UPC E-JOURNAL: ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

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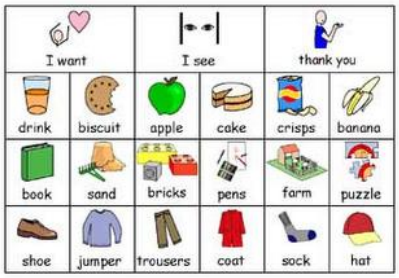
WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION TO THE WORLD OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

My name is Rebecca Turley, and I am a Parent Consultant and Trainer for the Utah Parent Center. I am pleased to present this e-journal on Assistive Technology. The information contained in this journal is designed to help parents and professionals who work with individuals with disabilities not only appreciate the possibilities of assistive technology, but also have a better understanding of how assistive technology can be used in public education. The e-journal will also focus on possible funding sources available to assist in the financing of assistive technology devices.

For a long time now, assistive technology has improved the quality of life for many individuals with disabilities. Assistive devices can help anyone at any age to read, hear, speak, write, learn, work, play, and participate in society. Assistive technology is considered to be any kind of technology that can be used to enhance the functional independence of a person with a disability. I have two family members with significant disabilities who have benefited greatly from the use of assistive technology. I'll begin with my oldest daughter Sarah, born with a severe speech and language disorder called Apraxia. Children with Apraxia have a difficult time with the motor planning necessary for intelligible speech. The thought of my daughter going through life unable to communicate her thoughts and needs effectively was hard to bear. When she entered her preschool program through the school district, a kind and knowledgeable speech therapist introduced me to the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS).



The PECS system uses picture symbols to build sentences and provide visual cues to help facilitate the motor planning process necessary for communication. Over time the PECS system, in combination with a good speech therapist, gave my daughter a way to express her feelings and communicate her wants and needs. Eventually, we were able to fade out the picture system, and she was left with functional communication skills. The other member of my family with a significant disability is my husband. Mark has a degenerative eye disorder called Retinitis Pigmentosa. He is currently legally blind. Without question, watching my husband gradually lose his eye sight was the hardest thing we had to face as a couple. Through assistive technology, though, Mark was able to regain much of his independence and face the world with renewed confidence. He is currently receiving mobility training and is learning to read and write Braille. Through the use of a high tech magnification device at home he is able to read many things that normally would be too difficult. Mark has also learned to modify the settings on his home computer and with greater magnification and better contrast he is able to use his computer just like everyone else. In the past, Mark has enjoyed books on tape and currently enjoys his ability to download books onto his Victor Reader MP3 player.

Continued on following page…

I am so grateful for the gains that have been made in current technology that allow my husband and daughter to benefit from the many assistive technology options available today.

If you have a child with assistive technology needs, this e-journal will provide you with many resources to help get you started. Many children with disabilities need assistive technology to benefit from their educational program. I would recommend that parents discuss these needs with their child's IEP team. The IEP team can provide an assistive technology assessment that will help determine the best way of accommodating their individual needs. If you have any questions regarding the information contained in this e-journal, please contact the Utah Parent Center. We would be happy to assist you.

In this Issue

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What is Assistive Technology?

Assistive technology is any kind of technology that can be used to enhance the functional independence of a person with a disability. Often, for people with disabilities, accomplishing daily tasks such as talking with friends, going to school and work, or participating in recreational activities is a challenge. Assistive technology (AT) devices are tools to help to overcome those challenges and enable people living with disabilities to enhance their quality of life and lead more independent lives.

Assistive technology can be anything from a simple (low-tech) device such as a magnifying glass, to a complex (high-tech) device, such as a computerized communication system. It can be big — an automated van lift for a wheelchair — or small — a grip attached to a pen or fork by Velcro. Assistive technology can also be a substitute — such as an augmentative communication device that provides vocal output for a child who cannot communicate with her voice.

The Possibilities of Assistive Technology

Technology is rapidly advancing, sometimes on a daily basis. New technology changes not only how we learn and engage with the world, but how we function in daily life. More than ever, technology makes it possible for children with disabilities to lead independent and fulfilling lives. Tools such as:

- Electronic devices that "speak" for an individual,
- Electric wheelchairs to enhance independence and even participate in sports, and
- Computers that can assist a student with school work, reports and learning.

Assistive technology, also known as AT, assists an individual with a disability to do something that he or she cannot do otherwise. Assistive technology can be anything from a simple magnifying glass to a complex device, such as a computerized communication system that provides vocal output for a child who cannot communicate using his or her own voice. It can be big (an automated van lift for a wheelchair) or small (a grip attached to a pen or fork by Velcro).

The potential of AT to help children with disabilities is tremendous. Assistive technology can help children become more self-sufficient at home and in school, communicate with friends and family, get out into the community and, as they grow older, to find employment.

The Basics of Assistive Technology at School

An assistive technology device is any item, piece of equipment or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a student with a disability. The term does not include a medical device that is surgically implanted, or the replacement of such a device.

An assistive technology service is any service that directly assists a child with selecting, acquiring, or using an assistive technology device. The term includes:

- Evaluating the needs of the student including a functional evaluation of the student in the student's customary environment
- Purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing assistive technology devices
- Selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing assistive technology devices
- Coordination and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs
- Training or technical assistance for a student with a disability or, if appropriate, that student's family
- Training or technical assistance for professionals (including individuals providing education or rehabilitation services), employers, or other individuals who provide services to, employ, or are otherwise substantially involved in the major life functions of students with disabilities

Learning More About Assistive Technology

Parents can help to identify potential AT for their child if they learn about the choices that are available. A good place to start is often with speech-language therapists, occupational therapists and school professionals. There are many organizations that provide AT information and training to consumers and families such as parent training and Information centers (PTI's), community technology centers, state assistive technology programs and rehabilitation centers. If possible you should visit an AT center with your child to see and try out various devices and equipment. Some AT centers offer lending programs that allow families to borrow devices for a trial period.

The following list includes several organizations that offer various resources on AT.

- Alliance for Technology Access – www.ataccess.org
- Abledata – www.abledata.com
- Assistivetech.net – www.assistivetech.net
- AbilityHub - www.abilityhub.com
- Family Center on Technology and Disability – www.fctd.info
- Utah Center for Assistive Technology – http://ucat.usor.utah.gov
- Utah Assistive Technology Program – www.uatp.org
- Utah Assistive Technology Foundation – www.utaf.org

The Family Center on Technology and Disability also has several downloadable documents available in both English and Spanish including:

- Family Information Guide to Assistive Technology
- Family Information Guide to Assistive Technology and Transition Planning

Leveling the Playing Field using Assistive Technology

Assistive technology helps to level the playing field for individuals with disabilities by providing them a way to fully engage in life's activities. An individual may use assistive technology to travel about, participate in recreational and social activities, learn, work, communicate with others, and much more.

Here are several examples of AT that enable people with disabilities to enter into the community and interact with others.

