



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT/THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK/ALBANY N.Y. 12234

OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES
EXECUTIVE COORDINATOR FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

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TO: District Superintendents
Presidents of Boards of Education
Superintendents of Schools
Organizations, Parents and Individuals Concerned with Special Education
Superintendents of State-Operated and State-Supported Schools
Nonpublic School Administrators and Educators
State and Local Teacher Associations
New York City Board of Education
Developmental and Psychiatric Centers and State Agency Personnel
Executive Directors of Approved Private Schools
Principals of Public Schools
Directors of Special Education
Chairpersons of Committees on Special Education
Chairpersons of Committees on Preschool Special Education
Directors of Pupil Personnel Services
Directors of Approved Preschool Programs and Preschool Educators
School Social Workers and School Psychologists
Family Court Judges
Early Childhood Direction Centers
Colleges with Special Education Teacher Training
Commissioner's Advisory Panel on Special Education Services
Preschool Special Education Advisory Panel
Impartial Hearing Officers
SETRC Project Directors and Training Specialists
Head Start Directors
Chief Elected Officials of Counties
Independent Living Centers

FROM:

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SUBJECT: Assistive Technology Devices and Services

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide information on assistive technology in a question and answer format. This information clarifies a school district's responsibilities to make available assistive technology devices and services to preschool and school-age students with disabilities consistent with Federal requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).



In the absence of State law and regulation, school districts must conform to the requirements of the IDEA. The Board of Regents, however, supports a legislative proposal to amend Section 4401 of the Education Law to expand the definition of special services and programs to include assistive technology devices and services consistent with the Act. The proposal would provide State Aid to support the purchase or rental of assistive technology devices. The New York State Education Department will propose conforming changes to the Part 200 Regulations of the Commissioner of Education following the enactment of State Law.

Cognizant that training is a critical aspect of successful implementation of assistive technology, the State Education Department is jointly sponsoring training with the Office of Advocate for Persons with Disabilities (OAPwD) on assistive technology during the fall of 1995. The Special Education Training Resource Centers (SETRC) will provide additional regional training sessions on assistive technology during the 1995-96 school year. The Department will disseminate guidelines on assistive technology during the 1995-96 school year.

Questions concerning this topic should be directed to the Office for Special Education Services at (518) 474-5548 or to the Technology Resources for Education Center at (518) 456-9290.

Attachment

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY: DEFINITIONS AND POLICY CLARIFICATION

1. What is the intent of assistive technology devices and services?

Assistive technology promotes equity of opportunity. The report of the House Committee on Education and Labor, in regard to Public Law 101-476, states that "*advances in the development and use of assistive technology have provided new opportunities for children with disabilities to participate in educational programs. For many children and youth with disabilities, the provision of assistive technology devices and services will redefine an appropriate placement in the least restrictive environment and allow greater independence and productivity.*"

The intent of the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is to make available assistive technology devices and services as part of the special education program for an eligible preschool or school-age student with a disability to ensure that a student increases, maintains or improves functional capabilities.

2. What is an assistive technology device?

An assistive technology device is defined as "*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 children with disabilities.*" (34 CFR 300.5)

Committees on Special Education (CSEs) and Committees on Preschool Special Education (CPSEs) are encouraged to consider both high and low technology for students with disabilities. High technology involves electronics and sophisticated equipment. Low technology relies on solutions using mechanical principles requiring simple hand tools and easy-to-find materials. Illustrative examples of high and low assistive technology are included in Attachment A.

3. What is an assistive technology service?

Assistive technology service is defined in Section 300.6 of the Code of Federal Regulations as:

"any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. The term includes:

- (a) *The evaluation of the needs of a child with a disability, including a functional evaluation of the child in the child's customary environment;*

- (b) *Purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of assistive technology devices by children with disabilities;*
- (c) *Selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, retaining, repairing, or replacing assistive technology devices;*
- (d) *Coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs;*
- (e) *Training or technical assistance for a child with a disability or, if appropriate, that child's family; and*
- (f) *Training or technical assistance for professionals (including individuals providing education or rehabilitation services), employers, or other individuals who provide services to, employ or are otherwise substantially involved in the major life functions of children with disabilities."*

4. **What is a school district's responsibility for providing assistive technology devices and services?**

Under the Federal Regulation (34 CFR 300.308) each school district must ensure that assistive technology devices and/or services are made available to a preschool or school-age student with a disability as part of a student's special education, related services or supplementary aids or services as described in the individualized education program (IEP).

