Garrett County Public Schools Assistive Technology

**What is Assistive Technology?**

Assistive technology, or AT, is *any item or piece of equipment that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of life, including at school, at work, at home and in the community.* In order to access the educational program, a student may require assistive technology as a related service. Assistive technology can range from “low-tech” to “high-tech.” Examples of “low-tech” devices include large print text, pencil grips, and raised line paper while “mid-tech” devices include talking spell checkers, digital books, or alternate keyboards. “High-tech” devices can include voice recognition software, communication devices with voices, and other specialized software. Assistive Technology is specifically considered, selected, implemented, and evaluated for any student whom the IEP team feels needs AT to do things that would be extremely difficult or potentially impossible for them to do otherwise.

**How does Assistive Technology fit into a student’s curriculum?**

Technology can offer access to the general education curriculum for all learners. The concept of Universal Design for Learning is the practice of embedding flexible strategies into the curriculum during the planning process so that ALL students can access a variety of learning solution ([CAST.org](http://marylandlearninglinks.org)). However, some students may still require the use and implementation of Assistive Technology to augment and demonstrate their learning. For students who require AT, the key is to match the individual student’s learning needs to the device.

**What is the process for considering Assistive Technology?**

Evaluating a student’s need for AT begins with first considering the individual student, the environment the student is in, the task(s) for which AT is being considered, and the tools needed to access the curriculum and demonstrate learning. The four-step [JHU AT Cycle](http://marylandlearninglinks.org) outlines the phases of considering, choosing and trialing, and implementing AT as well as on-going progress monitoring. Each student’s need for AT is addressed at the annual IEP team meeting.

**For more information about Assistive Technology:**

[http://marylandlearninglinks.org/955](http://marylandlearninglinks.org/955)

[http://marylandlearninglinks.org/3815](http://marylandlearninglinks.org/3815)

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