- For greater independence of mobility and travel, people with physical disabilities may use mobility aids, such as wheelchairs, scooters, and walkers. Adapted car seats and vehicle wheelchair restraints promote safe travel.
- Hand-held GPS (global positioning system) devices help persons with visual impairments navigate busy city streets and use public transportation.
- Building modifications at work sites, such as ramps, automatic door openers, grab bars, and wider doorways mean fewer barriers to employment, businesses, and community spaces, such as libraries, churches, and shopping malls.
- Special computer software and hardware, such as voice recognition programs and screen enlargement programs, enable persons with mobility and sensory impairments to carry out educational or work-related tasks.
- Education and work aids such as automatic page turners, book holders, and adapted pencil grips enable children to participate in classroom activities.
- Bowling balls with hand-grips and one-handed fishing reels are a few examples of how technology can be adapted for sporting activities. Light-weight wheelchairs have been designed for organized sports, such as basketball, tennis, and racing.
- Adaptive switches make it possible for a child with limited motor skills to play with toys and games.
- Accessibly designed movie theaters provide closed captioning and audio description for moviegoers with hearing and visual difficulties.
- Devices to assist a person with daily living tasks, such as cooking, dressing, and grooming, are available for people with special needs. For example, a medication dispenser with an alarm can be set to remind a child to take daily medication. A person with use of only one hand can use a one-handed cutting board and a cabinet mounted can opener to cook meals with improved independence and safety.

Getting Started with Assistive Technology

To determine the assistive technology needs of a child, an AT assessment should be conducted. The assessment can be conducted by the school, an independent agency, or an individual consultant. This assessment should take place in a child's customary environments -- home, school, and community. It is important that the assessment address the child's strengths as well as his/her weaknesses. It is key, when discussing how the child participates in his/her world, to hear the perspectives of teachers, parents and siblings, as well as that of the child. As their child's strongest advocate, it is important that families be involved in the planning, assessment, and follow-up of their child's assistive technology assessment.

The discussion should not be limited merely to what skills the child possesses but should include the ways in which a child communicates, what he likes and dislikes, and what kind of strategies and interventions are helpful in interacting with the child. Consideration must be given to how a child's need for AT might change depending on the environment, for example on the playground, in the classroom, at a friend's house or in a public place like a mall or library. This type of input will provide clues as to what technology might work and how well your child will respond to it.
The end result of an assessment is a recommendation for specific devices and services. Once it is agreed that assistive technology would benefit a child, issues related to design and selection of the device, as well as maintenance, repair, and replacement of devices should be considered. Training (to use the device) and ongoing technical assistance is necessary not only for the child, but also for family members, teachers, service providers, and other people who are significantly involved in a student's life. It is also important to integrate and coordinate any assistive technology with therapies, interventions, or services provided by education and rehabilitation plans and programs.

When AT is included in an IEP, it is the school's responsibility to make sure it is provided.

Acquiring assistive technology does not just happen once in a lifetime. The type of devices your child needs may change depending on the child's age, abilities, physical status, and features of the immediate environment, and advances in the technologies available. Changes in your child's life may require a re-assessment of his or her assistive technology needs. Remember to specify AT assessments, devices and services in your child's IEP, so that the school is responsible for providing them.

Assistive Technology and the IDEA

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires public schools to make available to all 'eligible' children with disabilities a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). To determine if a child is eligible for special education services, student must be evaluated. A parent, teacher, or related services providers, such as a therapist, can ask for a special education evaluation. The school system must provide this evaluation at no cost to the family. If a student is found to be eligible, then special education services must be made available to the student at no additional cost to families. A family should not wait until a child is ready to enter kindergarten or first grade to begin the evaluation process. IDEA has two parts:

- Part B applies to children with disabilities from 3 to 22 years old.
- Part C applies to infants and toddlers from birth to age 3.

The law requires that public schools develop an appropriate Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each child with a disability. The specific special education services, including assistive technology, that are outlined in the IEP should reflect the individual needs of the student.

IDEA requires that particular procedures be followed in the development of the IEP. Each student's IEP must be developed by a team of knowledgeable persons, including parents and/or family members, and must be reviewed at least once a year. The team typically includes:

- Teacher
- Parents
- Child, if appropriate
- LEA, who is a school system representative who is qualified to provide or supervise the special education services, and
- Other individuals at the parent's or school's request.

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As their child's strongest advocate, families should insist, politely but strongly, that assistive technology be considered in the IEP process and that both AT devices and services – such as teacher training on AT equipment – be included in the written IEP if needed.

Schools are responsible for providing assistive technology devices and services if it is determined by an IEP team that the child needs them to benefit from his or her educational program. Lack of availability or cost cannot be used as an excuse for denying AT devices or services. In addition, a child is allowed to take a device home if it is needed to enable him or her to benefit from his or her educational program as determined by the IEP team. Training of paraeducators and the student may also be listed in the IEP as AT services.

The term "assistive technology" may never appear on the IEP forms used by your child's school. Instead the form may use terms such as "accommodations, supports, program modifications or supplementary aids and services." No matter what form is used by the IEP team in your child's school, the law requires that the assistive technology needs of the child be considered.

Assistive Technology in Early Intervention and Preschool

Assistive technology has been shown to help young children improve in many areas including;

- social skills including sharing and taking turns
- communication skills
- attention span
- fine and gross motor skills
- self-confidence and independence

Assistive technology for young children is important because many of the skills learned in life begin in infancy. AT can help infants and toddlers with disabilities learn many of these crucial developmental skills. With assistive technology they can often learn the same things that nondisabled peers learn at the same age, only in a different way. Communication skills at this age are especially important since most of what an infant or toddler learns is through interacting with other people. This is especially true with family members and other primary caregivers. Sometimes parents are reluctant to begin using an AT device. They may believe it will discourage their child from learning important skills. In truth, the opposite may be true. Research has shown that using AT devices, especially augmentative communication devices, may encourage a child to increase communication efforts and skills. The earlier a child is taught to use an AT device, the more easily the child will learn to accept and use it. Assistive technology is also important because expectations for a child increase as he or she grows. Those around the child learn to say, "This is what the baby can do, with supports," instead of, "This is what the baby can't do." With assistive technology, parents learn that the dreams they had for their child don't necessarily end when he or she is diagnosed with a disability. The dreams may change a little, but they can still come true. There are two types of AT devices most commonly used by infants and toddlers– switches and augmentative communication devices. There are many types of switches, and they can be used in many different ways. Switches can be used with battery-operated toys to give infants opportunities to play with them. For example, a switch might be attached directly to a stuffed pig. Then, every time an infant touches the toy, it wiggles and snorts. Switches can also be used to turn things off and on. Toddlers can learn to press a switch to turn on a device or to use interactive software. Children who have significant disabilities can also use switches. For example, a switch could be placed next to an infant's head so that every time she moved her head to the left a

musical mobile hanging overhead would play. Augmentative communication materials and devices allow young children who cannot speak to communicate with the world around them. These devices can be simple, such as pointing to a photo on a picture board. Or, they can be more complicated— such as pressing message buttons on a device that activate pre-recorded messages such as "I'm hungry." There are many new applications for iPads and other devices that can assist in a cost effective way.

