

Assistive Technology: Your Guide to Dispel the Myths and Find the Facts

Samantha Conklin, MS, ATP

Assistive Technology Facilitator

Infinitec

sconklin@ucpnet.org

Peggy Childs

Executive Vice President

Infinitec

pchilds@ucpnet.org



Handouts:

<https://bit.ly/InfiniteslSBE24>



Agenda

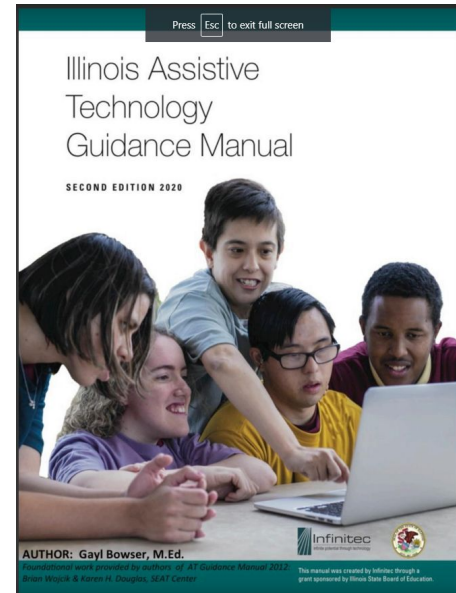
Overview of Select Myths and Facts
Shared in the Myths and Facts
Surrounding Assistive Technology
Devices and Services Document

- Federal Law
- Illinois Assistive Technology
Guidance Manual



Illinois Assistive Technology Guidance Manual

This manual is designed to help school systems adopt processes and practices that enable students with disabilities to use AT effectively. It is intended as a reference for school administrators, teachers and related service personnel, as well as students and parents of students with disabilities.



Illinois Assistive Technology Guidance Manual



1st Edition (2012), Brian Wojcik and Karen Douglas, Authors



2nd Edition (2020) Facilitated by Gayl Bowser

- AT Process
- Transition
- Creating an Infrastructure

Office of Special Education Programs – Dear Colleague Letter & AT Document

January 2024 released a document is designed to increase understanding of IDEA's AT requirements, dispel common misconceptions regarding AT, and provide examples of the use of AT devices and services for children with disabilities and to highlight the different requirements under Part C and Part B of IDEA.



“The Office of Educational Technology and the Office of Special Education Programs are pleased to share the below guidance in support of children with disabilities who need assistive technology (AT) devices and services for meaningful access and engagement in education.”

The screenshot shows the IDEA website with a blue header. The header includes the IDEA logo (a graduation cap with 'Ed' inside) and the text 'IDEA Individuals with Disabilities Education Act'. To the right is a search bar and a 'Connect with us' section with social media icons for Twitter and YouTube. Below the header is a navigation menu with links: Home, About, Law and Policy, Reports, Grants and Funding, Resources, and News and Media. The main content area has a title 'Assistive Technology Devices and Services for Children With Disabilities Under the IDEA' and a breadcrumb trail: Home » Policy Documents » Assistive Technology Devices and Services for Children With Disabilities Under the IDEA. Below the title, there is a section for 'Topic Areas: Assistive Technology' with four links: 'DCL on Myths and Facts Surrounding Assistive Technology Devices' (PDF), 'Myths and Facts Surrounding Assistive Technology Devices' (PDF), 'DCL sobre Mitos y Realidades sobre los dispositivos y servicios de la tecnología de asistencia' (PDF), and 'Mitos y Realidades sobre los dispositivos y servicios de la tecnología de asistencia' (File). On the right side of the page, there is a vertical sidebar with links to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), OSERS Blog, IDEA by State, and Contacts.

IDEA
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Search ...

Connect with us:

Home About Law and Policy Reports Grants and Funding Resources News and Media

Assistive Technology Devices and Services for Children With Disabilities Under the IDEA

Home » Policy Documents » Assistive Technology Devices and Services for Children With Disabilities Under the IDEA

Topic Areas: Assistive Technology

DCL on Myths and Facts Surrounding Assistive Technology Devices PDF

Myths and Facts Surrounding Assistive Technology Devices PDF

DCL sobre Mitos y Realidades sobre los dispositivos y servicios de la tecnología de asistencia PDF

Mitos y Realidades sobre los dispositivos y servicios de la tecnología de asistencia File

U.S. Department of Education

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS)

Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)

OSERS Blog

IDEA by State

Contacts

Office of Special Education Programs – Dear Colleague Letter & AT Document

- Addresses common misconceptions
- Uses clear and concise language
- Shares content that can be understood by ALL

V. COMMON MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY COSTS AND FUNDING SOURCES

MYTH 27: AT is expensive.

