



## SPECIAL EDUCATION RIGHTS: ILLINOIS EDITION



# Assistive Technology

This fact sheet answers:

- What Is Assistive Technology?
- Who Pays for Assistive Technology?
- Where Can My Child Get Assistive Technology?
- And More

### What Is (AT)?

AT can be an actual item, piece of equipment, or software that helps children with disabilities do better in school.

AT can be “low-tech” or “high-tech.” Some examples are:

- Computers, iPads, or communication devices.
- Programs that read books out loud to students with learning disabilities or visual impairments.
- Equipment such as walkers, wheelchairs, special desks, or writing grips.
- Calculators, timers, highlighters, or assignment notebooks.

### How Can AT Help My Child?

AT can help your child keep up with his classmates, learn, and do better in school. AT can help with physical, speech, cognitive/thinking, behavioral, or learning problems.

### Who Pays for AT?

The school must pay for AT if your child’s IEP/504 team decides that he needs it.

**The team cannot say no to AT because it costs too much money**, but it can look at cost when choosing between two similar kinds of AT.

### Does the School Have to Give My Child AT?

Yes, if the IEP/504 team decides he needs AT to do better in school. The team should talk about AT every time it meets.

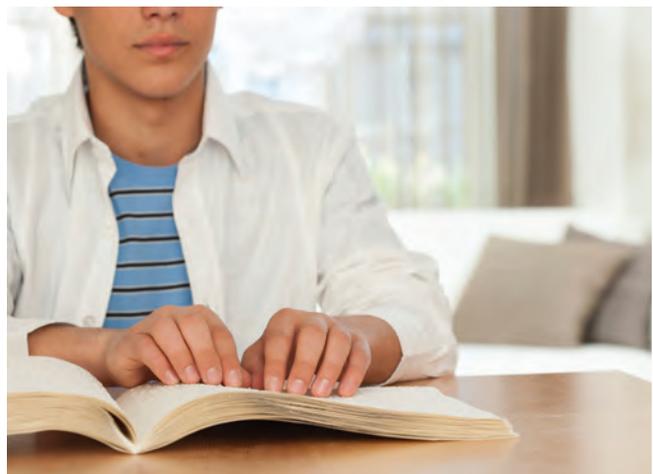
If the team decides your child needs AT, it should

- Put the AT in your child’s IEP/504 Plan.
- Buy and give the AT to your child.
- Help your child learn how to use it.
- Watch to make sure he is using it right.
- Fix the AT if it breaks.
- Train teachers, therapists, aides, and you how to use the AT.

### When Can a School Say No to Giving My Child AT?

A school does not need to give AT to your child if:

- He doesn’t need it to learn or do better in school.
- It is a medical device or service that only a doctor can provide.





## Where Can My Child Get AT?

The school can give your child AT:

- In the classroom and during his services like speech, social work, physical therapy, or occupational therapy.
- During recess and special classes such as PE, Music, or Art.
- During activities like field trips or on the bus.
- At home if the team agrees that bringing the AT home will help your child with homework or learn in school.

## Can AT Be Written Into My Child's IEP/504 Plan?

Yes. It should be. The plan should explain when the AT will be used, how it will be used, who will help your child use it, and if you or the school need any special training to learn how to use it. If your child has an IEP, the AT can also be written into your child's goals and transition plan.



## How Do I Get AT Into My Child's Plan?

- Talk about AT at your child's IEP/504 meeting. The school may have a good idea of what kind of AT could help your child and can add it to his plan.
- Ask (in writing) for your child to be tested for AT. Explain how AT could help your child in school. Talk to your child's doctor, therapists, and teachers about the kinds of AT that could help your child.
- If your child does not currently have an IEP/504 Plan, you can ask that the AT evaluation be done at the same time as a "Full Individual Evaluation."

See Equip for Equality's "**How to Help Your Child Be Successful in School - Getting a 504 Plan or IEP**" fact sheet for more information on how to ask for evaluations.

Even if your child already has AT, you can ask for a new evaluation because your child's needs, school work, and technology can all change as he gets older.

## Can My Child's Teacher and I Be Trained in the AT?

Yes! Everyone who uses the AT with your child should know how to use it. This includes you, his teachers, and in-school therapists. You should ask for this training in writing to the school. This can be a part of your child's IEP/504.

## **What If the AT Breaks?**

If your child needs the AT as part of his IEP/504, the school has to repair the broken device. If it breaks while it's at your home, you might have to pay for it.

## **What If My Child Doesn't Like His AT?**

Your child's needs, likes, and dislikes should all be talked about when the team thinks about what AT to use and if it should be changed.



## **What If the School Says No to AT or an Evaluation?**

If your child needs AT and **has a 504 Plan**, you can:

- Ask for a hearing with the school district.
- File a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights.

If your child needs AT and **has an IEP**, you can:

- Ask for mediation.
- File a complaint with the Illinois State Board of Education.
- File a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights.
- File for due process.

See Equip for Equality's "**What to Do When You Disagree with the School**" fact sheet to learn more about your options when a school says no to your request. ■



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## **Have More Questions?**

Call our Special Education Rights Parent Helpline.

**1-866-KIDS-046** (1-866-543-7046)  
[SpecialEd@equipforequality.org](mailto:SpecialEd@equipforequality.org)  
[www.equipforequality.org/helpline](http://www.equipforequality.org/helpline)