There are two ways for families to obtain AT services for their young child. First, infants and toddlers who have a disability may be eligible for early intervention services under Part C of a federal law called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). If the child meets eligibility criteria for early intervention services, he or she may receive assistive technology devices and services as part of the services provided. The Individual Family Services Plan (IFSP) team, including the parents, makes the decision whether those services are needed based on assessment information. If so, these services are provided to the child through a written Individualized Family Services Plan, or IFSP.

Ideally, a multi-disciplinary team will do an AT evaluation. Often this team will include an assistive technology specialist. This person should have a broad understanding about different kinds of technology, adapted toys, learning tools, communication devices and other adapted equipment. A member of the team should also understand how technology may be used in all areas of a child's life to support developmental outcomes. This person should also have knowledge about infant and toddler development. Some early intervention programs have AT specialists on staff. Other programs may use a physical, occupational, or educational speech pathologist that has had additional training as their AT specialist. If an early intervention program does not have a technology expert, it can contract with a provider, a school district, or a community agency. Before the evaluation takes place, team members should gather information about the child's interests, abilities, and family routines. This will help to determine what type of AT devices might be used during the evaluation. The evaluation is usually done in the environment where the child spends the most time, such as home and community settings.

IDEA defines an assistive technology device as "any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability." Under IDEA, assistive technology services are any services that directly assist a child with a disability to select, acquire or use a device. AT services include:

- finding and paying for an assistive technology device;
- selecting and making a device work (modifying, customizing, etc.) for a child;
- repairing or replacing a device;
- coordinating and using other therapies or services with AT devices
- evaluating the needs of a child with a disability, including
    - a functional evaluation of in the child's natural learning environment;
    - training or technical assistance for a child or that child's family; and
    - training or technical assistance for professionals.

Some infants and toddlers have delays that are not severe enough for them to be eligible for early intervention services. Many of these infants and toddlers may still benefit from using an AT device. In some cases, private insurance or medical assistance will pay for a device. Or, parents may choose to purchase a device directly for their child. Many technologies have become more affordable with the advent of iPads and other mass market devices. Some schools and communities have special lending libraries where parents can borrow toys with switches, computer software, and other devices. These libraries, such as Computer Center for Citizens with Disabilities in Utah, give parents an opportunity to try various devices before deciding whether to purchase them.

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To help you determine if your child would benefit from using an AT device even if he or she is not eligible for early intervention services under IDEA, consider the following questions:

- Compared to other children of the same age, can my child play with toys independently?
- Can my child communicate effectively?
- How does my child move from place to place?
- Can my child sit, stand, or walk independently?
- Is my child able to feed him or herself?

If you answer "no" to any of these questions, then assistive technology may help. In some cases, children with behavior problems actually have a communication impairment. They are frustrated that they cannot tell someone how they feel, and act out instead.

Under IDEA, early intervention services including assistive technology must be provided in natural environments such as the child's home, childcare setting, or other community settings where children without disabilities are found.

It is the responsibility of the IFSP team to determine what services are needed to meet the unique needs of the child. These services, including AT devices and services, should be included in the child's IFSP.

"The Utah Parent Center has been a very useful tool for our family. It was great to be able to call and talk with others who have walked the path before us. Also, their lending library is fantastic! Full of great resources to help me with many different topics."

Rachel Johnson

NOTES:

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT ACTION PLAN

Although, there is no single approach to considering your child's AT needs, most IEP teams will follow a process that includes the following steps:

1. Gather information about your child, his or her disability and abilities and ask the following questions:	
What does your child need to do but is unable to do because of his or her disability?	
What are your child's customary environments? These environments include the classroom, playground, bus, music, gym, and lunch periods.	
2. Share information gathered about your child. Parental input is very important and you should be actively involved in the process.	
3. Remember that your child's preferences in areas such as color and style are important things to consider. Many parents tell stories of successful AT implementation that hinged on a child's sense that a particular piece of equipment was "cool". Likewise, a child may resist using a piece of equipment that he or she thinks is "nerdy" and sets him or her apart from the rest of the class. Children want to fit in with their peers, so a device that is less conspicuous than another might be preferred even if it has fewer "bells and whistles".	
4. Make a list of the child's needs, environments, and tasks. Prioritize your child's biggest educational challenges, such as communication, mobility, reading, writing or behavior issues. Questions to discuss with the IEP team:	
What are the biggest challenges for my child?	
Which challenge should we focus on first?	
5. The IEP team brainstorms possible solutions to your child's main goals. Questions to ask include:	
What assistive technology tools are available to help my child overcome these challenges?	
What criteria will be used to determine if the AT has been successful in reaching the agreed-upon goals?	
6. After listing possible AT tools that the team thinks might help your child achieve his or her goal, the team needs to decide which device they will try first. Sometimes a number of different AT tools will need to be tried before an appropriate one is found for your child. The IEP team should discuss:	
What are the specific features of the AT device that can help your child?	
What tools are readily available from the school, the district or a loan library?	
Who will need to be trained to get maximum benefit from the AT device or service? What are the sources of training?	
7. After deciding upon a device to try, the IEP team needs to acquire the device for the student to experiment with. Some schools have access to libraries of technology that are shared among schools or districts. During the trial period with the device, IEP team members need to collect data about the child's use of the device. Questions to ask include:	
How often did the child use the device?	
Did it help the child do something he could not do before?	
How was success with the device measured?	
8. Sometimes a child may need to experiment with several devices before the team can decide which device has the features your child needs. After trying different devices and collecting data about which device worked best for the child, the IEP team should come to a conclusion about which device is most appropriate for the child.	

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Assistive Technology and Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. Section 504 affects all programs that receive federal funds, including public schools. The law states that students with disabilities must be given the same opportunities to participate in educational programs and activities as students without disabilities, AND the use of assistive technology may be considered as an accommodation.

Therefore, even if a child does not meet special education criteria, it is sometimes possible to acquired needed devices through 504 plan. For example, a student with poor handwriting due to impaired fine motor skills may be given access to a computer to complete written assignments. If it is determined that a 504 plan would benefit the student, the school should document in a written 504 plan what evaluations were performed and what decisions were made regarding the student.

Formal Evaluation for Assistive Technology for your child

If the IEP team is unable to determine what AT devices and/or services would be best for your child, then a formal AT evaluation may be needed. The formal AT evaluation is performed by a qualified professional in a timely manner. In some cases this presents a problem as there is currently a shortage of qualified AT evaluators in many areas.

The school or district may choose to use their own personnel to conduct the evaluation but if the parents disagree with the recommendations, they have the right to an independent evaluation at district expense. **Parents needs to be aware that they may have to assume the cost of an independent evaluation if the results do not differ from the one provided by the school or district AND if the school or district can show that the original evaluation was appropriate.**

Disagreeing with the School about Assistive Technology

You have the right to disagree with the school's decisions concerning assistive technology. Some situations in which parents and school personnel should meeting to resolve disagreements include:

- Parents disagree in writing with the IEP
- Parents believe their child is not receiving appropriate assistive technology devices and/or services.
- Parents believe that additional devices and/or services are needed.