FACT: While some AT may be expensive, there are many forms of AT devices and services with little to no cost.

AT can be 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 a child with a disability.⁷⁵ Some AT devices may be expensive, such as an electronic braille display that allows children who are blind to read on devices such as a tablet. However, there are many low-cost examples of AT devices, including binder clips or sticky notes, to help a child organize themselves or keyboard stickers to provide color contrast for children with low vision. Further, with technology development in recent years, many accessibility features, such as large text or a text-to-speech feature may be included in existing software owned by the LEA and may meet the AT needs of a child with a disability. Ultimately, a child's AT devices and services should be determined by the child's needs rather than the cost.

Myths and Facts Surrounding Assistive Technology Devices and Services Document

- I. Assistive Technology Requirements Under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- II. Common Myths and Facts about Assistive Technology Devices and Services
- III. Common Myths and Facts about Deploying Assistive Technology Devices and Services
- IV. Assistive Technology Requirements Under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- V. Common Myths and Facts about Assistive Technology Costs and Funding Sources



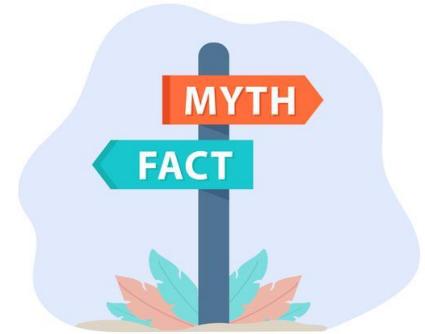
FACT OR MYTH?

Myths and Facts Surrounding AT Devices & Services

U.S. Department of
Education

Providing an AT device to a child with a disability satisfies IDEA's AT requirements.

MYTH



Myths and Facts Surrounding AT Devices & Services

U.S. Department of Education

FACT: IDEA requires IEP Teams to consider whether a child with a disability needs AT devices and services.

While providing a needed AT device is a critical component of meeting the IDEA's AT requirement, AT services are important and must be considered by a child's IEP Team because they directly assist a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an AT device. AT services also ensure that parents and families, teachers and related service providers receive training on how to use and implement the device as well as ensure coordination so that the AT device provided to the child can be used correctly and consistently both in school and at home. For example, if an IEP Team determines that a child needs a pencil grip as an AT device to improve the child's grasp of a pencil, the AT service could include testing out multiple pencil grips, selecting the appropriate pencil grip, training the child's parents and teachers on the correct way to use the pencil grip and developing strategies to support the child in using the pencil grip throughout the day.

IDEA Definition of AT Device

34 C.F.R. § 300.5

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 a child with a disability.

The term does not include a medical device that is surgically implanted, or the replacement of such device. (Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1401[1])



Assistive Technology Service - Legally Defined 34 C.F.R § 300.6

“Assistive technology service” means any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device

