Assistive technology (AT) can help students with many different types of disabilities. The use of technology to support learning differences is effective for many students because it allows them to utilize their learning strengths. AT does not eliminate the need for other types of intervention. Rather, AT works with other strategies to enhance the entire learning process. The outcome of appropriate assistive technology use should be to increase your child's independence and help them achieve academic success.

Consideration of Assistive Technology should be discussed as part of the IEP process. You do not have to wait for an IEP meeting to address your concerns with the educational team - you can ask for an IEP review at any time. Your district may have someone qualified to perform an assistive technology evaluation. If so, following the evaluation, you should be provided with a report and recommendations to review with your child's IEP team. If you feel you need additional input, you can discuss your options with the Special Education Administrator.

Checking to see that the basics are in place can help to insure that a student will be able to use assistive technology effectively in the classroom.

✓ The IEP team assesses a student's educational needs (with consultation as appropriate) and identifies goals which may be addressed using assistive technology devices/supports.

✓ An AT assessment takes place in the classroom environment, whenever possible with consultation by an assistive technology specialist as needed. As part of the evaluation phase, the student has an opportunity to use/trial the technology in the classroom before the final decision is made to obtain the equipment. During the trial period, specific goals are established and data is collected to help the educational team make a final determination as to the appropriateness of the equipment.

✓ The evaluation report should include clear recommendations and followed by a meeting to review the recommendations and make determinations as to how to implement AT use. Following the assessment, the IEP should be modified to include the new accommodations.

✓ The IEP clearly identifies why and how the assistive technology will be used to help the student meet his/her goals and objectives. In addition, the IEP identifies AT training for staff, student and family. There is a plan for maintaining and repairing the technology as well as a "back-up plan" for when the technology is not working/available.

✓ The assistive technology device is used concurrently with other appropriate accommodations to facilitate a student's maximum classroom participation and independence.

✓ The IEP includes a plan for monitoring use of the technology and reviewing its appropriateness at least yearly, and especially at key transition times (elementary to middle, middle to high school, school to work, etc.). Good records are kept on the assistive technology and the student's use of the technology and the records are passed on when the student transitions from grade to grade, from school to school, or if the student changes school systems

✓ The educational/therapeutic staff, parents and students have a common understanding of the potential and limitations of assistive technology and work together to insure that the assistive technology device is used effectively to meet the student's educational goals.

✓ The IEP team should continuously monitor the student's difficulties and progress when utilizing the assistive technology and make changes as needed. Consultation with an assistive technology specialist is recommended if questions arise during the AT implementation plan.

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