When differences arise, try to resolve them informally at first. Make sure to follow the chain of command. First, try to work things out with the teacher. Then request that he or she go with you to the next level, usually the principal. Most problems are solved at this level. If you cannot work things out at the building level, always follow your school district's chain of command.

For additional information on informal and formal dispute resolution options, please contact the Utah Parent Center at 1.800.468.1160 and speak to one of our parent consultants.

Proceed Thoughtfully!

Always seek to resolve difficulties at the lowest level

Tips from Parents Who Have Been There

- Make the effort to keep up with new technology developments by attending conferences, workshops, joining an AT listserv or finding the AT resources in your area.
- Start preparing for your child's future technology needs well in advance. For example, start planning for high school and college while your child is still in grade school.
- Talk with other children, their parents and adults who use assistive technology, not just professionals. This will help you to gain a user's perspective.
- Try out different devices in your child's typical environments, such as school and home, before settling on just one device.
- Participate in a parent advocacy organization or support group in your area to learn advocacy skills and to find additional information resources.
- The internet is a good tool for learning about assistive technology. Visit the resource listing at the back of this e e-Journal or the Utah Parent Center website for lists of resources.
- Acquiring assistive technology is an ongoing process. Your child's needs will change as he or she grows, physically, cognitively and emotionally.

From Red Flags to Green Flags

Written by Tom Johnson, Technology Specialist, Utah Personnel Development Center and Rachel Johnson, South Jordan, Utah Resident

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This is a continuation of the story of Mason. See the article, "What Do You Mean by Red Flags? A Parent Perspective on Discovering Their Child's Disability" at http://essentialeducator.org/p=1226

It's been two years since our family began our journey with autism. Mason, our sweet five-year- old boy has grown a lot over the last two years, and as parents, so have we. We have watched him and cheered him on as he has struggled with aspects of the disorder, and we have hoped, prayed, and pulled him along as much as we can. We have tried many different methods with him, some with great success, some as total failures. At the end of the day we usually hit the bed exhausted, and worn out; but with a satisfaction of knowing that we are doing a hard thing, and that our efforts are worth it.

Mason loves numbers, letters, colors, and especially loves nouns. He always has. When psychologists would ask me about how many words he knew, I had to answer, "Hundreds!" But, knowing the words, is very different than knowing how to use the words. He is just beginning to develop his language skills, and every once in a while I will catch myself smiling and realizing that he just said a 5 or 6 word sentence. I smiled for days and boasted to all of the neighbors the day that he said to me, "Thank you for the purple popsicle, Mom." Unfortunately, not all days, and not all sentences are as good as that one. Most of the time, I still have a little boy who comes into my room, yells words at me, and then waits for me to repeat them back to him. "Frogs!" Then silence, "frogs!, "frogs!," repeated over and over and over again, until we finally acknowledge him by repeating the word, "Frogs." Then, onto the next animal, "Snake!" It is a daily exercise in patience.

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One thing that Mason has always struggled with was anxiety. He couldn't open presents, for fear of what might be in them. Going to family parties or to grandma's house would find him standing at the exit, "I want to go home, I want to go home, I want to go home!" This last school year, his teacher sent a note home saying that they were going to start sending Mason to the autism preschool class one day a week. He had not been progressing for the last few months, and was really beginning to struggle in school. He would stand at the door begging to go home, and worrying about any new thing that might happen in the classroom. He previously had been holding his own in the preschool that dealt more with speech delay, and not specifically autism. This was a big, discouraging step for us. We finally decided that it was time to ask about putting Mason on some anti-anxiety medication. We took him to our family doctor and talked about the things that we needed. He wrote out a prescription for a very low dosage of an anti-depressant that can be used for anxiety in children, but he warned that it could take weeks before we saw a difference. The change was almost immediate. Mason immediately began to grab his shoes and request going places. He enjoyed going to the store with us, and was always looking forward to going somewhere. We became regulars at the local fast food joint and would spend hours playing on the playground, just so we would have somewhere to go in the afternoons. He was able to relax and enjoy the world for a little bit, which for four years he had been unable to do.

When we returned to school after a three-week break, they also were able to see changes. Nearly every day the teacher's note started with a comment such as "Mason had a great day today!" We went for several months without any negative comments, in contrast to nearly every day before the medication. He began to make progress, his communication skills improved, and he eagerly left for school most days, excited to see his friends and teachers.

When we were going through the process of diagnosing Mason, people would ask, "Does he have any sensory issues?" We responded negatively, and didn't really even know what they were asking. Since then, we have begun to discover that he does have sensory processing difficulties and we have learned to cope with them. Mason loves small spaces, and he loves hard surfaces. He has taken over ownership of our laundry baskets. When playing on the computer, Mason will carry a laundry basket over to the computer chair, put it on the chair and then climb in the basket. He will crawl in any cubby or space that he can find to fit himself in, and he loves it! He likes to shut himself into the small pantry or the bathroom to play games on his iPad. He will crawl in the shelf cubbies of the entertainment center. He gets into drawers and cabinets anywhere that he can find them. He went through a phase where we would put him to bed each night, go down to check on him 30 minutes later, and find he was gone. We would inevitably find him in the toy chest, with the lid closed, sound asleep on the hard, solid surface.

He also struggles with loud voices. If he has misbehaved and thinks there is a chance somebody might raise their voice he covers his ears, prepared to block out any loudness that might be coming his way. The running joke at our house (although we might not be joking-we actually did go look at them at a pet store), is that we will get Mason a dog house for Christmas so that he has a small safe place to go and hide. We have had to learn not only to help him cope with his sensory issues, but also to embrace them and become comfortable with the strange nuances and quirks that help define our child.

From a young age Mason has always engaged with technology; in fact, he often obsesses over it! We recently had to bolt the iMac down to the table, and the table to the wall because he has tried to take it with him on several occasions. He also loves the iPad. It has a calming influence on him, teaching him things with a patience and expertise that we have been unable to recreate elsewhere. He loves to methodically work his way through each of the menu items, pushing on the arrow to get to the next screen. We often tell people that the easiest way to teach Mason anything is to give him an App for it. A few months ago he started talking about coins. He didn't know anything about the monetary value or what they were used for, so we bought him a 99 cent app. He spent a couple of days studying the app. He tried every possible solution, not only learning and memorizing the right answers, but also wrong answers, so that he could fully understand what the program was trying to teach him and know what to expect from each answer he might give. After learning all of the basic amounts and names of all the coins, he then progressed to counting and sorting the money into certain piles of value. After he had fully learned everything that the app had to teach him, he moved to paper, drawing and writing page after page of coins and numbers. In the third step to his learning process is found objects to "act out" the scenarios that he had learned. In the case of the coins, it was our piggy bank. All day long he repeatedly dumped out the coins and lined them up, piled them, counted them, and sorted them. This process is something he repeats over and over with each new subject presented to him. He has systematically worked his way through nearly every screen on pbskids.org, as well as several Dr. Seuss software titles that we have for our home computer. As a result of his love of technology, he has a wide knowledge base and very advanced skills in many topics compared to typical kids in his age group.

