



10 Things You Need to Know About Assistive Technology for Students with Learning Disabilities

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1. Consideration of assistive technology services and devices for students with disabilities, including learning disabilities, is provided through the IEP process as mandated by IDEA or through 504.
2. Students with learning disabilities often have difficulty with reading, writing, spelling and math. There are assistive technology solutions to support all of these critical academic areas including software that “reads” the computer screen, devices that read textbooks and books out loud, software that supports spelling and the writing process, and software that supports math.
3. Software and devices are not appropriate for all students. Technology solutions are selected based on the student’s skills and deficits, the academic tasks the student needs to accomplish, and the student’s environment. Technology use should be constantly monitored and revised when the student’s skills, tasks or the environment change.
4. While many of the technologies used by students with learning disabilities are also beneficial for students without disabilities, the assistive technology used by a student with a learning disability must be individually selected to meet the student’s specific deficits and strengths and is considered an essential tool for learning.
5. Assistive technologies require training and practice for the student, the educational support staff, and the family.
6. Technology is just one of the tools a student with a learning disability may use and the technology should be coordinated with other strategies and accommodations that the student finds beneficial.
7. The educational staff, student and parents should have a clear expectation of how the assistive technology supports the student’s learning and there should be clearly stated performance criteria based on the student’s competency level with the technology.
8. Assistive technology almost always requires technical support and an individual should be identified who can problem solve quickly and with authority so that valuable learning time is not lost due to broken equipment.
9. Assistive technology use should be clearly documented in the IEP. It may appear in multiple areas including: strengths, needs, present levels of performance, annual goals, transition services, supplementary aids and services, support for school personnel, special education and related services, accommodations for state/district assessment, and consideration of special factors.
10. Technology, when used by students with learning disabilities, is not a goal in itself, but rather, technology is a tool which enables students to participate more independently and successfully in the academic and learning environments.

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