How to Have Collaborative Assistive Technology Conversations

Sara Pericolosi
Alt+Shift

Michigan Alliance for Families
information, support, and education

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Alt + Shift
Rethink the possible. Realize potential.

Sara Pericolosi

Alt+Shift is an *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) Grant Funded Initiative through the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Special Education

MICHIGAN Department of Education

Meet the Presenter

Sara Pericolosi

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- AT/AAC Specialist

- Speech-Language Pathologist

Learner Outcomes

Within this session, participants will learn strategies to:

- Partner with the Individualized Education Program team to consider Assistive Technology (AT)

- Build a multidisciplinary team with diverse expertise

- Create an AT implementation plan for the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

A Few Things First

What is Assistive Technology (AT)?

- 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 person with a disability.

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

Who Would Benefit from AT?

Potentially...Anybody!

Where Can AT be used?

Potentially...Anywhere!

Why Do We Consider AT?

AT can remove barriers

"For people without disabilities, technology makes things easier. For people with disabilities, technology makes things possible."

Partnering with the Individualized Education Plan Team to Consider Assistive Technology

Now That We Know

☑ What Assistive Technology (AT) is,

☑ Who May Benefit from AT,

☑ Where AT Can Be Used, and

☑ Why We Consider AT...

Let's Talk About How to Talk About AT With Your Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Team

There's No Need to Wait for the IEP Meeting

Contact your child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team to start the conversation if you feel that your child is not making adequate progress

- toward their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals and

- in the curriculum

How to Start a Conversation About AT

▪ Share your area(s) of concern and celebration

▪ Ask team members to share their observations, celebrations, and concerns

▪ Ask if AT tools and/or services might address the area(s) of concern

Building a Multidisciplinary Team with Diverse Expertise
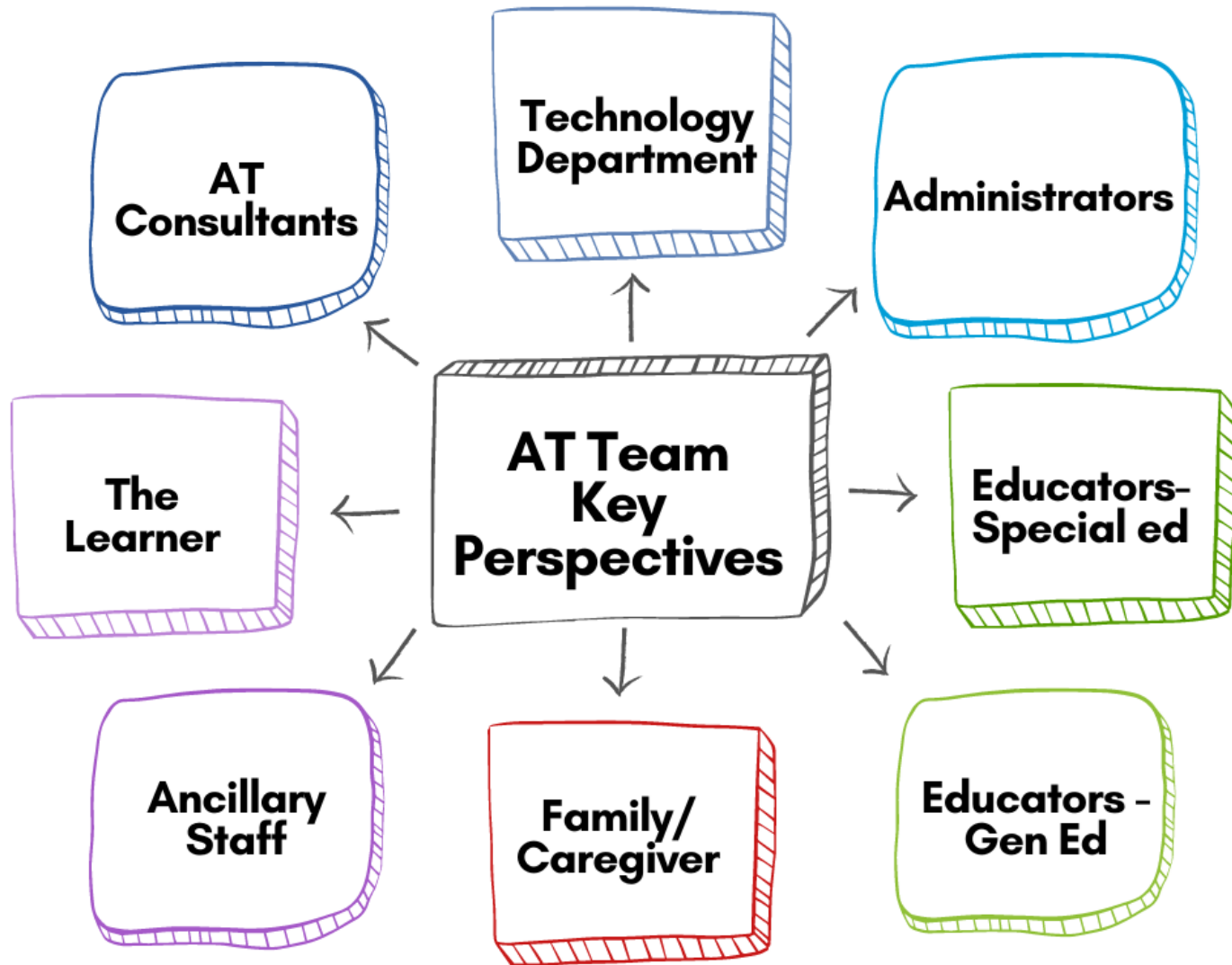
It Takes a Team - Not An Expert

