



## ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND THE IEP: Resources and Tips for Families, Youth and School Districts Before, During and After the IEP Meeting

### What is Assistive Technology:

- Assistive technology is a term for assistive, adaptive, and rehabilitative devices for people with disabilities who may have difficulty performing activities of daily living independently.
- The term AT service “means any service that directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device.”
- It includes: (A) evaluations, (B) purchasing, leasing, or otherwise acquiring AT devices; (C) selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, maintaining, repairing, or replacing AT devices; (D) coordinating and using other services with AT devices; (E) training for the individual, or, where appropriate, the family; and (F) training for those providing services to the individual. [Read the law here: 29 USC 3002\(3\).](#)

### Before the IEP Meeting

**TIPS:** Remember that each child's situation is unique, so tailor these tips to your child's specific needs and circumstances. Additionally, inquire about any school district or Child Study team resource or checklist that may be available to support the implementation of assistive technology

- **Research Assistive Technology (AT):** Familiarize yourself with available assistive technology options that might benefit your child. Understand how these tools can support their learning and address their specific needs.
- **Know Your Child's Needs:** Clearly understand your child's strengths and challenges related to their education. This will help you advocate for appropriate assistive technology solutions that cater to their unique requirements.
- **Communicate with Teachers and Therapists:** Regularly communicate with your child's teachers and therapists to gather insights into their progress and challenges. This information will be valuable in identifying the most effective assistive technology solutions.
- **Request a Technology Assessment:** If there hasn't been a recent technology assessment, request one during the meeting. This can help determine the specific assistive technology tools that align with your child's needs.
- **Review Assessment Reports:** If there have been recent assessments or evaluations, review the reports carefully. These assessments may highlight areas where assistive technology could be beneficial.
- **Clarify Goals and Objectives:** Clearly define your child's academic and functional goals. This will help guide discussions about the specific assistive technology tools that can support the achievement of these goals.



- **Collaborate with the IEP Team:** Work collaboratively with the IEP team, including teachers, special education professionals, and therapists. Share your insights, listen to their perspectives, and collectively determine the best assistive technology solutions for your child.
- **Ask Questions:** Don't hesitate to ask questions during the meeting. Seek clarification on any aspects related to assistive technology, its implementation, and its potential impact on your child's education.
- **Request Demonstrations:** If possible, request demonstrations of specific assistive technology tools. Seeing how these tools work can provide a better understanding of their potential benefits.

## Resources:

- [Title: Assistive Technology \(AT\) Can Play an Important Role in Meeting the Needs of Students with Disabilities in School](#): Definition of AT devices and services including how it relates to IDEA, National AT Advocacy Project, 2011 pdf (Families)
- [Resources for Assistive Technology in the IEP](#): Examples of Assistive Technology tools for reading, writing, mathematics, organization and more, Adam Krass, MS, ATP, 2023 pdf (Families)
- [Get Started Families](#): Questions families can ask and actions they can take to contribute to inclusive technology and education systems, CITES (Center on Inclusive Technology & Education Systems), 2023 webpage (Families)
- [Assistive Technology for Special Education Students](#): Steps and the process before IEP meeting, Disability Rights Washington
- [Title: WATI- AT Continuum](#) - WATI (Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative), 2017 pdf (Families and Professionals)
  - List of categories in areas to assess for Assistive Technology consideration and to assist in IEP goals:
    - Mobility
    - Communication
    - Reading
    - Writing
    - Organization
    - Information Management
    - Time Management
    - Recreation & Leisure



## During the IEP Meeting

During an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting where assistive technology is being discussed, it's important to be well-prepared and effectively advocate for your child's needs. Remember, the goal of the IEP meeting is to create a plan that supports your child's learning and development. Effective communication and collaboration with the IEP team are key components of this process.

**TIPS:** Remember that each child's situation is unique, so tailor these tips to your child's specific needs and circumstances.

- **Be Informed:** Familiarize yourself with your child's strengths, weaknesses, and specific learning needs. Understand how assistive technology can address these needs.
- **Bring Documentation:** Bring any relevant documentation, assessments, or reports that highlight your child's challenges and the recommendation for assistive technology.
- **Clarify Goals:** Clearly articulate your child's academic and functional goals. Explain how assistive technology can support the achievement of these goals and enhance their overall learning experience. Practice with someone before the meeting.
- **Collaborate with Professionals:** Work collaboratively with the IEP team, including teachers, special education professionals, and therapists. Share your insights and expertise and listen to theirs in determining the most suitable assistive technology solutions.
- **Ask for Demonstrations:** If possible, request demonstrations of specific assistive technology tools during the meeting. This can help everyone involved better understand how the technology works and its potential benefits.
- **Discuss Implementation Strategies and Training:** Address how the chosen assistive technology will be integrated into your child's daily routine, classroom activities and at home. Discuss training opportunities for your child, people in the home, teachers and support staff.
- **Explore Trial Periods:** Consider proposing a trial period for certain assistive technology solutions. This allows everyone to assess its effectiveness and make any necessary adjustments before committing long-term.
- **Establish Communication Channels:** Discuss how communication regarding your child's progress with assistive technology will be maintained. Establish a feedback loop to address any concerns or modifications needed. This will help ensure that the chosen tools are effective and meet your child's evolving needs.
- **Be Assertive, but Open to Collaboration:** Advocate assertively for your child's needs, but also be open to collaboration and compromise. Finding common ground with the IEP team will contribute to the overall success of the plan.
- **Follow-Up After the Meeting:** At the end of the IEP meeting, schedule a date to follow up with the team to ensure that the agreed-upon assistive technology solutions are being implemented effectively. Address any concerns or adjustments that may be needed.



