



Family Engagement Newsletter

What Parents Need to Know about Assistive Technology

By Wendy Overturf

In Wisconsin, on the I-4 form of the IEP, *Special Factors* must be considered when developing the individualized education program. The form states that the IEP team “Consider the special factors when identifying the effects of disability, summarizing disability related needs, developing goals, and determining services in the Program Summary.” One of these special factors is assistive technology (AT).

AT is any device that helps a person with a disability complete an everyday task. Some of the problems that a child might experience which would lead the IEP team to consider assistive technology as a solution include, but are not limited to:

- Print size is too small.
- A student is unable to hear all that is being said.
- Manipulatives are too difficult to utilize.
- The child often needs text read to him in order to complete an assignment.
- Handwriting is so illegible that the meaning is impossible to decipher.
- The effort of writing is so slow or so exhausting that it is counterproductive.
- Current modifications are not working.
- The child needs an alternative method to communicate.
- The effort of decoding reading assignments is so difficult that the child loses track of the meaning. (from WATI).

In short, AT is something that provides access to those things that the student otherwise might not be able to do. AT includes both the *devices* and the *services* needed to use the devices effectively. AT services might include assessing a child’s need for AT through an AT evaluation. It also includes the training the child and his teacher, aide, and family need to use the AT.

According to the Wisconsin Assistive Technology Institute’s (WATI) [resource manual](#), “Every IEP Team is now required to “consider” the child’s need for assistive technology. When you do “consider” assistive technology, that process should involve some discussion and examination of potential assistive technology. It should not be ignored or skipped over. It should not be someone saying, “Assistive technology? No, he doesn’t need that.” with no real discussion....That consideration should include at least a brief discussion of which assistive technology might be useful and whether it is needed. In order to do that, someone on the IEP team will need to be sufficiently knowledgeable about assistive technology to help lead the discussion.”

Parents are a child’s most effective advocate. It is crucial that parents be prepared and informed when meeting with the IEP team. Check out the **Online Resource Section** of this newsletter to learn more about possible AT devices. AT can be an invaluable part of your child’s daily life and can allow children to participate more fully with their peers and increase their functionality. When appropriate, AT can help to ensure that your child has every opportunity to his/her full potential. If parents think that their child needs AT and AT was not included on the current IEP, parents can request that an AT evaluation be conducted by an assistive technology specialist.

Statewide Events

[Supporting Neurodiversity in the IEP](#)

For educators, families, and other staff seeking information for students with autism, emotional behavior disabilities, and other developmental disabilities, the DPI Special Education Team is partnering again with the Community of Practice on Autism Spectrum Disorder and others for a joint meeting. Keynote: Dr. Markeda Newell will discuss bias as it relates to a comprehensive special education evaluation, with a lens of neurodiverse students (e.g. students with autism, emotional behavioral disabilities, other developmental disabilities, etc.). This is a FREE event.

Date: September 27, 2019

Location: Potawatomi Hotel and Conference Venue, 1611 West Canal Street, Milwaukee WI 53233.

[Youth in Partnership with Parents for Empowerment \(YiPPE\)](#)

An opportunity for youth with disabilities (ages 14-21) and their parents to learn about the transition process in a unique way while building real life skills in the areas of employment, education, living and health. YiPPE is a no-cost event and participants must be able to attend all five weekend sessions.

[2019-20 Locations & Dates](#)

[Autism Society of Greater WI Fall Conference “To Infinity and Beyond: Preparing Adolescents to Launch into the Real World.”](#)

Focus on helping parents and professionals (teachers, counselors, psychologists, speech-language pathologists, etc.) prepare for—and respond to—the transition to adulthood.

Date: October 3, 2019

Location: Florian Gardens Conference Center, Eau Claire, WI

Statewide Events

[Transition - Parents in Partnership \(PIP\)](#)

An opportunity for families to learn about the transition process for their youth with disabilities ages 14-21 in the areas of employment, education, living and health. PIP consists of five sessions and participants must be able to attend all Saturday sessions. This is a no-cost event.

Dates: October 5, 2019, November 9, 2019, January 4, 2020, February 8, 2020, March 14, 2020

Location: Southwest Wisconsin Technical College, Fennimore, WI

[WI FACETS Parent Leadership Conference](#)

A training for parents of school aged children with disabilities. Develop your leadership skills with fellow parents & become empowered to advocate to improve the lives of children & youth with disabilities in Wisconsin. The course content includes learning how to work in partnerships with schools, agencies and providers; coming together around issues; and ensuring relevant parent participation.

Date: October 5, 2019, 9 am—3:30 pm

Location: Great Wolf Lodge Conference Center, Wisconsin Dells, WI

[Wisconsin Statewide Transition Academy](#)

Packed with information relating to all areas of transition, this conference is perfect for all, whether you are an educator, paraprofessional, parent, youth, or agency member. A no-cost event.