For a school-age student with a disability, the district is required to provide assistive technology services and/or devices as recommended by the CSE. For a preschool child with a disability, the Board of Education must assure that the CPSE recommendation is implemented by the approved preschool provider and county. These services and devices must be provided at no cost to the child or parent. If a student with a disability requires assistive technology to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE), the student's IEP must indicate the specific type of assistive technology device required and/or the nature and extent of assistive technology services necessary to achieve IEP goals. A CPSE must provide guidance to the approved preschool program selected by the Committee or to the county regarding equipment specifications to ensure that an appropriate assistive technology device is available. Assistive technology devices and/or services must be provided consistent with the initial date of the student's IEP.

The effect of Section 300.308 of the Code of Federal Regulations is to limit the provision of assistive technology devices and services to those situations in which they are

required in order for a child with a disability to receive FAPE. Thus, participants at the meeting to develop a student's IEP must recommend whether the device and/or service is necessary in relation to the student's educational needs. A determination as to whether an assistive technology device or service is required in order to receive FAPE must be made on an individual basis using the evaluation and IEP development procedures described in State and Federal regulations.

A school district is not responsible to make available, through purchase or rental, devices that a student would require only for non-school settings or activities. In addition, the district would not, unless specifically stated in the IEP, have to provide items which a child routinely would require for daily life functions regardless of the setting (e.g., wheel chair, hearing aid, some prosthetic or orthotic devices, etc.) that are prescribed by a licensed physician. In cases where a child is already using a device provided by the parent, this could be noted on the IEP.

5. What criteria should be considered in recommending a student's need for assistive technology devices, assistive technology services, or both?

A student's need for assistive technology is determined through the individual evaluation. The district's CSE/CPSE is responsible for this functional evaluation of the student. The need to conduct an assistive technology component of an evaluation must be considered for students on a case-by-case basis. Additionally, parents and guardians should share information with the CSE/CPSE on how assistive technology could be beneficial to their child's education.

The student should be assessed in all areas of the suspected disability and the results of such evaluation described in the applicable sections of the IEP including the present levels of performance, goals and objectives, related services, supplementary aids and services, modifications to the regular education program and/or specialized equipment. It will sometimes be necessary to seek and obtain very highly specialized evaluation information from assistive technology experts/evaluators outside of the local school district. However in many instances, the assistive technology needs of a student should be determined as a component of an evaluation conducted by an occupational or physical therapist, teacher of the speech and hearing impaired, audiologist, etc.

As described in 34 CFR 300.6, the evaluation of the needs of a child with a disability includes a functional evaluation of the child in the child's customary environment. For a school-age student, the customary environment could be the student's current educational setting. For a preschool child with a disability, the customary environment would be in the current early childhood educational setting which could be the daycare setting, a nursery school or a headstart program that the child is attending. Since some preschool children do not attend early childhood programs, the customary environment could be in an alternative setting appropriate for a child of that age such as a play group, the home, or the library.

Recommendations should be provided to the Committee on whether assistive technology may be appropriate for the student to meet the goals and objectives of the IEP in the least restrictive environment. Areas for consideration could include:

- a. environmental considerations - recommendations that a student's educational environment needs to be adapted (e.g., lighting, desk, chair, keyboard or specific device or method designed to assist a student with a disability to perform daily tasks) or accommodated (e.g., changing a routine, method or approach which may be used by persons with or without disabilities);
- b. use of support materials - recommendations for specific kinds of materials (e.g., braille books, talking books, speech software using peripheral devices, communication boards, text enlargers, tape recorders);
- c. instructional uses of tool software (e.g., word processing, calendar organizers) and computer assisted/based instruction;
- d. an assessment of what is available to and required of nondisabled students of the same age and a determination of how these curricular and/or extracurricular activities could be made accessible to the student with the support of appropriate assistive technology; and
- e. recommendations on how the assistive technology may be integrated into the student's total educational program, rather than delivered in isolation.

