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What is Assistive Technology?

IDEA defines AT devices 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.

In other words: Anything you can make, buy, or change to help any student with a disability to do anything. The categories of AT and examples for each category are listed below.

- Academic and Learning Aids - tools for students who have difficulty accessing or completing academic assignments.

- Aids for Daily Living—items for self-help such as grab bars in bathrooms, specialized eating utensils, and grips.

- Assistive Listening Devices and Environmental Aids—amplification systems, closed captioning, etc.

- Augmentative Communication—provides alternate means of communicating (PECS, speech generating devices).

- Computer Access and Instruction—adapted keyboards, input devices, or computer controls.

- Environmental Control— switches and adaptations for students with physical needs to regulate things in their environment.

- Mobility Aids—wheelchairs, gait trainers, walkers, etc.

- Pre-Vocational and Vocational Aids— task analysis, timers, picture schedules.

- Recreation and Leisure Aids— adapted books, switch toys.

- Seating and Positioning— adapted seating, braces, positioning belts.

- Visual Aids— magnifiers, braille writers, CCTV

AT Tip—Voice Typing

Chrome has a built in voice typing feature. Voice typing can support those students who struggle with writing and spelling. It can also be used by any student just to save time.
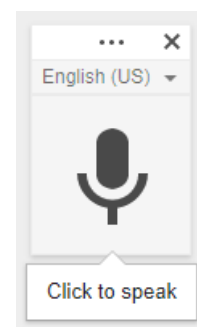
To use this feature follow these steps:

Open Google Docs

Click on Tools > Voice Typing

A box with a microphone will appear on the screen.

When ready to dictate, students click the microphone image and

speak into the Chromebook's microphone.

AT Procedures FAQs

Who can determine AT needs?

- The IEP committee or teachers can often determine appropriate assistive technology. It doesn't have to be something that is suggested by the AT Specialist in order for it to be included in an IEP.

When do we contact the AT Specialist?

- The IEP team should request assistance from the Assistive Technology Coordinator when they are unable to determine whether or not the student requires assistive technology or when they are unable to identify assistive technology solutions that would be appropriate to meet the student's needs. Assistance from the AT Coordinator can be requested as an AT consultation or an AT evaluation.

How do we request an AT consultation or evaluation?

- Our Special Education Procedures Manual has an AT tab. Page 9 of that section is a parent permission form. It must be completed before an AT assessment can begin. Page 10 is a request form. Just fill that out and send it through county office mail.

What happens once we request an evaluation?

- Once an assessment is requested and parent permission is obtained, the AT specialist will meet with the teachers to complete the Assistive Technology Student Information Sheet (page 11-12). Then the consideration process begins.

What kinds of AT does our system have available?

- We are very fortunate in Thomas County to have a variety of AT supports available. Our 1:1 Chromebook initiative in grades 2-12 provides our students with standard classroom tools that can be considered AT such as voice typing, screen reading, and a variety of apps/extensions. We have a large inventory of iPads with apps that can be used as AT. We also have an AT inventory that includes but is not limited to the following items:

slantboards	adaptive writing tools
adapted paper	visual timers
note taking devices	smartpens
alternate access tools	braille writers
AAC devices	colored overlays
tracking aids	magnifiers

How do I document AT in the IEP?

- Services: Not every student who uses AT will need a service. The AT Specialist must be a team member and have prior notice before AT is added as a service in an IEP. On the Special Considerations Page select "Yes" for AT Services then follow the example on page 6 of the AT section in the manual to document services on the Service Page of the IEP.

- Devices: Select "Yes" on the Special Considerations page for the device question, then be sure to include information on the device(s) on the Student Support Page and in the PLOP.