No need to wait for an AT expert

Collaboration

IEP teams have the expertise needed to start

Areas of Need and Potential Partners

- Academics and Executive Functioning

  - General and Special Education Teachers

- Communication and Executive Functioning

  - Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs)

- Vision and Hearing

  - Deaf Hard of Hearing and/or Visual Impairment Teacher Consultants

- Seating, Mobility, Positioning and Extra Curricular Activities

  - Occupational Therapists (OTs) and Physical Therapists (PTs)

- Staff training, Resources, and Policies to support all learners

  - Administrators

Areas of Need and Potential Partners (Cont)

- **Purchase and Provide Training on District Technology**

  - Technology Department

- **Training and Support on Assistive Technology Tools**

  - Assistive Technology (AT) Consultants/Specialists

  - Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Consultants/Specialists

- **Information about the Learner (not known to educational team)**

  - Family/Caregiver/Friends

- **Express Likes, Dislikes, and Expectations of Tools and Services**

  - Learner

The SETT: A Framework to Support Collaborative Decision Making

1. Student

Strengths, current performance, and weaknesses.

2. Environment

Current learning environment(s).

3. Tasks

Tasks for learning.

4. Tools

Current/potential tools that may benefit the student.

S E T T

Created by Joy Zabala

Creating an AT Plan for the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Developing an Assistive Technology Plan in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

AT Plans:

- Look different in each district

- Help guide implementation

- Ensure service delivery

- Allow teams the opportunity to determine if the AT provided is effective in meeting the needs of the learner

- Should be revisited throughout the year, as needs change

Parent Input Regarding AT Plans

As a parent, you can ask about the details of the plan such as:

- What Assistive Technology (AT) is needed

- How often the team will meet to ensure the AT is effective

- Who will be responsible for carrying out the actions identified in the AT Plan

Examples of AT in the
Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

- **Communication**
  - Carolyn utilizes a PODD communication book to express her predictions for an upcoming science experiment to a small group in her science classroom.

- **Academics**
  - Carlos utilizes fraction tiles to solve an addition problem that involves fractions.

- **Executive Functioning**
  - Rachel uses the calendar on her chromebook to remember upcoming homework and tests.

Examples of AT in the LRE

- **Vision**
  - Kate's chromebook is set to high contrast mode, which makes the text easier for her to read.

- **Hearing**
  - Jeff's teachers ensure that captions are available when showing videos within the classroom.

- **Seating & Mobility**
  - Ashley utilizes her stander when engaged in group work at the whiteboard.

- **Extra Curricular**
  - Cheryl uses an adapted controller to participate in Gaming Club.

Resources

Alt+Shift

We collaborate with educators and families to improve educational outcomes for every learner by rethinking what is possible through our:

- Professional Learning Opportunities

  - Online Modules (available to anyone)

- Technical Support (available to anyone)

- Lending Library (available to Michigan educators)

Resources for BVI/DHH AT Considerations

[Michigan Department of Education Low Incidence Outreach](#) (MDE-LIO) offers:

- AT tools
- Adapted books
- Resources
- Webinars
- Much, Much, Much more!

MICHIGAN Department of Education | Low Incidence Outreach

Michigan Disability Rights Coalition (MDRC)

- MDRC is a non-profit organization devoted to creating justice and equity for individuals with disabilities, promoting collaboration, and dismantling obstacles.

- MDRC partners with individuals, families, and organizations to build inclusive communities, foster disability pride, and eliminate oppression.

- MDRC provides training, resources, and services to parents, children, and adults with disabilities.

Phone: 517-333-2477 or 800-578-0280
Email: info@mymdrc.org
Website(s): www.mymdrc.org or www.mymdrc..org/assistive-tech-program/

Michigan Disability Rights Coalition
With liberty and access for all.

Michigan Assistive Technology Program (MATP)

- MATP is a FREE federally funded program that provides AT related supports around the state including:
  - Awareness Information
  - Training
  - Demonstrations
    - Customized virtual or in-person "how to" sessions to explore AT that meets your needs
  - Loan Program
    - MATP has over 1600 AT items for demo and/or loan
    - Try before you buy!
- MATP is by people with disabilities for people with disabilities, their allies, and other community members.

Thank you!

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We are here to support you!

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For more information visit
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Michigan Alliance for Families

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