

Appendices to Assistive Technology Guidelines

Who Can Provide Assistive Technology (Appendix 1)

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Appendix 1

Who Can Provide Assistive Technology

As required by IDEA and its regulations, IEP Teams, as part of the development, review, and revision of a child's IEP, must consider whether a child needs Assistive Technology (AT) devices and services. Since AT was first mandated in 1990, school districts have developed a variety of styles of delivering AT services. These vary from an "expert model," where members of an AT team are the only ones in the agency empowered to make recommendations about the selection, acquisition, and use of AT, to "capacity building models," where the members of the AT team spend their time training and supporting members of the IEP teams and student service teams so that they can effectively perform as independently as possible. The Shasta SELPA has adopted the second model.

Local Education Agencies (LEA) are encouraged to build their internal capacity by having their teams take advantage of the wealth of information and training available from Open Access (www.openaccess-ca.org). Additionally, the SELPA tries to have at least one of its Program Specialists AT-certified and available for consultation. While the certification is not required for providing AT, it demonstrates a level of expertise.

Augmentative, Alternative Communication is a subset of AT. Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) is an area of clinical practice that addresses the needs of individuals with significant and complex communication disorders characterized by impairments in speech-language production and comprehension, including spoken and written modes of communication. Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) describes multiple ways to communicate that can supplement or compensate (either temporarily or permanently) for impairments in speech-language production and/or comprehension, including spoken and written modes of communication. AAC is augmentative when used to supplement existing speech, and alternative when used in place of speech that is absent or not functional.

The provision of AT can be done by a variety of personnel. The state of California has an inclusive list (see Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 5, § 3051.19 - Assistive Technology Service). The list identifies any credentialed special education teacher (Subsection b8). This section states that AT services may be provided by any credentialed teacher authorized to serve students with orthopedic impairments in addition to other specialized areas.

The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing lists the areas of need each credential serves. The three primary special education credentials, Mild to Moderate Support Needs, Extensive Support Needs, and Early Childhood Special Education, are authorized to serve students with orthopedic impairments. Any teacher with one of these credentials can provide AT service and evaluation.

Teachers with more specialized credentials, DHH, VI, and APE, can provide AT services to students. Their credentials are specific to students with disabilities that are physical or severe in nature of the disability.

Additionally, Speech and Language Pathologists (SLPs) can provide AT services when those services are AAC-related. While there are SLPs that specialize in AAC, all school-based SLPs are licensed or credentialed to provide AT service. It is part of their scope of practice. To increase their capacity, SLPs are encouraged to build their internal capacity by having their teams take advantage of the wealth of

information and training available from Open Access (www.openaccess-ca.org), the California Speech and Hearing Association (www.csha.org), or the Diagnostic Center of Northern California.

Given the unique needs of students, more expertise and experience may be required. Schools can reach out to the SELPA. The SELPA has historically had a certified AT Specialist on staff, maintained contracts with NPAs, and has partnered with other SELPAs to provide consultation, assessments, and services.

Regulations

Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 5, § 3051.19 - Assistive Technology Service

(a) "Assistive technology service" means any service that directly assists an individual with exceptional needs in the selection or use of an assistive technology device that is educationally necessary. The term includes the evaluation of the needs of an individual with exceptional needs including a functional evaluation of the individual in the individual's customary environment; coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices, such as those associated with existing education programs and rehabilitation plans and programs; training or technical assistance for an individual with exceptional needs or, where appropriate, the family of an individual with exceptional needs or, if appropriate, that individual's family; and training or technical assistance for professionals (including individuals providing education and rehabilitation services), employers or other individuals who provide services to, employ, or are otherwise substantially involved in the major life functions of individuals with exceptional needs.

(b) Assistive technology services shall be provided only by personnel who possess a:

(1) license in Physical Therapy issued by a licensing agency within the Department of Consumer Affairs, where the utilization of assistive technology services falls within the scope of practice of physical therapy as defined in Business and Professions Code section 2620 and implementing regulations; or

(2) license in Occupational Therapy issued by a licensing agency within the Department of Consumer Affairs; or

(3) license in Speech-Language Pathology issued by a licensing agency within the Department of Consumer Affairs or a valid document, issued by the California CTC, where the function of the assistive technology service is augmentative communication; or

(4) baccalaureate degree in engineering with emphasis in assistive technology; or

(5) baccalaureate degree in a related field of engineering with a graduate certificate in rehabilitation technology or assistive technology; or

(6) certification from the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America and Assistive Technology Provider (RESNA/ATP); or

(7) certificate in assistive technology applications issued by a regionally accredited post-secondary institution; or

(8) credential that authorizes special education of physically impaired, orthopedically impaired, or severely impaired pupils.

California Commission on Teacher Credentialing

Specialty Areas

- **Mild to Moderate Support Needs (MMSN)**
Includes specific learning disabilities; mild to moderate support needs; autism; emotional disturbance; intellectual disability; multiple disabilities; orthopedic impairment; other health impairment; specific learning disability; traumatic brain injury; and authorizes service in grades K–12, transitional kindergarten, and in classes organized primarily for adults through age 22.
- **Extensive Support Needs (ESN)**
Includes autism; deafblind; extensive support needs; intellectual disability; multiple disabilities; orthopedic impairment; other health impairment; emotional disturbance; traumatic brain injury, and authorizes service in grades K–12, transitional kindergarten, and in classes organized primarily for adults through age 22.
- **Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)**
Includes the mild to moderate support needs and extensive support needs listed above; authorizes service to children ages birth to kindergarten only.
- **Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH)**
Includes deafness; hearing impairment; deafblind; autism; and authorizes service to individuals ages birth through 22.
- **Visual Impairments (VI)**
Includes blindness; visual impairment; deaf-blindness; and authorizes service to individuals ages birth through 22.