6. Who is qualified to provide "assistive technology services"?

Currently there are no credentialing standards for assistive technology providers in New York State. However, since assistive technology services are provided as part of a student's special education instruction, related service and/or other supplementary aids and services, they must be provided by an appropriately licensed or certified individual in accordance with Section 200.6 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. As assistive technology services are described as part of one or more of the aforementioned programs and services, they must be provided by qualified individuals who hold an appropriate New York State certification or license.

There may be instances when school district personnel will not have the specialized knowledge necessary to appropriately assess students with assistive technology needs or provide assistive technology services to some students. School districts will need to identify individuals/agencies with expertise in assistive technology (e.g., BOCES, private agencies) who are available to assist districts with the evaluation of the needs of a student with a disability as well as the selection, design, fit, customization, adaptation, application and/or repair of assistive technology devices, as appropriate. School districts may also establish formal agreements with these agencies to provide staff development, mentoring and/or

consultation to local district staff to expand their skills, thus developing a broader base of school personnel with expertise in assistive technology.

Formal agreements with these non-school consultants will need to be negotiated so that they work in cooperation and collaboration with and/or under the direction of appropriately qualified, licensed or certified school district staff to provide assistive technology devices and services.

Individuals and consultant staff who provide assistive technology services should have the training and/or experience necessary to deliver these assistive technology services in a safe and effective manner to students with disabilities at appropriate grade level(s) and area(s). Such training should be documented and/or may be acquired through preservice and in-service training programs. Assistive technology providers should demonstrate the ability to provide assistive technology services and to communicate results effectively, orally and in writing, to educators, parents, students, and other service providers.

7. How would an assistive technology provider, evaluator or approved evaluator be reimbursed for conducting an assistive technology evaluation?

School districts and counties will establish their own reimbursement agreements with assistive technology evaluators. However, in many instances, the assistive technology needs of a student should be determined as a component of an evaluation conducted by an occupational or physical therapist, teacher of the speech and hearing impaired, audiologist, etc. If such evaluation information for students is incorporated into an appropriate component of the evaluation, the evaluator should not be reimbursed twice. For example, if, as part of an occupational therapy evaluation component, a therapist advises that a child use adapted silverware, writing utensils and/or other manipulative items, the evaluator should only be reimbursed for the occupational therapy component of an evaluation, not for an assistive technology component as well.

8. Can students with disabilities take their assistive technology devices home or to other settings?

If a student requires the use of an assistive technology device in settings outside of school in order to meet the goal of a free appropriate public education, then the school district is obligated to provide the student access to the device at additional times and places consistent with the IEP. For example, if the IEP requires that a student have access to an assistive technology device at home to prepare homework assignments or other work related to his/her instructional program, or if a student's IEP requires use of an augmentative communication device in a home setting or other setting (such as a work-study placement) as well as in school, the district must make arrangements for the device to be used at that site.

Committees should be cognizant that some assistive technology devices are fragile (e.g., head pointers) or extremely large and/or heavy and may not be easily transported between home and school. Therefore, it may be necessary to consider the advisability of providing one device for school and another for home use. When use of an assistive technology device is recommended at home, Committees should consider including parent training on the IEP, so that parents have the skills necessary to support the student at home in using the assistive technology device. School districts should develop procedures to track equipment and should consider insurance costs associated with assistive technology devices lost and/or broken at home.

9. When a student moves from one level of schooling to another, does the device follow the student?

If an assistive technology device is necessary to fulfill the requirements of a student's IEP, such a device must be provided in whatever school the student attends. When the student makes a transition from one school to another, the CSE/CPSE should ensure that the device is available for the student, in the new setting, on the date the IEP is required to be implemented. School districts should develop procedures addressing the transfer of assistive technology equipment (see Attachment B). If a student no longer requires the use of an assistive technology device purchased by a school district, it remains the property of the school or, if purchased by the county, it remains the property of the county.

10. Is assistive technology required under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973?

Students who do not qualify for special education under IDEA but who are determined "handicapped" under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, are eligible for appropriate accommodations. Section 504 provides that:

"No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States, as defined in section 706(8) of this title, shall, solely by reason of her or his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance or under any program or activity conducted by any Executive agency or by the United States Postal Office." [29 U.S.C. sec 794, amended by Section 111(a)]

Section 504, which has a broader definition of who is a "handicapped" individual than the IDEA, also requires public schools to provide qualified 504 students with disabilities with a free appropriate public education and, in addition, ensures that students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in school programs. An appropriate education under Section 504 is defined as "...the provision of regular or special education and related aids and services designed to meet individual educational needs of handicapped

persons as adequately as the needs of non-handicapped persons are met...."(34 CFR 104.33, emphasis added).

