Assistive Technology (AT) in Early Childhood

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Today's Agenda

- AT Myths & Truths

- Defining AT and AT Services

- AT & Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs)

- AT Continuum & AT Examples

- Benefits of AT

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Assistive Technology (AT): True or False

1. Assistive Technology = Computers & Tablets ◯ ◯

2. There are prerequisite skills that a child must have before using AT ◯ ◯

3. Parents can request an AT evaluation at any time ◯ ◯

4. AT makes children dependent on technology and prevents them from learning to do tasks on their own ◯ ◯

AT: True or False cont'd

5. Children who use AT are getting an unfair advantage, which is like cheating

6. The use of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices will increase a child's speech development

7. Using AT decreases a child's engagement and motivation to learn

8. Children won't have AT in the real world, so there is no reason to provide it in school

Definition: Assistive Technology (AT)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Sec. 303.13 (b) (1) (i)
"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 an infant or toddler with a disability."

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Definition: Assistive Technology Service

IDEA Sec. 303.13 (b) (1) (ii)

"Any service that directly assists an infant or toddler with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device."

- **Evaluation** of needs including a functional evaluation in the child's customary environment

- **Purchasing**, leasing, acquiring AT devices

- **Selecting**, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing or replacing AT devices

- **Coordinating** and using other therapies, interventions, or services with AT devices

- **Training** or technical assistance for child, family, professionals, employers, or other support service providers

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Why Include AT?

- Considering AT is a legal requirement for every child with an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)

- It is best practice and good for kids!

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Determining Need for AT in IFSP

WHO

- All members of the IFSP team including the parent

WHEN

- Initial IFSP Development

- 6 Month Review

- Annual Review

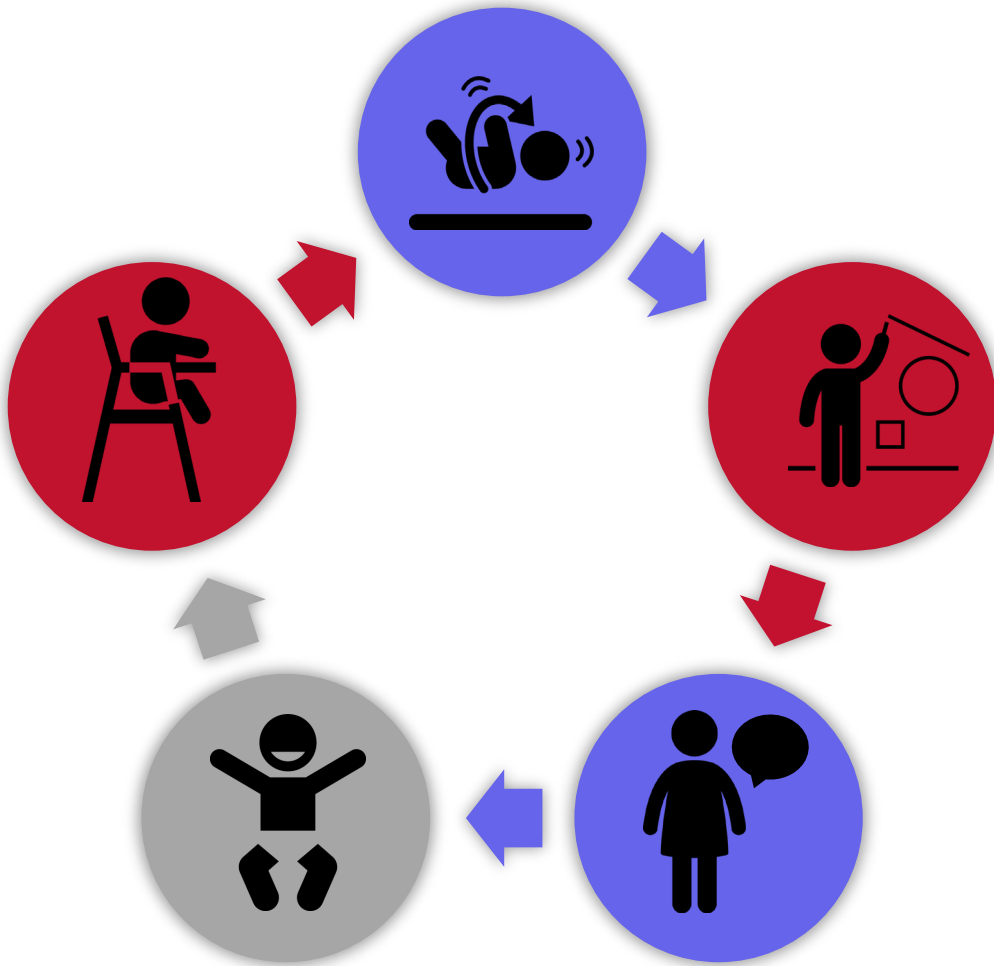- Any other time where IFSP is reviewed and amended

HOW

- Documented observation

- Current data

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OSEP Part C Clarification Letter

AT must serve a developmental purpose by supporting the child's ability to participate in everyday activities.