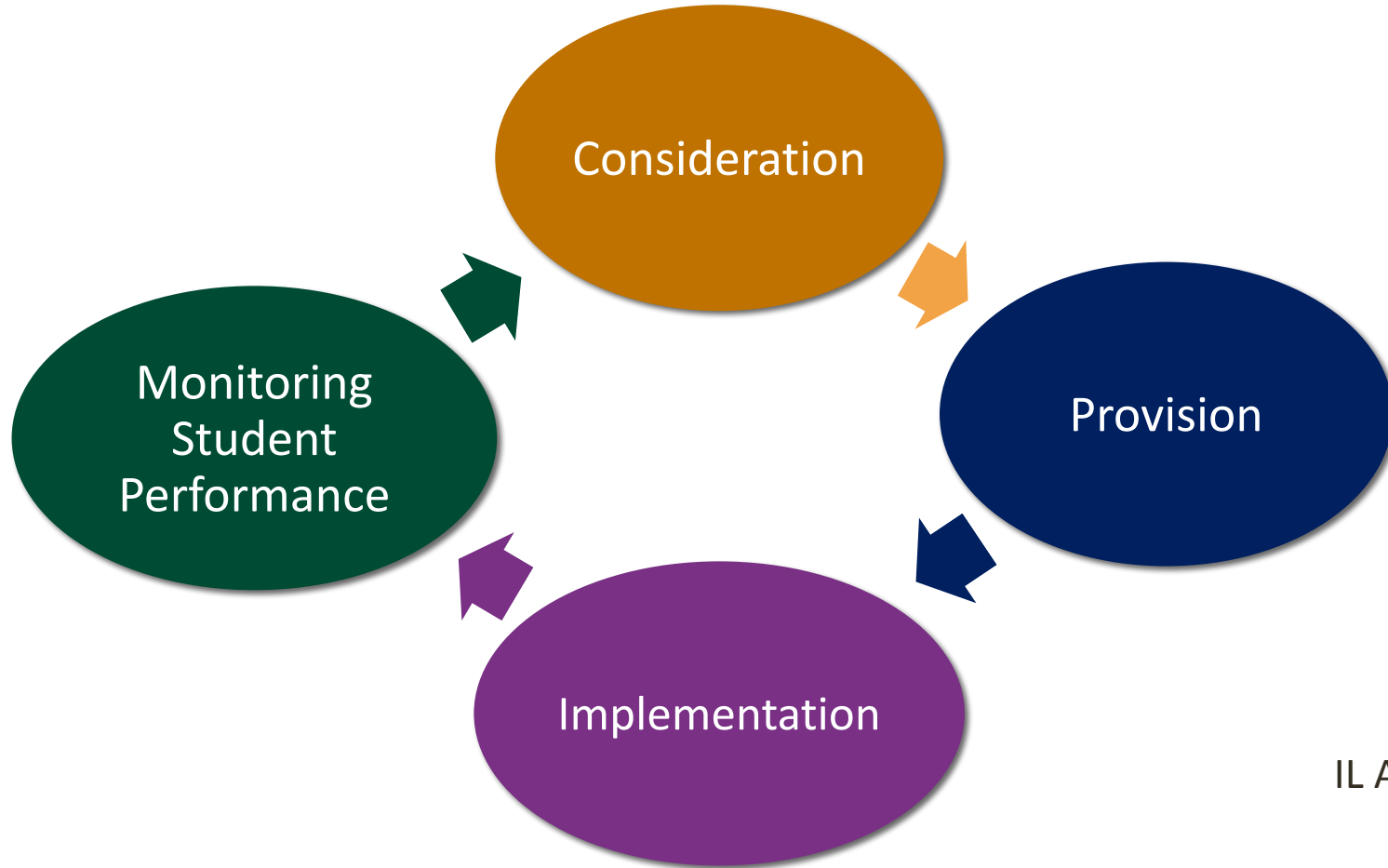


Assistive Technology Service Continued

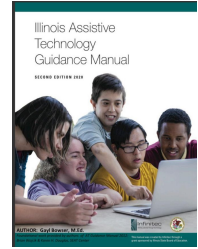


- a) Evaluation of the needs of a child with a disability, including a functional evaluation of the child in the child's customary environment;
- b) Purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of assistive technology devices by children with disabilities;
- c) Selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, 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 that child.

Assistive Technology- Device & Services



Illinois Assistive Technology Manual



“IDEA 2004 provides a definition of AT services at 34 C.F.R. § 300.6. It states:

Assistive technology service means any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, and 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 that child. (Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1401(2))*

AT service delivery involves more than simply providing AT. It is a process, recorded in a student’s IEP, by which AT is considered, selected, provided, supported and periodically evaluated to determine its effectiveness for a student.” p.5

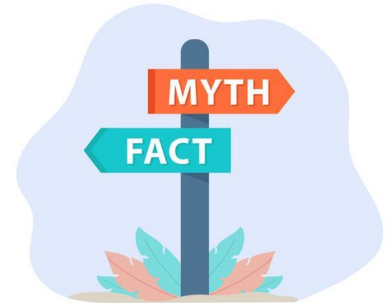
FACT OR MYTH?

Myths and Facts Surrounding AT Devices & Services

U.S. Department of
Education

Assistive Technology (AT) should only be considered at some individualized education program (IEP) Team meetings.

MYTH



Myths and Facts Surrounding AT Devices & Services

U.S. Department of Education

FACT: Each time an IEP Team develops, reviews, or revises a child's IEP, the IEP Team must consider whether the child requires AT devices and services.