For students eligible under Section 504, schools may need to make special arrangements so that these students have access to the full range of programs and activities offered. These special arrangements may include assistive technology devices and/or services and should be included in the student's accommodation plan.

11. What funding is available to support the provision of assistive technology devices, recommended by the Committee on Special Education/Committee on Preschool Special Education (CSE/CPSE)?

Funding which is currently available for special education, health services and other social services may be accessed to support the provision of assistive technology. The following information provides guidance on financial support in the preschool and school-age systems.

Preschool Children

Under the preschool system, an approved program would make available and be responsible for, in most situations, high and low assistive technology devices as part of its instructional program. These could include specialized chairs, computers, simple communication boards, auditory trainers, adapted toys or other "low tech" assistive technology devices that may be needed or used by more than one child in a program. These devices may be reimbursed as part of the tuition rate through the Department's current rate setting methodology. The Department expects approved programs to adhere to responsible standards of cost efficiency as promulgated in the Reimbursable Cost Manual. It is expected that approved preschool programs will provide all programs and services associated with the IEPs of children accepted into their program, including assistive technology devices and services. However, in cases where a child-specific assistive technology device is required that is not available in a preschool program, the following procedures apply:

- The county in which the child resides purchases or leases the device pursuant to the IEP.¹ The county would follow appropriate county bidding procedures.

NOTE: It may be advantageous for counties to lease equipment so that they do not have to dispose of used equipment and so that equipment is covered by warranty and/or service contracts.

¹ The Department is considering advancing legislation to allow counties to receive reimbursement for administrative costs associated with the provision of assistive technology. This proposal will be reviewed by the Municipal Advisory Committee on Preschool Rate Setting and Reimbursement Methodology (MAC).

- The county submits costs to the Department on a STAC-1 form, identifying the assistive technology device on the related service line of the form along with a copy of the purchase order or the lease agreement for the device or equipment.
- If equipment is partially reimbursed by third party insurance, the county submits a claim for the net amount paid by the county on a STAC-1 requesting reimbursement for the balance of the total cost of the assistive technology device. Any Medicaid reimbursement for assistive technology would be recouped by New York State pursuant to Section 4410 using the Automated Voucher Listing Process.
- The State will reimburse the county a percentage of the costs pursuant to Section 4410 of the Education Law, as it does for any other preschool service or program. If a county purchases equipment, the county maintains ownership of the device which may be made available to other children with similar needs.²
- When the preschool child becomes school age, the school district responsible for the child may purchase the remaining useful life of the device or equipment from the county, if such device continues to be required on the child's IEP developed by the Committee on Special Education (CSE) and is not otherwise available in the district. Otherwise, the device remains the property of the county and may be used again or disposed of by the county.³
- Any revenue recovered by the county from a school district or as the result of disposal must be reported to the Department. The State and county would share in any recovered revenues equally.
- Counties should include installation costs, training and/or service contracts required as part of the cost of the assistive technology device.

² If Medicaid or third party reimbursement is accessed, refer to ownership in the Third Party Reimbursement/Medicaid section of this memorandum.

³ Ibid

School-Age Children

- The school district programmatically responsible for the student purchases or leases the equipment required as specified on the IEP.
- The cost of such equipment (including maintenance and repairs) is the responsibility of the district. If appropriate, those costs could be considered in determining eligibility for high cost public excess cost aid.
- School districts may use excess cost aid and Federal flow through funds (P.L. 94-142 and P.L. 99-457) to fund assistive technology as appropriate.

NOTE: Any devices purchased with Federal funds are disqualified for Medicaid reimbursement.

- If a child transfers to another school district, the new district may purchase the remaining useful life of the device if the child's new IEP requires the use of the equipment and the new district does not have such a device available.
- The school district retains ownership of any device purchased. If appropriate, such equipment can be used for other children. Districts may sell used equipment.⁴
- Districts should include installation costs, training and/or service contracts required as part of the cost of the assistive technology device.

