

Assistive Technology & the IFSP

Ruthann, a two-year-old with cerebral palsy, already uses many AT devices. If the communication board she is learning to use works for her, more sophisticated equipment will be explored.

AT can help infants and toddlers with disabilities to move, play or communicate more quickly and easily.

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.

Children and adults with any type of disability can use AT to make the most of their abilities and to do things more quickly and easily.

How can AT help my infant or toddler?

AT equipment and services can help infants and toddlers with disabilities or developmental delays to play, move, eat or communicate with others more independently, quickly and easily.

Some examples of equipment that might help your child are special utensils, adaptations for toys, communication boards, walkers, positioning devices and assistive listening devices.

AT services provide support in selecting, acquiring, using and maintaining equipment. Services include evaluating AT needs and training for families and schools in the use and maintenance of AT equipment.

How do I get AT in my child's IFSP?

As part of your child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), you and team members talk about family goals or outcomes and your child's developmental needs. This discussion may include information about how technology might help your child.

If you think your child may benefit from it, ask that AT be included in the IFSP. The team will review your request and possible funding sources. You can request an evaluation if you are unsure whether your child could benefit from technology, or to find out what type of equipment would be most helpful.

Who pays for AT?

Funding of AT comes from a variety of sources including:

- Medicaid
- private insurance
- schools
- other agencies
- private organizations
- the Family Infant & Toddler Project



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. And don't forget to visit our website at www.vtfn.org.

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Although parents may be asked to share some of the costs, they are not required to use Medicaid or private insurance benefits to pay for AT when doing so will result in loss of benefits, increased premiums, co-payments or discontinuation of coverage.

Who owns the AT device?

In most situations, an AT device belongs to the child. In a few situations, the agency or school purchasing the equipment might own the device.

Some programs may ask families to return a device when the child no longer needs it. If Medicaid or private insurance pays, the device belongs to the family and child.

What happens when my child turns three?
Before your child turns three, you and the other members of the IFSP team will develop a transition plan. The planning process can include a discussion of AT needs and moving equipment to your child's next placement.

This may be a good time to ask for a re-evaluation of your child's AT needs.

What can I do if I disagree?

If you disagree with other members of the IFSP team, you may call the Family Infant & Toddler Project Director at 1 (800) 660-4427 to

- request an advisory team meeting
- request mediation
- ask for a due process hearing
- file an administrative complaint
- ask for more information about parents' rights

Resources

Vermont Family Network
help for families advocating for AT
(802) 658-5315 • 1-800-800-4005
info@vtfn.org • www.vtfn.org

Family Infant & Toddler Project of Vermont

evaluations and help getting AT
(800) 639-1577 Addison region
(800) 750-6975 Bennington region
(800) 299-6609 Caledonia/South Essex region
(800) 870-6758 Chittenden region
(800) 870-6720 Franklin/Grand Isle region
(800) 639-1932 Lamoille region
(800) 639-0039 Orange/Winsor region
(800) 253-6621 Orleans/Essex region
(800) 974-2034 Rutland region
(800) 270-4231 Washington region
(800) 281-7852 Windham region
(800) 808-4442 Winsor South region

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).

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