Further, when an IEP Team determines AT devices and services are required to enable the child to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE), the local educational agency (LEA) is responsible for providing and maintaining the AT device and providing any necessary AT service. The IEP Team has discretion in determining the type of AT device and service that the child needs to receive meaningful educational benefit. Specifically, IEPs must include a statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services, which may include AT devices and services, based on peer reviewed research, to the extent practicable, that will allow the child to: (i) advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals in a child's IEP; (ii) be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum; (iii) participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities; and (iv) be educated and participate with other children with disabilities and nondisabled children.

IDEA mandates IEP teams must consider each child's need for AT



What is AT Consideration?

- ❑ Consideration of AT is a purposeful, collaborative decision-making process
- ❑ IEP team reviews existing information and potentially collects additional information before deciding if AT is needed for the child to receive FAPE
- ❑ The decision is then documented in the IEP

IL AT Manual



Illinois Legislation From the State

Illinois PA 100-0993

Added the paragraph below to the **Notification of Conference** form (34-57D):

The IEP Team will discuss whether your child requires Assistive Technology (AT) to receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). The Illinois State Board of Education Assistive Technology Program can be reached by calling toll-free 1-866-262-6663 or by going to <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Special-Education-Assistive-Technology.aspx>.

STUDENT NAME: _____

DATE OF MEETING: _____

EDUCATIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS AND SUPPORTS

Complete for initial IEPs and annual reviews. *(Anyone responsible for implementing the educational accommodations must be notified of her/his specific responsibilities).*

CONSIDERATION OF SPECIAL FACTORS

Check the boxes to indicate if the student requires any supplementary aids and/or services due to the following factors. **For any box checked "yes," specify the special factors in the "Supplementary Aids, Accommodations and Modifications" section and/or the Linguistic and Cultural Accommodations section listed below.**

☐ Yes ☐ No assistive technology devices and/or services. If yes, please specify needed AT. If no, specify why AT is not needed to access FAPE.

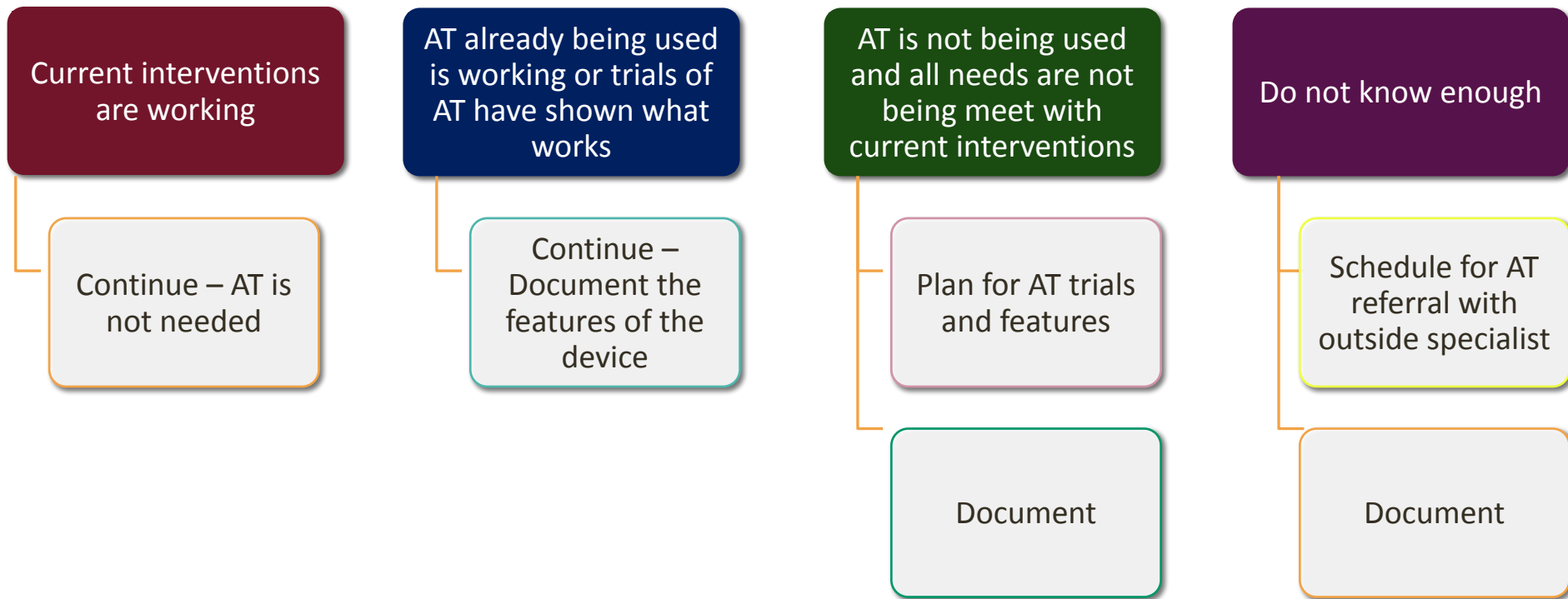
☐ Yes ☐ No communication needs including students who are deaf/hard of hearing. If yes, complete linguistic and cultural accommodations section below.