The provision of assistive technology devices to school-age and preschool students may also be supported through:

- **Third Party Reimbursement/Medicaid.** School districts and counties pursuant to IDEA, can access third party reimbursement to pay for certain diagnostic and related services listed on a student's IEP. Since assistive technology devices, assistive technology services, or both must be provided at no cost to the parent, the use of parents' private insurance must be strictly voluntary. It is a violation of the right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to require that parents of a student with a disability use private insurance when it would result in a decrease in the available lifetime coverage, an increase in premiums and/or discontinuation of the policy. Therefore, the district must have fully informed consent of the parent before billing private insurance and may not require a student's parents to file a claim with a private insurance carrier as a condition for receipt of services.

⁴ Ibid

- The school district/county is responsible for any required co-pay so that FAPE can be provided at no cost to the parent. In these instances, any assistive technology devices obtained belong to the individual student or student's family.
- The State Education Department and the Department of Social Services are reviewing standards to address the provision of assistive technology devices and/or services as Medicaid billable in the Preschool School Supportive Health Services Programs (PSSHSP) and the School Supportive Health Services Program (SSHSP). Medicaid requirements will include a physician's prescription, proof of reasonable cost for audit purposes (verified bidding process) and an invoice accompanying billing.
- Medicaid will require the student/recipient to own the assistive technology device. Medicaid reimbursement for assistive technology devices should include initial installation of the device, initial training of the student, professional staff and, when necessary, the parents in the use of the assistive technology device and a service contract for the device.
- Even with Medicaid reimbursement, districts will be allowed to factor the cost of assistive technology devices and/or services into high cost public excess cost aid.
- For equipment purchased by private insurance or reimbursed by Medicaid with mandated ownership by the family, districts and counties should be cognizant of purchaser/seller relationships specified in contract language for warranties, authorization for repairs and/or service contracts. A school district's responsibility to provide FAPE at no cost to parents does not change. Therefore, agreements should be negotiated with parents to access warranties and service contracts. Otherwise, repairs will be at district or county expense.

NOTE: Determination of remaining useful life of assistive technology equipment can be calculated by:

- Following guidelines included in the New York State Education Department's Consolidated Fiscal Reporting Manual. If specific assistive technology devices are not included in Appendix P, the useful life of a similar item may be substituted.
- Utilizing a recognized formula for determining useful life that might be used by a Certified Public Accounting firm.

Please contact the Program Services Reimbursement Unit at the New York State Education Department at (518) 474-3227 for guidance.

12. What is the school district's responsibility to provide assistive technology devices and services for students with disabilities who attend a nonpublic school?

If a school district determines that a student with a disability requires an assistive technology device or service in order to receive a free appropriate education (FAPE), the district is responsible for the provision of such device or service if it is determined through the IEP process to be a part of a special education program, a related service or a supplementary aid or service required by the student.

Assistive technology devices may be provided at both sectarian and non-sectarian nonpublic schools. However, related services for nonpublic students with disabilities are generally provided in the public schools or in a neutral site. Since assistive technology services may not be practicable in a public school or neutral site if the assistive technology device is located in a sectarian nonpublic setting, school districts are advised to consult with their school board attorney to develop a district policy regarding the provision of special education services on site.

Special education and related services may be provided to students with disabilities on the premises of a sectarian nonpublic school only when such services are provided solely with Federal funds. No State and local tax levy funds may be expended for these purposes. It should be noted, however, that when local tax levy funds, distinct from Federal funds, are being expended by a public school district, diagnostic and evaluation services may be provided on the site of the sectarian school that the child attends.

13. Who is responsible for purchasing assistive technology devices for students with disabilities who attend approved private schools, State-supported or State-operated schools?

Many of these schools routinely provide assistive technology devices and services to meet the needs of the special populations they are designed to serve. When a child-specific device is not available at an approved private, State-operated/State-supported school, the CSE/CPSE is responsible for providing that device to individual students.

14. What role does BOCES play in the provision of assistive technology devices and/or services?

Although the provision of assistive technology devices and services is the school district's responsibility, BOCES are responsible for providing assistive technology services to students as part of their instructional program in programs administered by BOCES. School districts and BOCES should work collaboratively to plan and implement procedures to provide assistive technology in their region.

Some BOCES have established Assistive Technology Teams that assist school districts in the evaluation of students' assistive technology needs in areas such as computer access,

augmentative communication, software options and environmental access. These teams also can provide training to students, staff and parents for successful implementation and integration of assistive technology into a student's program.

