CONNECT WITH SUPPORTS

Every U.S. state has a **State Assistive Technology Act Program**. The programs offer services and conduct activities in two broad areas. Programs offer training, outreach and professional development to promote knowledge and understanding of how to apply AT in various sectors of society.

The State Assistive Technology Program in Connecticut is

TECH ACT
Connecticut **Tech Act** Project

facebook.com/CTtechact | (860) 424-4881

Call Tech Act or Infoline 211 to find out about additional resources in your local community.

An AT Device Demonstration is an opportunity for a person to interact with an AT device, learn about the different features and compare with similar devices. An AT Device Demo allows a person to make an informed decision about whether the device is the right one.

You can request an AT Device Demo at one of these CTTAP partner agencies:

New England Assistive Technology (NEAT) Center at Oak Hill
neatmarketplace.org | (866) 526-4492.

AcessIndependence
drcfc.org | (203) 378-6977.

Eastern CT Assistive Technology Center, Windham Regional Community Council
(860) 423-4534

EASTCONN: Resources for educators
eastconn.org

Western CT Assistive Technology Center
wcaaa.org | (800) 994-9422.

This product was developed through the National Community of Practice for Supporting Families of Individuals with I/DD. More at supprotstofamiles.org

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assistive technology

What is Assistive Technology?

Assistive Technology (AT) refers to 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.

Assistive technology ranges on a continuum from low tech to high tech devices or equipment. Low-tech devices are usually less expensive, don't require a lot of training and have less features. High-tech devices tend to be more expensive, may require more in-depth training but will also likely have multiple features and are more adaptable for multiple purposes.

DDS
CT Department of Developmental Services
ct.gov/dds

CT Council on Developmental Disabilities
ct.gov/ctcdd

TECHNOLOGY ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

What do families need to know about AT?

Assistive technology can help people at any age in all aspects of their lives: at home, at work, and in the community. The use of technology can help young children to maintain typical development, it can be used to help promote inclusion in the regular education environment, and it can assist adults in being successfully employed in real jobs. AT can help enhance communication and can help increase independence and assist individuals to live more self-determined lives. Resources are available through Medicaid, Private Insurance, and other sources to pay for assistive technology. See the back page for resources you can connect with for support with AT.

Prenatal & Infancy

Research has found infants and toddlers, age birth to three, capable of using AT, and the Federal Government mandates that AT be considered when a team creates an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).

Early Childhood

During the preschool years, young children are developing a sense of initiative and creativity. They are exploring their ability to create and communicate using a variety of media (crayons, felt-tip markers, paints and other art materials, blocks, dramatic play materials, miniature life figures) and through creative movement, singing, dancing, and using their bodies to represent ideas and experiences. Assistive technologies can help them to demonstrate their creativity and learning and can help with communication and mobility.

School Age

In the new millennium, the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) (2004) ask educators to maximize opportunities for students with disabilities to succeed in inclusive classrooms. To make autonomy and integration seamless, many students with disabilities will need to make use of assistive technology.

Transition

Demands increase as students' transition from middle school to high school to the adult world. During the transition years, students are expected to programmatically move from school to community as their education becomes increasingly real life-based. Although this provides an excellent educational opportunity, it offers many challenges in providing necessary supports, including assistive technology. When the team begins to develop the student's transition plan, it is important that the IEP team includes members who are knowledgeable about assistive technology and transition.

Comprehensive planning is necessary in order to meet the student's assistive technology needs, while maximizing resources and avoiding duplication of assistive technology serves or devices as the student moves from school to work or other post-secondary environments.

Adulthood

The need for Assistive Technology does not end after high school. AT can help to increase independence and improve functioning for post-secondary education, employment and daily living. There are several adult service agencies that can assist with the AT. Also, employers are required to provide reasonable accommodations in the workplace, which can include Assistive Technology, to perform the essential functions of a job.

Aging

For many seniors, assistive technology makes the difference between being able to live independently and having to get long-term nursing or home health care. For others, assistive technology is critical to the ability to perform activities of daily living, such as bathing and going to the bathroom.

Older adults must carefully evaluate their needs before deciding to purchase assistive technology. Using assistive technology may change the mix of services that a senior requires or may affect the way that those services are provided. For this reason, the process of needs assessment and planning is important. Seniors must also remember to plan ahead and think about how their needs might change over time.