☐ Yes ☐ No limited English proficiency – language needs

☐ Yes ☐ No blind/visually impaired – provision of Braille instruction

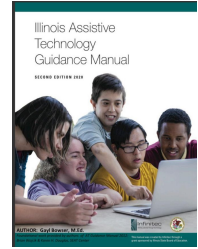
☐ Yes ☐ No behavior impedes student's learning or that of others. If yes, the team must consider strategies, including positive behavioral interventions and supports to address behavior. **This may include a Functional Behavioral Assessment and/or a Behavioral Intervention Plan. If so, attach any completed forms.**

AT Consideration Flowchart



Adapted from MSDE, Center for Technology in Education, CEC-TAM Monograph,
"Considering the Need for Assistive Technology Within the Individualized Education Program"

Illinois Assistive Technology Manual



“The Individuals with IDEA mandates that IEP teams consider several “special factors” for every student receiving special education services.

Section 300.324(a)(2)(v) of the IDEA regulations states that IEP teams must “consider whether the child needs AT devices and services” when developing a student’s IEP.

Consideration of assistive technology is a purposeful, collaborative decision-making process. The IEP team reviews existing information and potentially collects additional information about a student before deciding whether he or she needs AT. If the answer is yes, the IEP team identifies the AT needed for the student to receive FAPE. The responsibility for AT consideration falls upon the entire IEP team and is not relegated to an individual or an outside evaluator. While schools may engage in ongoing and recurring AT consideration, discussion of the need for AT is required at every IEP meeting.” p.17

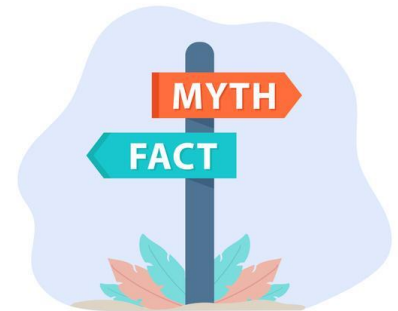
Myths and Facts Surrounding AT Devices & Services

U.S. Department of
Education

FACT OR MYTH?

AT devices and services are only needed for the academic classroom and only for use at school.

MYTH



Myths and Facts Surrounding AT Devices & Services

U.S. Department of Education

FACT: A learner's AT device should be used across all environments to both improve the child's use of the AT as well as to ensure the child is provided their required support throughout the day.

IDEA's definition of an AT device "means 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 a child with a disability." The term "functional capabilities" is not exclusive to academic classroom time. As a supplementary aid and service, AT devices and services could be utilized during nonacademic and extracurricular activities such as counseling services, athletics, transportation, health services, recreational activities, special interest groups or clubs sponsored by the LEA. Additionally, IDEA states that LEA-purchased AT may be used at home or other locations if the IEP Team determines their use is necessary to provide FAPE to the child. The use of AT devices and services can increase a child's independence while engaging with others at school, home, their community, and eventually, post-school. For example: If a child requires a communication device, they will need this device with them at all times of the day to communicate. A child who requires text-to speech software should have access to that software in all environments, not just their academic class. This is to ensure they have access to written information in their home, in non-academic classes or settings, socializing with friends, and in their community..

Title 34 - Assistive Technology

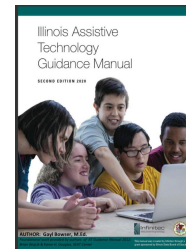
34 C.F.R. § 300.105(b)

(a) Each public agency must ensure that assistive technology devices or assistive technology services, or both, as those terms are defined in §§ 300.5 and 300.6, respectively, are made available to a child with a disability if required as a part of the child's—

- (1) Special education under § 300.39;
- (2) Related services under § 300.34; or
- (3) Supplementary aids and services under §§ 300.42 and 300.114(a)(2)(ii).

