

Ohio Early Intervention Assistive Technology Guidelines

Assistive Technology

Assistive Technology (AT) in early intervention is any service, tool, or device that supports an eligible infant or toddler's ability to participate actively in his or her home, community settings, or other natural environments, and is **necessary to meet an IFSP outcome**. It is a broad term that includes a service, tools, or devices ranging from simple "low-tech" adaptations of common items or materials (such as bending a spoon to make it easier to hold or creating a foot stool with phone books), to something as "high tech" as an electronic communication device. The need for AT, like any EI service, is determined by the IFSP team and based on an assessment data or results.

AT Definitions

The Federal definition of AT includes both devices and services.

An **AT device** is 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.

This does not include medical devices that are surgically implanted, the optimization of that device's functioning, the maintenance, or the replacement of that device (34 CFR 303.13(b)(1)(i)).

An EI **AT service** means any service that directly assists an eligible infant or toddler in the selection, acquisition or use of an AT device. The term includes:

- The assessment of the needs of the infant or toddler with a disability, including a functional assessment of the child in the child's natural and customary environment(s);
- Purchasing, leasing or otherwise providing for the acquisition of AT devices for infant and toddlers with disabilities;
- Selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing or replacing AT devices;
- Coordinating and using other therapies, interventions or services with AT devices such as those associated with other existing service plans and programs;
- Training or technical assistance for that child's parents and other primary caregivers; and
- Training or technical assistance for professionals who provide services to or are otherwise involved with infants and toddlers with disabilities in the EI program. (34 CFR 300.6).

Determining Need for Assistive Technology:

AT devices should be considered if interventions are required to aid in the developmental activities that support the child outcomes of social relationships, use of knowledge and skills, and acting to meet needs.

The determination of need of AT devices is based on an AT assessment. An AT assessment begins with a parent concern or priority, and/or the need to determine a service that supports

the IFSP outcomes. The AT assessment includes:

- A multi- or transdisciplinary team, with the parents as crucial team members;
- Review of the results of all recent evaluations and assessments, including the child and family strengths and needs related to possible AT devices or services
- Consideration of the activities or outcomes that will be supported through AT, and the environments where the activities will occur
- One or more trials with one or more possible AT devices, services or accommodations, with a focus on function and simplicity and beginning with low tech options when available.
- Data collection from these trials about the effectiveness of the various technologies and ease of use in selected settings and with multiple caregivers
- Assessment of child and parent/family interest in, feelings about, and ability using the device includes the parents as crucial team members, focuses on function, and strives for simplicity
- Review of all assessment findings and assessment team recommendations about the supports needed to meet IFSP outcomes and activities, and a plan for ongoing assessment and data collection.
- Completion of form EI-16 if state or federal funds may be requested for payment.

Assistive technology assessment, selection, training and maintenance must be carried out by qualified professionals (such as occupational, physical, and speech therapists and developmental specialists), with active parent and other team member participation. EI team members should have a basic understanding of the kinds of AT that exist and how they can be used to help a child achieve more independence and control of his/her environment. Ultimately, decisions about an AT device or service must be based on family values, resources, concerns, routines, and willingness to use the assistive technology, in order to enhance the level of success in everyday activities.

AT and the IFSP

The need for AT services may be identified at any time, but in practice the need is often explored after the initial IFSP is developed. As with any IFSP, the IFSP which includes the need for AT (accommodation, purchased device, or service) must include all requirements of any IFSP. When AT is determined as needed, the following information will be addressed:

- The outcomes(s) that will be achieved for the child and family, including the way in which the AT device is expected to increase, maintain, or enhance the child's participation in everyday activities and routines;
- A description of the specific AT device needed by the child, the projected dates for acquisition and the method of acquisition
- The methods and strategies for use of the AT device to increase, maintain, or improve the child's functional capabilities;
- The qualified personnel who will be providing the AT services and the frequency, intensity and method of delivery, and the funding source.

The funding sources under the system of payments that apply to any EI service apply to AT services and devices. When there are no other funding sources available, the EI service coordinator will contact the EI resource coordinator. The EI service coordinator should be prepared to discuss the developmental necessity, the equipment/services described, pricing requests, quantity, and duplication.

NOTE:

Hearing aids, ear molds and hearing aid batteries should be applied for through the Ohio Hearing Aid Assistance Program

<https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/hearingaid-assistance/ohaap/>

Eye glasses should be sought through the ODH Vision Resources

<https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/children-s-hearing-vision-program>

Resources

<https://www.ctdinstitute.org/>

<https://www.fabricate4all.org/>