Date: October 15, 2019

Location: Glacier Canyon Lodge, Wisconsin Dells, WI

[Children Come First Conference](#)

“Cooperation” is the theme of this conference for those caring for, working with, or concerned with the well-being of children and young adults with social, emotional, and behavioral challenges. Youth (ages 12-26) who have a social, emotional, behavioral, mental health or substance use challenge are invited to attend the keynote presentations, and then enjoy special youth-only sessions during workshop breakout times.

Some scholarship funding will be available for parents/primary caregivers who would otherwise be unable to attend.

Date: November 11-12, 2019

Location: Glacier Canyon Lodge, Wisconsin Dells, WI



At Home Learning Strategies

It is September and the weather is still nice for outdoor play. Listed below are ways to have fun outside and promote learning!



Alphabet Ball Games

- The adult calls out a letter, and the child responds with a word that begins with that letter.
- After the word is called, the adult tosses the ball to the child. The child catches the ball and calls out a new letter.
- When the adult responds with an appropriate word, the child throws the ball back to the adult.
- To add a little more challenge: You can create a rule that the same word cannot be repeated, or that you cannot repeat a letter until all the letters have been used.

Variations of this game:

Rhyming Ball: Instead of a letter, call out a word for the other person to rhyme before throwing the ball.

Opposite Ball: Have the adult call out a word, and the child call out the opposite, and then throw the ball to the child.

Next letter: This version is a little tricky for pre-readers, but it would work well with older kids who are more familiar with reading. The adult calls out a letter and the child then names a word that starts with the next letter. So, when the adult calls out “B,” the child would call out “cat.”

ABC ball: Younger children who know the alphabet but are not at the stage of sounding out letters can call out the next letter. The adult would say “B” and the child would respond with “C”. This really works best when sticking close to the beginning of the alphabet, or if you repeat the alphabet with your child, pausing right before the letter they are supposed to name.



Host a Family Paint Night

Let your kids inspire creativity as your family unleashes their inner artists and the paintbrushes fly during Family Paint Night.

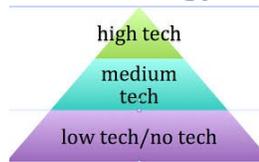
Remember, there is no right or wrong, everyone should just relax and enjoy the creative process.

Do the Math: Calculator Hopscotch

Get kids moving—and practicing basic number skills—with a game of calculator hopscotch. We all know that exercise is good for kids' health, but according to a growing body of evidence, it can also improve their academic performance. Schools are experimenting with incorporating movement into classroom lessons, so why not try a little active learning at home? This brainy variation on a blacktop fave will help your kids get a jump on arithmetic—and it's a blast!

7	8	9	-
4	5	6	+
1	2	3	=
x	÷	0	

Online Resources: Assistive Technology



[Center for Parent Information and Resources \(CPIR\)](#)

The website offers numerous resources related to assistive technology. It also has links to checklists that IEP teams can use when considering assistive technology.

[Center on Technology and Disability](#)

Assistive and instructional technology (AT/IT) allows children across the ability spectrum to participate fully at home, in school, and in the community. The Center on Technology and Disability provides a wealth of free resources – personal and professional development webinars, articles, guides, training materials and more.

[National Center on Accessible Educational Materials \(AEM\)](#)

This site focuses on how schools can serve students who are unable to read or use standard print materials, through the use of specialized formats (braille, audio, large print, and digital text). There are articles and research about effective practices, technical information, tutorials, webinars, and online forums.

[Bookshare](#)

An online library of more than 170,000 digital books for children and adults with qualifying disabilities. Schools can download textbooks, books, and periodicals, which their students can access on computers or mobile devices using software or apps that read the text aloud. For students with visual impairments, schools can also download files for use with braille devices. Bookshare is also FREE for U.S. Students with qualifying reading barriers. Students 18 years and over can sign up on their own; parents can sign up students under 18 years of age.

[Learning Ally](#)

Featuring a collection of more than 70,000 audiobooks, recorded textbooks and literature titles, for children and adults with qualifying disabilities. Audiobooks are available as digital downloads, as well as CDs, and free apps are available for popular mobile devices. Learning Ally works with volunteers to record books that its users request.

[SETT Framework](#)

Student, Environments, Tasks, and Tools—all of which need to be fully explored when assistive technology tools are considered or selected. The website offers a set of forms for collaborative decision making.

[Free Assistive Tech Tools Make Learning Accessible to All](#)

This website has a long list of tools and articles related to assistive technology. It also includes links to tools to support Universal Design for Learning (UDL). UDL is an educational framework based on research in the learning sciences, including cognitive neuroscience, that guides the development of flexible learning environments that can accommodate individual learning differences.