Teaching Mason to read has always worried us, as he has never been interested in books. It is nearly impossible to get him to sit and read a book with us. We were excited to find out that the Reading for All Learners series was coming to iPad. We were able to get a preview version, and help with the beta testing. It has been a hit! Mason is beginning to learn to read using the Reading for All Learners "Little Books Set 1" app, which will be released in late fall 2012 http://iseesam.com. His love for the iPad has really helped him embrace reading. He loves to systematically click his way through the menus and see his completion and progress in the "game". In talking to his teacher this year at the local diagnostic kindergarten, she said that Mason will be one of the most advanced reading students that she has ever had. We have to attribute this to his love for technology and the amazing educational resources that are available at this time.

As we began the process of intervention and diagnosis, we heard the term "red flags" pop up in our conversations with service providers, educators and psychologists. In racing, the red flag symbolizes stoppage in the race. In the race to help Mason develop into a happy well educated boy, our strivings and goals have been to keep him progressing, to keep him moving, and to make sure that his life and progress doesn't fall short because of his "red flags". Mason may not ever lead the race, or be the first one to cross the symbolic checkered flag (at least in comparison with a neurotypical child), but with strong supports and interventions at home and at school we think it is possible to keep him moving under green flag conditions–reaching and striving for his great potential in the race of life. We are endlessly grateful for the family, friends and educators who all give us the love and support that we need to help this special child.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE SPECIAL NEEDS CLASSROOM

Written by Evaluce Quintero, Special Education Teacher, Provo School District
Reprinted with permission from the Utah Special Educator; March 2012

Technology is such an important tool in today's special education classroom. Our students are being exposed to technology all around them and if we do not keep up with them and teach them more about technology we are not preparing them for their adult lives. We must have classrooms that offer a variety of technology tools to engage them in their learning. We are past the days of giving a student a worksheet and expecting that they will be engaged, on-task, or even interested. David A. Sousa writes in his book, How the Special Needs Brain Learns, "The brains of today's students are attracted more than ever to the unique and different-what is called novelty." (p. 16)

As a classroom teacher I have noticed a huge difference between student academic and behavior outcomes when technology is being used, especially hands on technology. When I use the Promethean board, computers and iPads all in the same lesson, students are more focused and excited to learn. Students are more tech savvy now than ever due to the constant exposure to computers, video games, cell phones and movies. Students have different learning styles and the iPad can meet the needs of the tactile, visual, and auditory learner. I especially like the iPad applications that require the user to shake the iPad to clear the screen or to go on to the next screen. There are so many applications that are basically worksheets, except that they are interactive and they engage the senses that help to motivate the students. Educational apps provide immediate feedback if the student has the correct answer, this is vital to keep the students attention. As a special education teacher, it is important for me to collect data daily on students so that I can adjust my instruction to meet their needs. Several apps offer immediate data/scores which I can use for monitoring progress. The iPad also allows for easily differentiating instruction for students of varying academic levels.

If you haven't yet heard the phrase, there's an app for that, it's because once you immerse yourselves and your students in this technology you too will see there really is an app for just about everything. Some of my favorite types of educational apps for the classroom are: timers, whiteboards, math facts, interactive story books, fractions, voice recorders, Pages, Keynote, dictionaries, calculators, PBS, Evernote, UPAD, even many text books can be accessed on line on the iPad.

If you haven't yet heard the phrase, there's an app for that, it's because once you immerse yourselves and your students in this technology you too will see there really is an app for just about everything. Some of my favorite types of educational apps for the classroom are: timers, whiteboards, math facts, interactive story books, fractions, voice recorders, Pages, Keynote, dictionaries, calculators, PBS, Evernote, UPAD, even many text books can be accessed on line on the iPad.

I have also sent iPads home with students for homework. This has so many advantages. One advantage is that the iPad is a great bargaining tool for getting desired academic outcomes and social behavior results. I have a class rule that if the student's behavior meets the set expectations, they turn in their assignments and homework to me on time, and there attendance is regular, they can earn the opportunity to take the iPad home with them for the night to do homework. The second advantage is that I have students come

back to school the next day and tell me that they showed their parents and siblings all of the fun things that they are learning at school. Homework can be a challenge for students and parents to take the time each evening to work together. However, I have never had a student that was sent home with iPad homework tell me that they didn't do their homework, or that their parents couldn't help them, or that their dog ate it. Instead I get details of how the evening was spent reading interactive books with their parents, their parents using the iPad to help them learn English, and students asking me when they can take the iPad home again for homework. The third benefit is that our economically disadvantaged students who may not have internet connection or a computer at home can still have access to technology as most apps on the iPad do not require an internet connection.

I also believe that special educators must give our students with special needs that extra edge, that extra piece that could make them stand out in a positive way. If we can teach these students how to access technology and how to use a variety of technological tools it may give them the advantage that they need when they eventually have to go out into the job market and compete against people who do not have learning disabilities. I want to give every student the opportunity and ability to use technology. In order to do this I need to keep myself current in the latest technology. Several teachers come from the generation that there were no computers when we were kids. When I was in college it was the first time that I used a computer in a computer lab to type a paper. I had no idea how to use it and needed one of the computer techs next to me through the process. I want the students who come through my class to be technology literate. Technology is here to stay and we must embrace it and teach it to our students or they will be left behind.

My recommendations to other educators is to keep yourselves current on the latest technology, go to trainings often and learn what other teachers are doing in their classrooms with technology. Update your iPads with new apps on a regular basis, you have the novelty, don't let that novelty become ordinary. My last recommendation is to begin with the end goal in mind. We want our students to be productive members in society, give them the edge that they will need to achieve, compete, and succeed in the technological world.

Here is a list of some great websites and downloads:

- www.prometheanplanet.com/en-us/
- http://freeappaday.com/n/mi.php
- www.macupdate.com/app/mac/15667/applejack
- www.macupdate.com/app/mac/11582/onyx
- www.ixl.com
- www.raz-kids.com
- www.spellingcity.com
- www.arcademicskillbuilders.com

An electronic version of this article including resources can be found at:
http://essentialeducator.org/?p=12148

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COGNITIVE SUPPORT TECHNOLOGIES

Written by Christine Timothy, Specialist, Utah State Office of Education
Reprinted with permission from the Utah Special Educator; March 2012

> "…Cognitive support refers to the assistive aspects of technology that enhance the mental capabilities and avoid the limitations of users." (Wolgalter and Mayhorn)

Usually, when you enter a transition period in a classroom full of students with significant cognitive disabilities, multiple disabilities or autism there is a lot of movement, noise and organizing taking place. Students are trying to figure out what materials they need, where to get them and moving around the room in general. It takes time to get the students settled down and focused for instruction. This is not the case in Barbara Hegland's class at Hartvigsen School in the Granite School District. In contrast, as the transition period begins, the students know where to go to get their materials; they pick them up and go straight to their seats to begin instruction. The instruction is on iPads! During an observation it was noted that within five minutes all students had focused attention on their assignments. After twenty-five minutes, the class was still engages with 100% concentration on instruction.

