to college, technical school, employment and independent or supported living situations. Your discussion should include identification of other possible funding sources for AT.

**What if my child can't get AT through the IEP?**  
Some children with disabilities are not eligible for special education. Others may no longer be on an IEP. These children may still be entitled to AT under Section 504. For more information, refer to the separate brochure Assistive Technology & Section 504.

**Resources**  
Vermont Family Network  
help for families advocating for AT  
(802) 876-5315 • 1-800-800-4005  
[info@vtfn.org](mailto:info@vtfn.org) • [www.vtfn.org](http://www.vtfn.org)

**Disability Law Project**  
legal support for getting AT  
(800) 747-5022 Burlington/Champlain Valley  
(800) 789-4195 Central Vermont  
(800) 769-7459 Rutland Area  
(800) 769-6728 Northeast Kingdom  
(800) 769-9164 Southern Vermont  
All phones (v/TTY).

**I-Team, University of Vermont**  
help with AT issues for schools and families  
(802) 656-4031  
[www.uvm.edu/~uapvt/programs/iteam.html](http://www.uvm.edu/~uapvt/programs/iteam.html)

**Vermont Department of Education**  
help with AT issues for schools and families  
(802) 828-3130 (v/TTY)

**Association for Cerebral Palsy**  
help with AT issues for families and students with physical disabilities  
(800) 639-1930 Main office  
(802) 257-2237 Southern Vermont  
(802) 723-6303 Northern Vermont

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Titles in VFN's Assistive Technology (AT) Series  
Facts About AT • AT Evaluations • AT & the IEP • AT & the IFSP • AT & Section 504 •  
Funding AT • Funding AT Through Medicaid • Funding AT Through Private Insurance