(b) On a case-by-case basis, the use of school-purchased assistive technology devices in a child's home or in other settings is required if the child's IEP Team determines that the child needs access to those devices in order to receive FAPE.

Illinois Assistive Technology Manual



“The degree to which the AT is used beyond the school environment is based on a student’s IEP and what the IEP team determines is needed for a student to receive FAPE.

IDEA 2004 specifically addresses school-owned AT use in home settings:

On a case-by-case basis, the use of school-purchased assistive technology devices in a child’s home or in other settings is required if the child’s IEP Team determines that the child needs access to those devices in order to receive FAPE. (34 C.F.R. § 300.105(b))

Consequently, school-owned AT should be used in home settings if the IEP team determines such use is required for the student to accomplish IEP goals. The school may set up specific arrangements with the family to address issues of liability and care of the AT, as well as responsibilities of the family (e.g., charging the AT at home so that it is ready for school use). Any home-use agreements or arrangements are specific to individual school systems. These may be vetted by legal counsel to ensure protections for both families and schools..” p.33

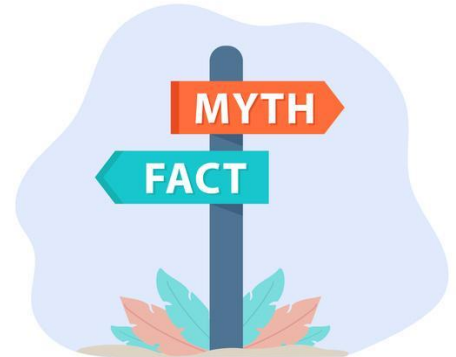
FACT OR MYTH?

Myths and Facts Surrounding AT Devices & Services

U.S. Department of
Education

Only staff who specialize in AT can
deploy AT devices or provide AT
services.

MYTH



Myths and Facts Surrounding AT Devices & Services

U.S. Department of Education

FACT: IDEA requires the IEP Team to have representatives of the LEA who are qualified to provide or supervise the provision of specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities.

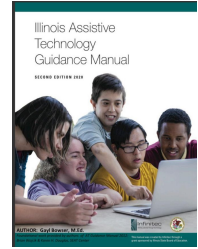
The individuals or process needed to select, purchase, and provide AT devices and services varies by the child's unique needs as determined by the IEP Team. In many cases, the AT device and service is delivered by the child's regular classroom teacher, special education teacher, or related services provider. If there are complex AT needs, either the parent or the LEA can include other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child as a member of the child's IEP Team. An LEA may also access technical assistance with a Section 4 State or Territory AT Act program (State or Territory AT program) in their State regarding AT needs for a child.

Who is responsible for AT consideration?

The responsibility for AT consideration falls upon the **entire IEP team** and is not relegated to an individual or an outside evaluator.



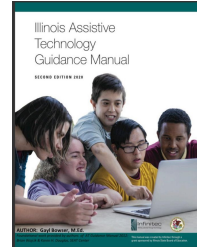
Illinois Assistive Technology Manual



AT Consideration

“Each member of the team provides a different but complementary perspective when developing an IEP for a student; however, not all IEP teams have members who are knowledgeable about AT and AT services. ... If an IEP team has at least one person who is knowledgeable about potential AT and AT services that may benefit a student, then the team can proceed with the AT consideration process. If not, then the team should seek more information or add a team member who has that knowledge.” p.19

Illinois Assistive Technology Manual



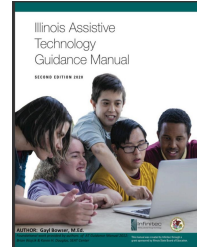
AT Assessment/Evaluation

“While there is no legal guidance regarding the qualifications of people involved in these processes, the individual or individuals should have an understanding of:

- the student (including current performance, interests, disability
- impact of the student’s disability on performance)
- the curriculum/tasks in which the student is expected to perform
- the scope of potential AT tools and services the student may need to be successful

The IEP team is responsible for ensuring that this assessment is completed.. In some cases, a member of the IEP team will have the requisite knowledge and skills for the AT assessment. In other cases, the team may need assistance from other individuals with specific knowledge and skills relevant to the process.” p.23

Illinois Assistive Technology Manual



AT Implementation

“Ensuring implementation of the AT as described in the IEP is the responsibility of the entire IEP team; however, an IEP goal or objective that includes an AT device or service should specify the person responsible for implementing that goal.” p.36

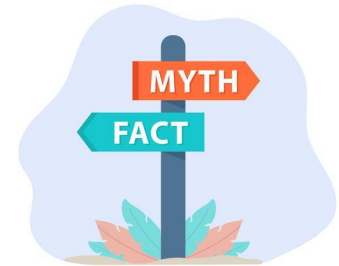
Myths and Facts Surrounding AT Devices & Services

U.S. Department of
Education

FACT OR MYTH?