This is an impressive educational outcome of cognitive support technology (CST). The concept of cognitive support technology helps build independence for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It also encompasses and is useful for students with traumatic brain injury and multiple disabilities. Research has shown that very young children can benefit from having access to a variety of assistive technology devices as well. Assistive technology uses any tool or device that a student with disability needs to do a task that he or she could not otherwise do without it, or any tool the student needs to do a task more easily, fater, or in a better. They can be "low-tech" devices like pencil grips, or "high-tech" devices such as a computer. Utilizing assistive technology has become an accepted practice in special education.

Research-based interventions such as making decisions within a task sequence, following a schedule, using the internet, computer skills and assistive devices show that students have fewer external prompts, fewer errors, more tasks successfully completed and more complex tasks are evident. Students using cognitive support technology can stay on task while at school, stay on a schedule and for secondary students, it may also aide them in staying on task on the job.

The Effects of Technology in the Classroom

These tips are from Janice Hill, teacher of a self-contained Significant Cognitive Disabilities Classroom, Weber School District. She notes that all of these technologies have become available within the last ten years.

In my classroom technology has given us…

- Many ways and options for students who are non-verbal to communicate.
- Alternative pencils so that student who cannot hold or control a pencil can have writing experiences
- Engaging alternative ways to learn new skills. (There's an App for that!)
    - Provide access to reading, math, social studies, and science to those who are Significantly Cognitively Disabled. For some it has leveled the playing field just a little more with their typical peers.

- New and innovative ways to teach communication and social skills through social stories and video modeling.

My Favorite Devices or Technology

- iPad! I have never found another piece of technology as engaging and versatile as the iPad and the wealth of apps available for use. The possibilities seem somewhat endless.
- Boardmaker – Thank you Mayer Johnson for taking away my days of coloring, cutting and pasting!
- Springboard Lite and/or Vantage.
- Smartboard – There are so many uses within a classroom for this piece of technology. Again, like the iPad, it is very engaging for the students.
- Ablenet's switches – My favorite is the Step by Step.

The following guiding questions are suggested for someone considering the use of cognitive support technology:

- Are you considering the environmental impact of the technology, e.g. arrangement of the classroom, support available to both the student and the staff, materials and equipment, access issues, attitudes and expectations of staff, family and others?
- What specific tasks occur in the student's natural environments that enable progress toward mastery of the IEP goals and objectives?
- What specific tasks are required for active involvement6 related to communication, instruction, participation and productivity?

There are five top strategies suggested for successful assistive technology implementation in the schools. They are:

1. Develop an Assistive Technology (AT) Committee.
    - Do this within your school district or LEA.
    - Facilitated committee meetings by an AT Coordinator.
    - Share latest tools and programs.
    - Share tips from workshops.
    - Determine AT tip of the month.
    - Focus on a topic of the month.
    - It is all about a team approach and coaching one another!
2. Establish an AT point person in each building.
    - This may be the same point person assigned to the committee.
    - Attend trainings as possible and bring back information.
3. Create an AT Toolbox for each school.
    - Start small with some low-tech and some mid-tech materials.
    - Toolbox may include such things as: timers, Motivators, pencil grips, small white boards, non-slip placemats, Bingo markers, calculators with extra large numbers, HandiTak to hold things down, communication systems, simple switches, etc.
    - Provide a variety of programs available (submit a grant to get money).
    - Some program suggestions might be: SOLO, CLOZ Pro, and Boardmaker Plus.
    - Informaton on free downloads like: Word Talk, Readplease, My Studybar.
    - Begin a library of additional programs and tools.
    - You may want to have AAC toolkits as well.

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4. Develop District Assistive Technology Handbook
    - Establish an AT flowchart within the LEA or school.
    - Make a set of expectations for each teacher.
    - Make decisions about how to collect data.
5. Provide or be involved with ongoing professional development.

Here is the testimonial to the importance and success teachers are finding with cognitive support technologies:

Marilyn Sanderson, teacher in the Uintah School District reports that she has a boy in her classroom who throws pencils at his classmates, along with other challenging behaviors. "He basically does not do his work because of his major behavior problems. He is nonverbal and very bright. He also has autism. He will work without behavior problems when he knows he will get the use of the iPad for 15 minutes at the end of his math and/or reading session. There has been great progress with him using the iPad and programs that catch his attention. The class is very happy and so am I!"

Becoming familiar and comfortable with effective cognitive support technologies will take an effort, some planning, and concerted teaming with others. Reach out to other teachers and do something. Don't' get left behind in offering the excellent learning opportunities that assistive technology brings to a classroom.

An electronic version of this article including resources can be found at:
http://essentialeducator.org/?p=12124

UTAH ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOUNDATION (UATF)

Contact UATF at 1-800-524-5152 or at www.uatf.org

The Utah Assistive Technology Foundation, a private, non-profit organization, makes it possible for children and adults to buy the assistive technology de4vices they need through affordable loans. Examples of loans ranging from $500 to $50,000 include:

- Adapted Vans
- Hearing Aids
- Home/Work Accessibility
- Modifications
- Braille Equipment
- Scooters and Wheelchairs
- Modified Computers
- Printer Enlargers

The UATF offers:

- Much lower interest rates than available from banks
- Flexible loan terms
- Easy application process
- Information and Referral services.

UTAH CENTER FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY (UCAT)

Written by Ken Redmund, Director, UCAT
Contact UCAT at 801-887-9380 or at http://ucat.usor.utah.gov

The Utah Center for Assistive Technology (UCAT) is a statewide resource that offers information and technical services to help people with disabilities acquire and use assistive technology devices. We provide services for people with disabilities identify and obtain assistive technology that will enhance the quality of their lives. Our services are free to people with disabilities within the state of Utah. UCAT helps identify and access information that is vital in acquiring equipment. We provide the following services:

- Help to define seating and positioning needs to ensure maximum effectiveness and seating solutions.
- Help clients learn to use aids to daily living (ADLs) including electronic ADLs, which increase independent activity.
- Assess job and home-sites to determine the best way to facilitate client access.
- Assess aptitude for using voice input technology for computer access by people who cannot use other methods.
- UCAT has an extensive loan bank allowing clients to use a device for up to 30 days ensuring that the proper device is successful for each individual client.
- Driving evaluations for individuals with physical impairments.
- Funding advice. Lack of funds can sometimes be a big barrier to device acquisition. Our funding specialist can help identify appropriate funding sources, assistance in contacting funding sources and applying for services and conflict resolution throughout the funding process.
- Design and custom solutions. Sometimes a commercial, off-the-shelf device is just not quite right to fill a need or allow independence, UCAT has a well-equipped shop and skilled staff who can modify equipment or fabricate solutions to each individual.
- UCAT is a complete information and referral service. We have a good presence within the school districts, local advocacy in differing arenas, Vocational Rehabilitation and Independent Living.

