



a publication of the
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center

assistive technology *facts*

Assistive Technology & the IFSP

*R*uthann, 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.

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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

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 Parent Information Center
help for families advocating for AT
(802) 658-5315 (v/TTY) • (800) 639-7170
vpic@vtpic.com • www.vtpic.com

Parent to Parent of Vermont
one-to-one parent support on AT
(802) 655-5290 (v/TTY) • (800) 800-4005

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).

To order copies of this fact sheet, or to learn more about VPIC's materials and services, contact the Vermont Parent Information Center (VPIC), 600 Blair Park, Suite 301, Williston VT, 05495, (802) 876-5315 (v/TTY) or toll free 1 (800) 639-7170. You can also contact us via e-mail at vpic@vtpic.com. And don't forget to visit our website at www.vtpic.com.

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