There are no resources available to LEAs who can provide technical assistance on AT devices.

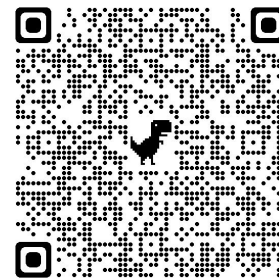
MYTH



Illinois Statewide Assistive Technology Technical Assistance, Training and Resources

“Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.”

Illinois Statewide Assistive Technology Technical Assistance, Training and Resources



Knowledge Based Professional Learning Sessions (40+ Titles)

Assistive Technology Consideration . . . More Than a Checkbox

Assistive Technology for Reading, Writing, or Executive Function

Getting Started with the Student-Centered AAC Assessment

The Assistive Technology Decision Making Process and Tools to Support Reading

The Assistive Technology Decision Making Process and Tools to Support Writing

Illinois Statewide Assistive Technology Technical Assistance, Training and Resources

Webinar Professional Learning Sessions

60+ 1-2 hour sessions in FY24

Variety of topics related to assistive technology

Regional and national speakers

Full Day Professional Learning Sessions

6 full day sessions in FY24

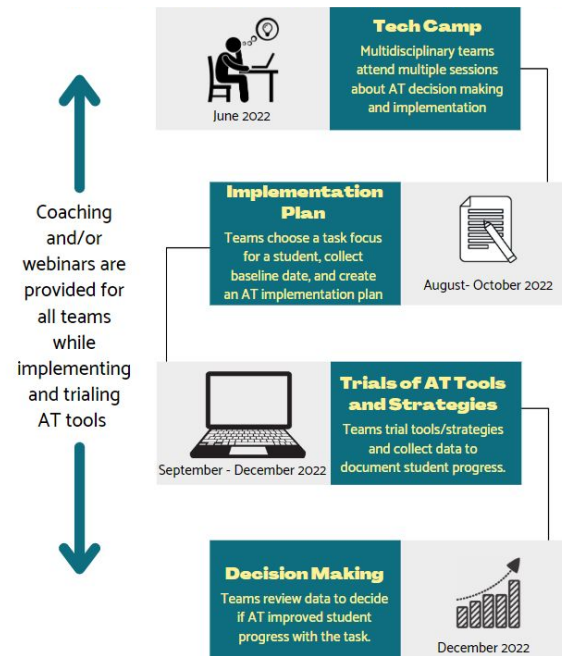
Topics included reading/writing, self-regulation and communication, UDL and accessibility, executive function

Regional and national speakers

Illinois Statewide Assistive Technology Technical Assistance, Training and Resources

Guided & Intensive Trainings

- Augmentative and Alternative Communication Assessment Professional Learning (virtual and in-person options)
- Tech Camps



Illinois Statewide Assistive Technology Technical Assistance, Training and Resources

Assistive Technology Assessments - Building Capacity

Goal: Empower teams to conduct local AT assessments using a data driven decision making process.

Training and/or coaching are provided, alongside the assessment, to support successful implementation and build local capacity.

Guided and Intensive PLS and Assessments

Professional Growth

(Pretest - Post-test)

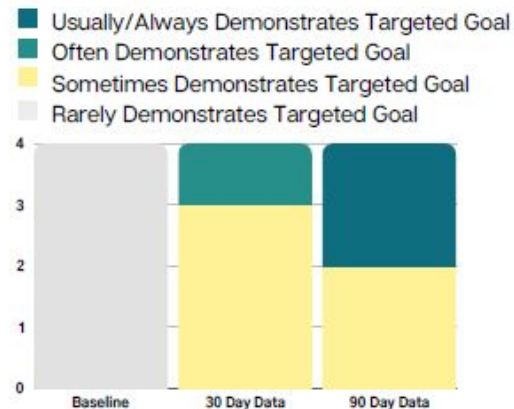
- Educate others about AT
- Access AT resources and information
- AT Consideration
- AT Decision-Making
- Implement appropriate tools/strategies