15. What technical assistance and training are available to assist districts in providing assistive technology devices and services?

- The Technology Resources for Education (TRE) Center. Since 1989, the Department has funded the Technology Resources for Education (TRE) Center, a co-sponsored project of the Capital Region BOCES and the Office for Special Education Services of the New York State Education Department. The TRE Center provides information, referrals, technical assistance, student assessments and training through coordination with the Special Education Training and Resource Centers (SETRC) and other personnel development networks. Targeted audiences include members of CSEs and CPSEs, educators, parents and other service providers involved with students with disabilities.

For more information on these services, contact: Technology Resources for Education (TRE) Center, Albany-Schoharie-Schenectady-Saratoga BOCES, Maywood School, 1979 Central Avenue, Albany, New York 12205. Telephone: (518) 456-9290 Bulletin Board System (BBS) Access: (518) 456-9289 or (518) 456-9274.

- The Office of Advocate for Persons with Disabilities TR Aid (Technology Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities) Project funds Regional TR Aid Centers throughout the State. These centers provide technical assistance to individuals with disabilities and their family members. For more information on TR Aid, contact:

New York State Office of Advocate for Persons with Disabilities
One Empire State Plaza, Suite 1001
Albany, NY 12223-1150
1-800/522-4369 - (voice and TTY)
(518) 474-2825 - (voice)
(518) 473-4231 - (TTY)

EXAMPLES OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Assistive Listening

Assistive listening devices to help with auditory processing may include hearing aids, personal FM units, sound field FM systems, text telephones, closed caption TV, and mild-gain hardware systems.

Augmentative Communication

Augmentative communication systems may include symbol systems, nonelectric alphabet, picture or object communications boards and wallets, electronic communication devices, speech synthesizers, and communication enhancement software. Sign language is another augmentative communication strategy.

Computer Access

Eye blinks, mouth movements, or head or neck movements are some of the methods that may be used to operate devices which provide access to the computer. Once an anatomical site has been determined, then decisions can be made about input devices, selection techniques (direct, scanning), and acceleration strategies (abbreviation expansion, prediction). Input devices include switches, expanded keyboards, mouse, trackball, touch window, speech recognition, head pointers, keyboard emulators (i.e., adaptive firmware cards) and electronic communication devices. Output devices include any adaptation which may be needed to access the screen display such as tactile (braille), text enlargement, or synthesized speech. In some instances, access to keyboards can be improved by simple modifications such as slant boards, wrist rests, keyguards, keyboard masks or a shoe box to define mouse movement.

Computer-Based Instruction

Computer-based instruction may be needed for independent participation in activities supporting the curriculum. Software can be selected which mirrors the conceptual framework of the regular curriculum, but offers an alternative way of responding to exercises and learning activities. Software can provide the tools for written expression, spelling, calculation, reading, basic reasoning and higher level thinking skills.

The computer can also be used to access a wide variety of databases for information retrieval and telecommunication services.

Environmental Control

Independent use of equipment in the classroom can be achieved for students with physical disabilities through various types of environmental controls, including remote control switches and special adaptations of on/off switches to make them accessible (e.g., velcro attachments, pointer sticks).

Mobility

Mobility devices include braces, self-propelled walkers and manual or powered wheelchairs. Mobility also refers to specialized training and aids used by individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Travel aids for individuals with low vision, blindness or dual sensory impairments include long white canes, electronic image sensors which provide information through vibration, and telescopic aids for reading signs or spotting other landmarks.

Visual Aids

General methods for assisting with vision needs include increasing contrast, enlarging images, and making use of tactile and auditory materials. Devices that assist with vision may include optical or electronic magnifying devices, low vision aids such as hand-held or spectacle-mounted magnifiers or telescopes, closed circuit television read/write systems, cassette tape recordings, large print books, brailled materials, computer screen reading adaptations such as enlargement, synthesized voice and refreshable braille, scanners, optical character readers, reading machines, electronic note taking devices, braille writers, copy machines which can increase the size or contrast of images, halogen or other lighting modifications, and vision stimulation devices such as light boxes.

Physical Education, Recreation, Leisure, and Play

A student with a disability has a right to an appropriate physical education program through inclusion in a regular physical education class or adapted physical education. Assistive devices might include beeping balls or goal posts, wheelchairs adapted for participation in sports, game rules in braille or on audio cassette, balance or positioning aids and adapted sports or fitness/exercise equipment. Adapted recreational activities include drawing software, computer games, computer simulations, painting with a head wand, interactive laser disks, and adapted puzzles.