UCAT also houses the Computer Center for Citizens with Disabilities (CCCD) which is an integral part of UCAT. The Computer Center is a member of the Alliance for Technology Access (ATA), a network of over forty resource centers across the country. The ATA is committed to improving the lives of persons with disabilities through technology. Linked by e-mail, centers share computer solutions and help one another keep current as to the latest technological developments.

- Workshops - We provide workshops for parents and professionals concerning all aspects of applying computer technology to the needs of persons with disabilities.
- Information - As a technology resource center, we can answer questions and provide information on many types of adaptive equipment and special software.
- Augmentative Communication - The Computer Center has a contract to work with the Utah Augmentative Alternative Assistive Communication and Technology teams (UAAACT) in the public schools throughout the state of Utah. Under this agreement with the Utah State Office of Education, we can loan augmentative devices and adaptive equipment to teachers and therapists on the augmentative teams for their use in assessing the oral and written communication needs of students. See the web site for more information: www.uaaact.org

THE UAAACT PROJECT

Written by Craig Boogaard, The Computer Center for Citizens with Disabilities at UCAT
Contact UAAACT at 801-887-9380 or Toll Free at 1-888-866-5550 or www.uaaact.org

In 1987 the Utah State Office of Education started the UAAACT Project to improve the communication skills of students with disabilities across the state of Utah. UAAACT stand for Utah Augmentative, Alternative, Assistive Communication and Technology Teams.

Purpose: UAAACT Teams serve as a resource for assessment and development of communication and technology systems for students.

Evaluations: The UAAACT Teams evaluate students in the public schools who are nonspeaking or severely limited in their quality of speech or written language.

Equipment Loans: Communication books, electronic communication devices, special software and other assistive technology tools are loaned to the students during the evaluation process to determine which tools will support the student's current communication system.

Support: UAAACT Teams provide strategies and ideas to assist parents and the local IEP teams as they work with students to increase communication skills.

Training: Some of the augmentative communication devices are complex and require training. UAAACT Teams provide initial training for students using these devices. They may also be able to arrange additional training if desired.

Activities: UAAACT Team members have full time assignments with their local school districts. In order to participate in student evaluations, they are released from their regular assignment at least one day each month.

Conferences: Conferences are held every other year to provide UAAACT team members, parents and other support personnel an opportunity to learn about the newest augmentative communication devices and related assistive technology products. UAAACT Team members also attend technology workshops on a regular basis.

Information:

- A UAAACT Newsletter is published quarterly, except during the summer.
- A web page with informative links to related sites, the UAAACT newsletter, pictures and information on the UAAACT Team project is located at: http://www.uaaact.org

Leadership: The UAAACT Team Leadership Council (project leaders from each area of the state) meets regularly with the liaison from the Utah State Office of Education and support staff at The Computer Center to plan activities and set policy for the UAAACT Team project.

The state of Utah has been divided into 25 regional areas with one UAAACT team serving each region. In some cases the team will serve multiple school districts and in other cases the school district may be large enough to have a team within the district. Teams consist of, but are not limited to, speech pathologists, teachers, psychologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, administrators, computer specialists, audiologists, and vision specialists.

The UAAACT Teams Project is sponsored by The Utah State Office of Education, Special Education Services Section and is located at The Computer Center for Citizens With Disabilities at UCAT.

10 Things That Parents Need to Know About NIMAS and USIMAC

Written by Vali Ann Kremer, Former USIMAC Coordinator
Contact USIMAC at 801-629-4811 or at www.usimac.org

Accessible Instructional Material: The Legal Connection
Provisions within the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 require State and Local Education Agencies to ensure that textbooks and related core instructional materials are provided to students with print disabilities in specialized formats in a timely manner.

1. **What are Core Instructional Materials?**
   Printed textbooks and related printed core materials published with the textbooks that are written and published primarily for use in the elementary and secondary school instruction and that are required by State or Local Education Agencies for use by students in the classroom.
2. **What are specialized formats?**
   Specialized formats are: braille, large print, audio files, or Digital (e-text).
3. **What is timely manner?**
   Timely manner means, "at the same time as other students receive their core instructional materials in print format."
4. **What is NIMAS?**
   NIMAS is a national standard that uses XML files that can be readily transformed into student-ready specialized formats. The NIMAC is the National Instructional Material Access Center which is located in Louisville, Kentucky. The NIMAC houses all the NIMAS file-sets obtained from publishers of core instructional materials. These files are available, consistent with copyright law, for State and Local Education Agencies to download in order to produce accessible student-ready formats of instructional materials for eligible students.
5. **What is USIMAC?**
   USIMAC is the Utah Instructional Materials Access Center which opened on January 9, 2009 with a mandate to provide core instructional materials to the students of Utah in a timely manner. USIMAC works closely with the Braille Department at the Utah Schools for the Deaf and Blind and has produced hundreds of books in Braille, Large Print, DAISY, MP3, and e-Text formats. USIMAC is also the only authorized user in Utah for the NIMAC and we download NIMAS file-sets for eligible students to assist in the timely production of instructional materials in these alternate formats.
6. **Who is eligible to receive accessible instructional materials?**
   Students who are eligible under the Copyright Act of 1931 as Amended are those who have been certified by a competent authority as unable to read printed materials because of:

- Blindness
- Visual impairment
- Physical limitations
- An organic dysfunction
- Student who qualify as a student with a disability under IDEA 2004
- In cases of **blindness, visual disability, or physical limitations**, "competent authority" is defined to include doctors of medicine, doctors of osteopathy, ophthalmologists, optometrists, registered nurses, therapists, professional staff of hospitals, institutions, and public or welfare agencies (e.g., social workers, case workers, counselors, teachers, and superintendents).

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- **Organic dysfunction** is defined as having a reading disability resulting from organic dysfunction and of sufficient severity to prevent their reading printed material in a normal manner. In the case of a reading disability from organic dysfunction, "competent authority" is defined as doctors of medicine or doctors of osteopathy.

**It is important to note that not all students qualify to receive accessible instructional materials from all sources.*

7. **What is the process to obtain core instructional materials in alternate formats for my student?**
    - Meet with IEP team or Section 504 team to determine what specialized formats are needed to help the student.
    - The IEP team or Section 504 team fills out the eligibility form and request for materials form, which is available at the USIMAC website (www.usimac.org) and sends a request into the USIMAC to either obtain or produce a textbook in a particular specialized format for the qualified student.
    - USIMAC searches the NIMAC as well as other specialized format providers to see if the material is already available. If available, the material is purchased and sent to the school. If the material is not available, the USIMAC will assign the production of the material to its alternate format technicians for production in the requested format.
    - The requested materials are sent back to the school for use by the student.

