

Assistive Technology Guide

Empower Independence Through Technology Solutions

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☒ AT Assessment Guide

Understanding Assistive Technology

Assistive Technology (AT) is any tool, device, or software that helps individuals with disabilities increase, maintain, or improve their functional capabilities. From simple pencil grips to sophisticated communication devices, AT opens doors to independence.

☒ AT Categories

Level	Examples	Cost	Training Needed
No Tech	Strategies, positioning	\$0	Minimal
Low Tech	Pencil grips, timers	<\$100	Basic
Mid Tech	Recording devices, apps	\$100-500	Moderate
High Tech	Communication devices, computers	\$500+	Extensive

☒ **Remember:** The best AT is the one that gets used! Start simple and build up.

☒ Assessment Process

Step 1: Identify Needs

Functional Areas Checklist:

- ☐ Communication
- ☐ Computer access
- ☐ Education/learning
- ☐ Daily living
- ☐ Recreation/leisure
- ☐ Mobility/positioning
- ☐ Vision
- ☐ Hearing
- ☐ Environmental control

Key Assessment Questions:

Question	Why It Matters
What tasks are difficult?	Identifies priority areas
What are the goals?	Ensures AT matches objectives
What's the environment?	Considers where AT will be used
What are current strategies?	Builds on existing success

What hasn't worked? Question	Avoid repeating failures Why It Matters
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Step 2: Team Assessment

Essential Team Members:

- Student/individual (primary decision maker)
 - Parents/caregivers
 - Special educator
 - General educator
 - OT/PT/SLP as needed
 - AT specialist
 - Vision/hearing specialist if applicable
- 📌 **Success Indicator:** The user is actively involved in selection and excited about the AT chosen.

Step 3: Feature Matching

Consider These Factors:

Factor	Questions to Ask
Abilities	What can they do independently?
Learning Style	Visual, auditory, or kinesthetic?
Physical Access	Fine motor? Gross motor?
Cognitive	Memory? Processing speed?
Sensory	Vision? Hearing? Sensory preferences?
Environment	Home? School? Community?
Culture	Language? Family values?
Cost	Budget? Funding sources?

📌 Assessment Tools

Popular Frameworks:

- **SETT Framework:** Student, Environment, Tasks, Tools
- **WATI:** Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative
- **QIAT:** Quality Indicators for AT

📌 Funding Sources

Insurance Coverage

📌 Coverage Comparison

Type	Coverage	Requirements	Tips
Private Insurance	DME benefits	Medical necessity	Get pre-authorization
Medicaid	Comprehensive	Prior approval	Use approved vendors
Medicare	Limited	Very strict criteria	Appeal denials
Tricare	Good coverage	Military connection	Know your region

⚠️ **Important:** "Not medically necessary" often means "needs better documentation." Try again with more support!

🔗 Educational Funding

IDEA Requirements

Schools Must:

- 🔗 Consider AT for every IEP student
- 🔗 Provide if educationally necessary
- 🔗 Allow home use if needed for FAPE
- 🔗 Include training for student/staff
- 🔗 Provide at no cost to family

How to Request:

"Based on [evaluation/need], my child requires [specific AT] to access their education and make progress on IEP goals. Please document this in the IEP."

🔗 State & Federal Programs

Vocational Rehabilitation

- Employment-related AT
- Education if job-focused
- Assessment services
- No income limits
- Apply at 16+

State AT Programs

- Device demonstrations
- Short-term loans (try before buying)
- Funding guidance
- Training opportunities
- Reuse programs

🔗 Tip: Every state has an AT Act program. Find yours at www.at3center.net

🔗 Grants & Alternative Funding

National Grant Programs

Organization	Funds	Amount	Timeline
United Healthcare	Medical equipment	Up to \$5,000	Quarterly
First Hand Foundation	Medical needs	Up to \$10,000	90 days
iTaalk	Autism/communication	Varies	Rolling
Variety	All disabilities	Varies	Quarterly

Creative Funding Options

- Crowdfunding (GoFundMe)
- Community service clubs (Lions, Rotary)
- Religious organizations
- Employer giving programs
- Device loan libraries
- Refurbished equipment programs

🔗 Communication Apps

AAC Apps Overview

🔗 Premium AAC Apps

Proloquo2Go 🔗 \$249.99

- **Best for:** Comprehensive AAC needs
- **Features:**
 - 25,000+ symbols
 - Customizable vocabulary
 - Word prediction
 - Switch accessible
 - Grammar support
- **Pros:** Most comprehensive, excellent support
- **Cons:** Expensive, learning curve

TouchChat ⌘ \$149.99-299.99

- **Best for:** Literate users with motor planning needs
- **Features:**
 - Word-based pages
 - Vocabulary packages
 - Button activation options
 - Social phrases
- **Pros:** Consistent motor patterns
- **Cons:** Less intuitive initially

LAMP Words for Life ⌘ \$299.99

- **Best for:** Building language systematically
- **Features:**
 - Motor planning approach
 - Consistent word placement
 - Vocabulary development tools
- **Pros:** Research-based approach
- **Cons:** Specific training helpful

⌘ **Success Tip:** Most expensive apps offer free "Lite" versions to try first!