Positioning

In the classroom, individuals with physical disabilities may need assistance with positioning so that they can participate effectively in school work. Generally, therapists try to achieve an upright, forward facing position by using padding, structured chairs, straps, supports, or restraints to hold the body stable and in a comfortable position. Also considered is the student's position in relation to peers and the teacher. Often, it is necessary to design

positioning systems for a variety of settings so that the student can participate in multiple activities in school. Examples of equipment used for positioning are side-lying frames, walkers, crawling assists, floor sitters, chair inserts, wheelchairs, straps, trays, standing aids, bean bag chairs, sand bags and so forth.

Self Care

In order to benefit from education, some students require assistance with self-care activities like feeding, dressing and toileting. Assistive devices which assist with self care may include adapted utensils, specially designed toilet seats and aids for tooth brushing, washing, dressing and grooming.

Vocational Skills

Preparing students for work often involves skills training with equipment adaptations needed to accomplish tasks. Jigs are devices used to mechanically maintain the correct positional relationship between a piece of work and the tool, or between parts of work during assembly. They are constructed to meet the individual needs of the student to carry out specific tasks.

Adapted from Hawaii's Draft AT Guidelines 1995

* These examples not exhaustive and illustrative only.

Guidelines on the Use of Assistive Technology Devices and Services

School districts may find the following guidelines helpful in assuring the provision of assistive technology services.

School District Procedures:

- Pursuant to Section 200.2 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, school districts must develop a plan including, but not limited to, a description of the nature and scope of special education programs and services available to preschool and school-age students with disabilities. This plan should address procedures for making assistive technology devices and services available to eligible students to benefit from a free appropriate public education including a description of funding procedures to support the provision of assistive technology services and/or devices and concomitant liability, insurance, maintenance, and repair.
- Procedures should be developed regarding the provision of assistive technology devices outside the school setting (e.g., the student's home or supported employment settings).
- Procedures should be developed addressing the transfer of assistive technology devices. District procedures should specifically address the transfer of assistive technology devices from:
 - one school building to another
 - one school district to another
 - school to home for evening work
 - school to home for the summer (if appropriate)
 - school district to private schools
 - preschool to school-age systems
 - school to adult systems

The transfer procedures should focus on a method to allow the student's uninterrupted access to equipment which continues to meet his/her needs. Procedures should address the establishment of agreements between systems to ensure timely and cost-efficient methods for the smooth transition of technology between systems. Current State law allows flexibility in addressing issues connected with the transfer of technology. School districts are provided significant latitude in developing policy on selling equipment, although Article VIII of the Constitution of the State of New York prohibits the gift or loan of such equipment.

- School districts should consider establishing procedures to monitor the location of and use of equipment.

Factors to Consider in Determining the Need for Assistive Technology:

An evaluation to determine an individual's need for assistive technology devices and/or services may require an observation of the student in his or her customary environment. A review of a videotaped observation by various members of the evaluation team may be a useful method to determine the need for assistive technology. The following questions may assist CSE/CPSE members to determine the need for assistive technology, in relation to the student's environment, and the tasks they need to perform.

1. What are the student's educational goals?
2. What tasks will the student need to perform, as required on the IEP? Are there other options to assist the child in meeting the goals of the IEP besides assistive technology?
3. In what environments - school, classroom(s), home, other - will the assistive technology be required and will these environments have to be adapted to implement the goals and objectives of the IEP?
4. What are the rules, structure and attitudes related to assistive technology in the environment(s) where the assistive technology is needed?
5. What resources are available in the different environments?

(adapted from R.Reed, 1993)

Additional questions the CSE/CPSE should consider related to the use of assistive technology are:

1. In what ways will the student be assisted by the use of the assistive technology?
2. Will the assistive technology address the student's needs?
3. What are the student's limitations and what technology is available and appropriate to compensate for those limitations?
4. Does the student want the assistive technology device or service?
5. Is it worth the effort for the person to use the device?
6. What options does the person have if he or she does not use the device?
7. What is the range of assistive technology options available from "No Tech" to "Low Tech"?

(adapted from Enders, 1984)