## Resources:

- [Title: Assessing Students' Need for Assistive Technology](#): Decision-making guides using the SETT model (Student, Environments, Tasks, Tools) for multiple topics such as AT for communication, writing, mathematics, recreation and leisure, organization, low vision and more, WATI (Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative), 2018 pdf (Families and Professionals)
- [Title: WATI- AT Continuum](#) - WATI (Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative), 2017 pdf (Families and Professionals)
  - List of categories in areas to assess for Assistive Technology consideration and to assist in IEP goals.
    - Mobility
    - Communication
    - Reading
    - Writing
    - Organization
    - Information Management
    - Time Management
    - Recreation & Leisure
- [Assistive technology: Questions to ask the school](#): Q and A for Parents including downloadable pdf, Understood, 2023 (Families)
- [9 examples of assistive technology and adaptive tools in school](#): Low and medium tech examples of assistive devices, Understood, 2023 (Families)
- [Resources for Assistive Technology in the IEP](#): hands on tools to support reading, writing, mathematics, organization and more, Adam Krass, MS, ATP, 2023 pdf (Families)



## After the IEP Meeting or Without an IEP Meeting

After an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting where assistive technology has been discussed, there are several important steps you can take to ensure effective implementation and ongoing support for your child. Remember, the IEP is a dynamic document that can be adjusted as your child's needs evolve. Open communication with the school and ongoing collaboration with the IEP team are essential for ensuring the continued success of the assistive technology plan.

**TIPS:** Remember that each child's situation is unique, so tailor these tips to your child's specific needs and circumstances.

- **Review the IEP Document:** Carefully review the finalized IEP document. Ensure that it accurately reflects the decisions made during the meeting, including goals, objectives, and the specific assistive technology tools to be used.
- **Communicate with Teachers and Staff:** Reach out to your child's teachers and support staff to discuss the agreed-upon assistive technology plan. Clarify any questions they may have and ensure everyone is on the same page regarding implementation.
- **Schedule Training Sessions:** Work with the school to schedule training sessions for teachers and relevant staff, family and your child on the proper use and integration of assistive technology in the classroom.
- **Establish a Communication Channel:** Set up a regular communication channel with teachers and the IEP team to receive updates on your child's progress with assistive technology. This can help identify any challenges early on.
- **Monitor Implementation:** Regularly monitor how the assistive technology is being implemented in the classroom. If there are any issues or concerns, address them promptly with the relevant teachers or specialists.
- **Provide Feedback:** Share feedback on your child's experience with assistive technology. If adjustments are needed, communicate these to the IEP team to ensure ongoing success.
- **Stay Informed About Progress:** Stay informed about your child's progress in relation to the goals set in the IEP. Discuss with teachers how assistive technology is contributing to their academic and functional development.
- **Request Follow-Up Meetings:** Follow-up meetings should be scheduled to assess the effectiveness of the assistive technology plan. Discuss modifications or adjustments based on your child's evolving needs.
- **Advocate for Additional Support:** If you find that the initially agreed-upon assistive technology tools are not meeting your child's needs, advocate for additional support or explore alternative solutions.
- **Encourage Independence:** Encourage your child to use assistive technology independently when appropriate. Foster a sense of ownership and confidence in utilizing these tools to enhance their learning experience.
- **Stay Engaged and Informed:** Stay engaged in your child's educational journey. Attend school events, parent-teacher conferences, and stay informed about any updates or changes related to assistive technology.



## Resources:

- [Title: The What & Why of Inclusive Technology](#): Why designing learning experiences using inclusive technologies is important, including the impact of implementation on all learners, CITES (Center on Inclusive Technology & Education Systems), 2023 video (Families and Professionals)
- [Title: Using Accessible Formats](#): In order to be successful with using accessible formats, learners will need a number of supports, National Center on Accessible Educational Materials, website (Families Youth and Professionals)
- [Title: Teaching with Accessible Video](#): Strategies for creating more active, minds-on engagement with instructional videos, National Center on Accessible Educational Materials, 2020 website (Families Youth and Professionals)
- [Assistive technology that's built into mobile devices](#): Most mobile devices come with assistive technology (AT) that can help with reading, writing, and organization, Understood, 2023 (Families and Youth)
- [Title: WATI- AT Continuum](#) - WATI (Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative), 2017 pdf (Families and Professionals)
  - List of categories in areas to assess for Assistive Technology consideration and to assist in IEP goals.
    - Mobility
    - Communication
    - Reading
    - Writing
    - Organization
    - Information Management
    - Time Management
    - Recreation & Leisure
- Visit the [Parent Center Hub](#) for more resources and information on Assistive Technology.