5 Developmental Domains

✓ **Physical**
Ability to interact with the world around them, including mastering movement and balance

✓ **Cognitive**
Ability to think, react and learn about the world around them

✓ **Communication**
Ability to exchange information, understand and express ideas

✓ **Social or Emotional**
Ability to interact with others and self-regulate emotions
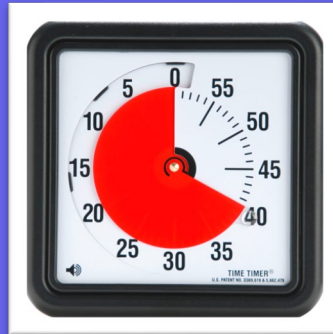
✓ **Adaptive**
Ability to adapt to various demands of normal daily living

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Assistive Technology Continuum

No or low tech

Medium tech

High tech

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AT: Interacting with the World
Movement, Balance, Motor, Vision & Hearing

LOW TECH

- Boppy Pillow
- Towel Roll
- Seat cushion
- Wedge
- Magnifiers
- Braille display

MEDIUM TECH

- Walker
- Stander
- Adapted Bicycle
- Wheelchair
- Switches
- Lighted Visual Display
- Talking Devices
- Screen Reading Software
- Pull Ball

HIGH TECH

- Power chair
- OT Apps
- Talking Devices
- Text-to-speech system

Physical Domain

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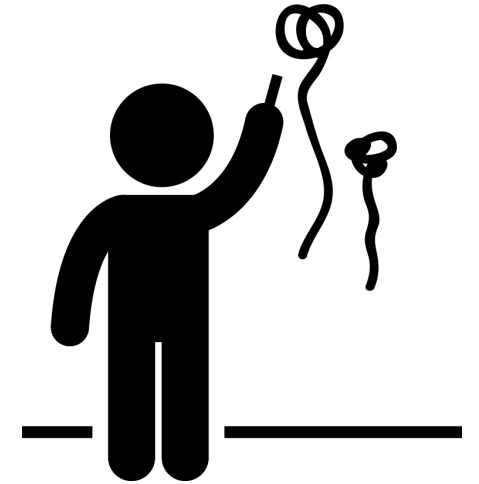# AT: Thinking, Reacting, and Learning about the World

LOW TECH

- Sorting trays
- Stamps
- Textured books
- Adapted writing materials
- Manipulatives
- Alphabet blocks
- No spill paint cup
- Dot painters
- Counting cube

MEDIUM TECH

- Audiobooks
- Switch adapted toys
- Mini popper toy

HIGH TECH

- Electronic Device with apps

Cognitive Domain

AT: Exchange Information, Understand and Express Ideas

LOW TECH
- Communication Key Chain
- Visual Stories
- Picture Symbols
- Core Vocabulary Boards

MEDIUM TECH
- Single Message Device
- Voice amplification systems

HIGH TECH
- Dynamic AAC Device
- Speech Recognition Software

Communication Domain

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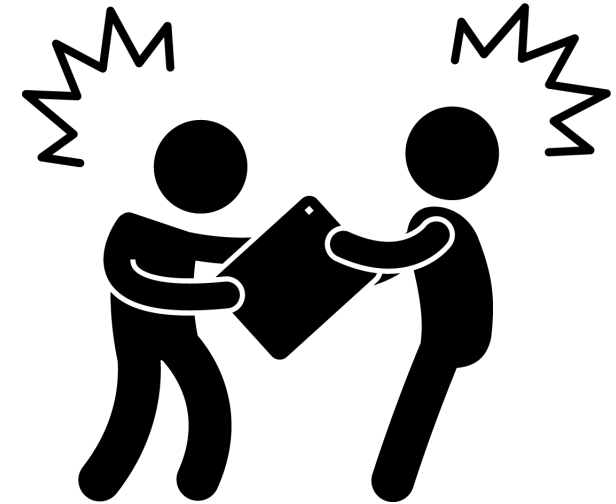# AT: Interaction with Others and Self-Regulation of Emotions

LOW TECH

- Fidget toys
- Emotion visual cards
- Visual social stories
- Mirror to identify emotions
- Swings/Trampolines

MEDIUM TECH

- Video modeling
- Visual timers
- Vibrating cushions/gadgets

HIGH TECH

- Electronic device apps
- Robots

Social/Emotional Domain

AT: Adapting to Various Demands of Daily Living
Dressing, Eating, Toileting, Washing

LOW TECH

- Bowls/cups with suction
- Adapted grip utensils
- Elastic shoelaces
- Velcro belt
- Stickers for shoes
- Adaptive openers (jars/bottles)
- Nonslip mats
- Adapted brushes/sponges

MEDIUM TECH

- Automatic soap dispenser

HIGH TECH

- Voice/motion activated lighting
- Obi (adaptive eating tool)
- Smart bathing/faucets

Adaptive Domain

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Benefits of Assistive Technology

Participation

Access

Development

Communication

Independence

Learning

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