8. **Will USIMAC accept an order for a student from a parent?**
   The USIMAC is a collaborative effort between the Utah State Office of Education and the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind. We are not allowed to accept orders from parents. The application for service must go through the IEP team or Section 504 team process. Once the IEP team or the Section 504 team determines that a student needs our services, they will follow the procedures outlined in #8 (above) to ensure that your students' instructional materials are ordered and delivered in a timely manner.
9. **There are free resources out there for parents and teachers to access for their print-disabled student.**
    - BookShare (www.bookshare.org) has refreshable Braille or DAISY books. This service is free for eligible students (if your child has a print disability and an IEP they should qualify). BookShare has thousands of titles covering all grade levels. This is an excellent source of summer or after school reading material.
    - Learning Ally (www.learningally.org) produces and maintains a library of educational accessible audiobooks for people who cannot effectively read standard print because of visual impairment, dyslexia or other disabilities.
    - USIMAC (www.usimac.org) has a list of quick links to free or inexpensive places that provide e-text books, text-to-speech readers, educational and fun websites for students or families.

More Assistive Technology Information

The Utah Parent Center's Assistive Technology website page has been updated to include a variety of new information pages including:

- Assistive Technology Glossary
- Assistive Technology 101
- Assistive Technology for Infants, Toddlers, and Young Children
- Simple, Inexpensive Devices Can Assist with Communication
- Techniques and Devices Can Help a Child Learn to Communicate
- Augmentative Device Helps Max Speak
- Switch Activities Promote Classroom Inclusion for Young Students
- Technology that Empowers People with Memory Loss

Visit the site at: http://www.utahparentcenter.org/resources/assistivetechnology/
The Utah Parent Center website is continually growing, please check back for new and updated resources as they become available.

Assistive Technology Resources in Utah

The following organizations will lend assistive technology devices to individuals for short trial periods, before the individual makes a financial investment.

Utah Assistive Technology Program – Laboratory

The AT Lab houses a state-of-the-art computer lab and a fabricating shop. Individuals can test various software and hardware devices or find assistance to design, fabricate, modify or repair AT equipment to enable a person to be more independent. The AT Lab serves anyone in the State of Utah and loans devices such as daily living aids, augmentative communication devices, aids for vision and hearing, motorized wheelchairs and scooters, manual wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, etc.

Phone: 435.797.0699 or toll-free 800.524.5152
Location: Utah State University, Janet Quinney Lawson Building
Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00 am – 4:00 pm, by appointment

Utah Center for Assistive Technology (UCAT)

UCAT is a service hub for assistive technology assessment, evaluation, training and device demonstrations. UCAT strives to enhance human potential through facilitating the application of assistive technologies for persons with disabilities. UCAT serves the entire State of Utah.
Phone: 888-866-5550
Location/Address: 1595 West 500 South, Salt Lake City, UT 84104
Hours of Operation: Monday – Friday 8-5

Computer Center for Citizens with Disabilities (CCCD)

The CCCD and UCAT provides free consultations, workshops information and augmentative communication devices to children and adults living with disabilities. The CCCD specialized in augmentative communication devices, specialized computer software and computer access tools such as specialized keyboards and mice.
Phone: 888-866-5550, 801-887-9539
Location/Address: 1595 West 500 South, Salt Lake City, UT 84104
Hours of Operation: Monday – Friday 8-5

The Sanderson Community Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DSDHH)

DSDHH provides assistance to individuals seeking information regarding assistive technology for community, education and employment activities. The AT demonstration, training and evaluation center provides opportunities to use, try out and compare a variety of hearing-related AT devices.
Phone: 800-860-4860 TTY/Video, 877-860-4861 voice, 801-263-4861
Location/Address: 5709 South 1500 West, Taylorsville, UT 84123
Hours of Operation: Monday 9-5, Tuesday -Saturday 9-7

Centers for Independent Living (CIL)

CILs outside the Salt Lake City area comprise the rural AT demonstration network for Utah. Each employs an assistive technology coordinator who is responsible for AT assessment, evaluation, training, and device demonstration for individuals with disabilities of all ages. For more information contact the CIL nearest you.

OPTIONS for Independence

Service Area: Box Elder, Cache and Rich Counties
Phone: 435-753-5353
Location/Address: 1095 North Main Street, Logan, UT 84341
Hours of Operation: Monday - Thursday 7-4; Friday 7-1
Types of Loan Devices: Chair lifts, bath aids, power mobility, walkers, canes, crutches and hospital beds.

Tri-County Independent Living Center

Service Area: Davis, Morgan and Weber Counties
Phone: 866-734-5678
Location/Address: 2726 Washington Blvd., Ogden, UT 84401
Hours of Operation: Monday – Friday 8-4
Types of Loan Devices: Toilet risers, bath benches, crutches, manual and electric wheelchairs, canes, Hoyer lifts, super poles, grab bars, hospital beds and beach wheelchairs, etc.

Utah Independent Living Center

Service Area: Salt Lake, Summit and Tooele counties
Phone: 800-355-2195
Location/Address: 3445 South Main St., Salt Lake City, UT 84115
Hours of Operation: Monday – Friday 8-12, 1-5
Demonstration Devices: Daily living aids, mobility (power and manual wheelchairs, walkers, scooters), cooking devices and van lifts.
Types of Loan Devices: Manual and power wheelchairs, scooters, bath or transfer benches, Hoyer lifts, walkers, crutches and grab bars.

Central Utah Center for Independent Living

Service Area: Utah, Wasatch, Juab and Sanpete Counties
Phone: 877-421-4500
Location/Address: 491 North Freedom Blvd., Provo, UT 84601
Hours of Operation: Monday – Friday 8-5
Types of Loan Devices: Vision aids (CCTV), folding canes, hearing aids (sound amplifiers), wheelchair cushions, Boardmaker software, adapted phones and communication devices.

Active Re-Entry Independent Living Center

Service Area: Carbon, Daggett, Duchesne, Emery, Grand, San Juan and Uintah Counties
Phone: 435-637-4950
Location/Address: 10 South Fairgrounds Rd., Price, UT 84501
Hours of Operation: Monday – Friday 8-12, 1-5
Types of Loan Devices: Daily living aids, mobility devices, low vision aids and modified communication devices.

Red Rock Center for Independence

Service Area: Beaver, Garfield, Iron, Kane Millard, Piute, Sevier, Washington, and Wayne Counties
Phone: 800-649-2340
Location/Address: 515 West 300 North, Suite A., St. George, UT 84770
Hours of Operation: Monday – Friday 8-5
Types of Loan Devices: Wheelchair lifts, daily living aids including kitchen aids, mobility devices, and low vision aids including specialized software.

Utah Parent Center Information Disclaimer

Utah Parent Center • Serving Utah families since 1984!
Utah Family Voices - Family to Family Health Information Center
Autism Information Resources at the Utah Parent Center
Family to Family Network – A Network Supported by the Utah Parent Center
Phone: (801)272.1051 • Toll Free Utah: (800)468.1160 • Fax: (801)272.8907
Email: upcinfo@utahparentcenter.org • Website: www.utahparentcenter.org

Our Mission: To help parents help their children with disabilities to live included, productive lives as members of the community. We accomplish this through the provision of information, training, and peer support.

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