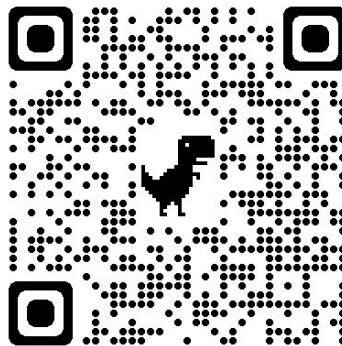
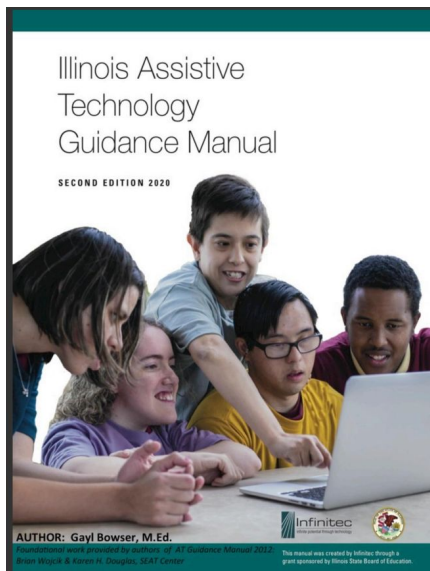
Student Impact

- *(Baseline, 30-day, 90-day)*

IEP/curricular goal/objective specific to target student



Assistive Technology Guidance Manual and FAQ Document



Work In Progress...

- Illinois Assistive Technology Guidance Manual Updates
- Crosswalk of Content - Facts and Myths Surrounding Assistive Technology Devices and Services and the Illinois Assistive Technology Guidance Manual



at4il.org

[Home](#)[Illinois AT Manual](#)[Big Ideas](#)[Free AT Training](#)[Parents](#)[Forms/Guides](#)[ATEN](#)[DME](#)[Need More Help?](#)

Welcome to the Illinois Assistive Technology Support site for K – 12 schools.

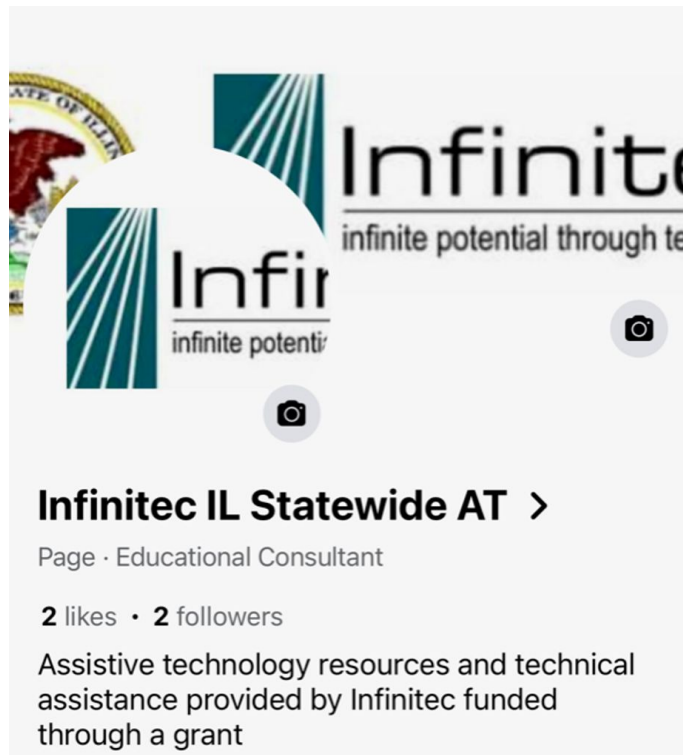
Purpose:

This website is intended to provide information about the provision of assistive technology (commonly referred to as "AT") in the K-12 school setting, to Illinois educators and parents. The determination of a student's need for AT, selection of the appropriate AT, implementation of AT services and ongoing support for a student using AT is a critical process requiring many individuals, including a wide variety of school professionals as well as the student and their parents or guardians, to work together to determine how the student can best meet his or her educational objectives.

Infinitec has created and maintains this free public website as place to house information that we trust will be very useful to the stakeholders involved in the school-based AT process.

What will you find here?

Infinitec IL Statewide AT - Facebook



QUESTIONS

Samantha Conklin, MS, ATP

Assistive Technology Facilitator

Infinitec

sconklin@ucpnet.org