⌘ **Free/Low-Cost Options**

App	Price	Platform	Best For
Emergency Chat	Free	iOS/Android	Non-speaking moments
Predictable	\$159.99	iOS	Text-based communication
CoughDrop	\$6/month	Web/iOS/Android	Budget-conscious families
Avaz	\$99.99	iOS/Android	Children/picture-based

⌘ Learning & Education Apps

Reading Support

⌘ **Top Reading Apps**

Learning Ally ⌘

- Human-narrated audiobooks
- Synchronized highlighting
- Note-taking features
- Student dashboard
- **Cost:** Membership required
- **Best for:** Dyslexia, reading disabilities

Voice Dream Reader ⌘

- Text-to-speech
- Imports any document
- Customizable voices
- Reading tracking
- **Cost:** \$19.99
- **Best for:** Digital reading support

🗒 Writing Support

Co:Writer ✍

- Word prediction
- Grammar support
- Topic dictionaries
- Speech feedback

- **Cost:** \$4.99/month
- **Best for:** Writing difficulties

✎ Math Support

ModMath ✎

- Digital graph paper
- No handwriting required
- Problem-solving workspace
- **Cost:** Free
- **Best for:** Dysgraphia, motor challenges

✎ **Teacher Tip:** Many schools have site licenses for educational apps. Ask before purchasing!

✎ Executive Function Apps

Organization & Planning

App	Function	Cost	Key Feature
MindMeister	Mind mapping	Free/Premium	Visual planning
Todoist	Task management	Free/Premium	Natural language
Forest	Focus timer	\$3.99	Gamification
Time Timer	Visual timer	\$2.99	Countdown visual

✎ Daily Living Apps

Visual Schedules

First Then Visual Schedule ✎

- Customizable schedules
- Check-off features
- Multiple users
- Timers included
- **Cost:** \$14.99
- **Best for:** Routine support

Choiceworks ✎

- Visual schedules
- Feelings board
- Waiting board
- Token economy
- **Cost:** \$6.99
- **Best for:** Young children

Life Skills Development

Life Skills Winner ✎

- Video modeling
- Social stories
- Task analysis
- Progress tracking
- **Cost:** Free with IAP
- **Best for:** Skill development

Money Management

Money School ✎

- Coin/bill recognition
- Making change practice
- Shopping scenarios
- Multiple currencies
- **Cost:** \$4.99
- **Best for:** Financial literacy

📄 Implementation Strategies

Getting Started

📄 Implementation Checklist

Week 1: Introduction

- ☐ Introduce AT in preferred activity
- ☐ Keep sessions short (10-15 min)
- ☐ Focus on motivation, not mastery
- ☐ Celebrate any interaction

Week 2-4: Building Skills

- ☐ Increase session length gradually
- ☐ Add new features slowly
- ☐ Practice in multiple settings
- ☐ Include peers when possible

Month 2: Expansion

- ☐ Use throughout the day
- ☐ Train all team members
- ☐ Customize for efficiency
- ☐ Track progress data

⚠️ **Common Mistake:** Introducing too much too fast. Build success gradually!

📄 Data Collection

Progress Tracking Template

Date	AT Used	Duration	Independence Level	Notes
			Prompt/Partial/Independent	

Team Training

Essential Training Topics:

- Basic operation
- Troubleshooting
- Customization
- Data collection
- Maintenance

📄 Troubleshooting Guide

Common Issues & Solutions

📄 Device Abandonment

Cause	Solution
Poor match	Reassess needs
Inadequate training	Provide more support
Technical issues	Ensure working properly
Social stigma	Address peer education
Lack of motivation	Find meaningful activities

Technical Support

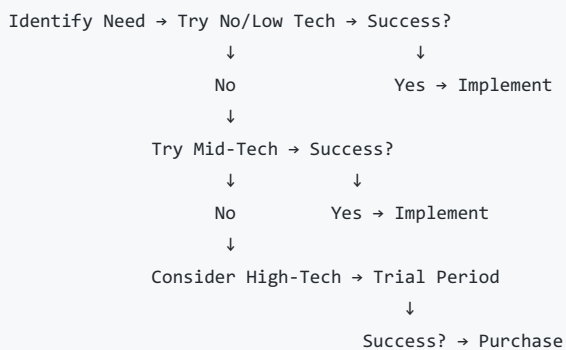
When Things Go Wrong:

1. Check battery/power
2. Restart device
3. Check settings
4. Update software
5. Contact vendor support
6. Use backup system

📌 **Always Have a Backup!** Low-tech backup for high-tech solutions is essential.

🔗 Quick Reference Guide

AT Selection Flowchart



📌 Essential AT Apps by Need

Communication:

- Proloquo2Go (comprehensive)
- Emergency Chat (free backup)

Learning:

- Learning Ally (reading)
- Co:Writer (writing)
- ModMath (math)

Organization:

- Time Timer (visual time)
- First Then (schedules)
- Todoist (tasks)

Life Skills:

- Money School (finance)
- Life Skills Winner (ADLs)

📌 AT Resources

National Resources:

- CAST: www.cast.org
- Closing the Gap: www.closingthegap.com
- ATIA: www.atia.org
- Your State AT Program: www.at3center.net

Assessment Tools:

- SETT Framework: Free download
- WATI: www.wati.org
- QIAT: www.qiat.org

Key AT Terms

Know These:

- AAC: Augmentative/Alternative Communication
- DME: Durable Medical Equipment
- SGD: Speech Generating Device
- UDL: Universal Design for Learning

- **VOC:** Voice Output Communication
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📌 **Remember:** Technology is a tool, not a solution. The right AT in the right hands with the right support can change everything. Start where you are, use what you have, and build toward independence one step at a time.