[Reading Rockets](#)

This link will introduce parents to the role of AT in helping their children with a learning disability. Parents will learn how to choose AT tools that are reliable and to select technology that is tailored to the child's individual needs, abilities, and experience.

For people without disabilities,
technology makes things
easier.

For people with disabilities,
technology makes things
possible!



Event title links to information & registration for WI FACETS FREE [workshops & webinars](#):

By phone, Sandra: 877-374-0511

All webinars 12:00—1:00 PM
(unless otherwise noted)

[Pediatric Mental Health Screening Tools and Resources](#)

Date: September 4, 2019

Presenter: Brad Holmen, Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN)

[Forgiveness: One Way to Stop Guilt and Self-Blame](#)

Date: September 11, 2019

Presenter: Tim Markle, Director
Southern Regional Center

[Lo que Necesito Saber sobre la Educación Especial](#)

Date: September 12, 2019

Presenter: Nelsinia Ramos, WI FACETS

[Section 504 and Education: What Parents and Schools Need to Know](#)

Date: September 17, 2019

Presenter: Matthew Zellmer, WI FACETS

[New Ambassador Orientation \(Virtual volunteer recruitment event\)](#)

Date: September 17, 2019, 4-5 p.m.

Presenter: Nelsinia Ramos, WI FACETS

[Discrimination and Harassment Protections for Public School Students](#)

Date: September 18, 2019

Presenter: Paul Sherman, WI DPI

[New Ambassador Orientation \(Virtual volunteer recruitment event\)](#)

Date: September 19, 2019

Presenter: Nelsinia Ramos, WI FACETS

[Speech and Language Eligibility and Current Trends](#)

Date: September 25, 2019

Presenter: Andrea Bertone, WI DPI

[Serving on Groups – Opportunities to Get Involved & Types of Groups- Sections 1 and 2](#)

Date: September 26, 2019

Presenter: Jan Serak,
Serak Consulting Services



Intervention IDEAs for Infants, Toddlers, Children, and Youth Impacted by Opioids

The abuse of opioids—such as heroin and various prescription drugs commonly prescribed for pain (e.g., oxycodone, hydrocodone, and fentanyl)—has rapidly gained attention across the United States as a public health crisis. Youth may be exposed to opioids in a variety of ways, including but not limited to infants born to mothers who took opioids during pregnancy; children mistakenly consuming opioids (perhaps thinking they are candy); teenagers taking opioids from an illicit street supply; or, more commonly, teenagers being given opiates for free by a friend or relative. Even appropriate opioid use among adolescents and young adults to treat pain may slightly increase their risk of later opioid misuse. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have identified opioid abuse as an epidemic, noting that opioids impact and affect all communities and age groups.

[The Intervention IDEAs Brief Series](#) describes interventions based on evidence, for practitioners and parents that address the academic, developmental and behavioral domains of infants and toddlers as well as school-aged children and youth with or at risk of disabilities.

Research to Read

Enhancing TPACK with Assistive Technology: Promoting Inclusive Practices in Pre-service Teacher Education

Marino, M., Sameshima, P. & Beecher, C. (2009). Enhancing TPACK with Assistive Technology: Promoting Inclusive Practices in Pre-service Teacher Education. *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education*, 9(2), 186-207. Waynesville, NC USA: Society for Information Technology & Teacher Education.

[Article Link](#)

As the global community continues the transition from an industrialized factory model to an information and now participatory networked-based society, educational technology will play a pivotal role in preparing students for their futures. Many teacher preparation programs are failing to provide preservice teachers with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to adopt and utilize technology effectively. This paper presents an enhanced technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge (TPACK) model that adds assistive technology to promote inclusive educational practice for preservice teachers. This model offers substantive promise for improving learning outcomes for students with disabilities and other traditionally marginalized populations who receive the majority of their classroom instruction in general education settings. This paper extends the TPACK model by providing specific examples of how assistive technology and instructional technology are distinct yet overlapping constructs. Essential technology skills for preservice teachers and strategies supporting inclusive educational practice are identified.

This monthly update is provided by the Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education, Training & Support (WI FACETS) to share statewide information regarding parent leadership and family involvement. *If you would like to receive this monthly update or if you would like to have your name removed from the distribution list, contact: Wendy Overturf at woverturf@wifacets.org.*



Contributions to the Newsletter

Upcoming newsletter topics: October: Learning Disabilities
November: Emotional Behavioral Disabilities
December: Communication

To submit contributions of articles, events, or resources, you may use the attached word document. Send submissions to woverturf@wifacets.org. If unable to access form, you may send information in an email.

Material appropriate for the monthly newsletter include web links to sources of family involvement/parent leadership resources, advertisements for statewide trainings for parents, youth or parent/educator audiences, information about statewide parent agencies, recent research pertaining to family engagement, and family engagement success articles.

***The WI FACETS Family Engagement E-Newsletter
can be found online at:***

<https://servingongroups.org/resources>



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