

Assistive Technology: What It Is And Why It Matters

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Alt+Shift



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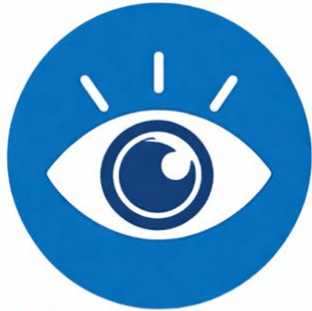
Please Note

In this webinar, Alt+Shift will provide information and resources regarding assistive technology best practices. Student specific solutions, including the use of specific tools, are determined by your learner's IEP team.

For assistance navigating IEP meetings, contact Michigan Alliance for Families.

For assistance with disagreement resolution or complex meetings, contact [Special Education Mediation Services](https://www.mikids1st.org/) (https://www.mikids1st.org/).

Accessibility Commitments



P PERCEIVABLE



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U NDERSTANDABLE



R ROBUST

[Learn more about WCAG 2.0 Accessibility Standards](#)



Nice to Meet You!

Kelsey Brewer

- Assistive Technology and Augmentative and Alternative Communication Specialist with Alt+Shift
- Early Childhood Special Education Teacher 9 years
- Adjunct Professor in Special Education at a Michigan University



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



Learner Outcomes

- Help you understand what assistive technology is and how to determine if your child needs it
- Provide examples of tools and strategies for children of different ages, from no-tech to high-tech, and how they can be used in everyday life
- Share free and low-cost AT resources available to Michigan families through schools, lending libraries, and statewide programs

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.

What is Assistive Technology (AT)?

- A **tool or strategy** that supports people of any age with a disability in doing things they would not otherwise be able to do
- AND
- Any **service** that can help those people select, access, and use that tool or strategy

Who Receives AT Tools and Services?

Any learner who is eligible for special education or Section 504 accommodations, may receive AT tools and/or services if necessary including those with IFSPs.

**“For people without disabilities,
technology makes things easier. For
people with disabilities, technology
makes things possible.”**

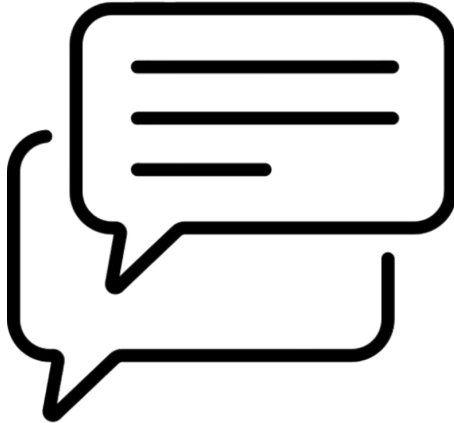
--IBM Training Manual, 1991

An Introduction to AT

youtube.com/watch?v=bFheTcqRtdY



**What, if anything, surprised
you about AT after viewing this
video?**



Student Success Depends on Both AT Tools and AT Services



AT Tools

Things that are specifically designed to be used as AT
“off the shelf”



Things that are changed or repurposed to be used as AT



The Range AT Tools

No-Tech

Mid-Tech

High-Tech



AT Strategies

Strategies can include modifications or accommodations

AT Strategies Example (1)

modified print

modified print

modified print

modified print

AT Strategies Example (2)



Modeling

AT Strategies Example (3)

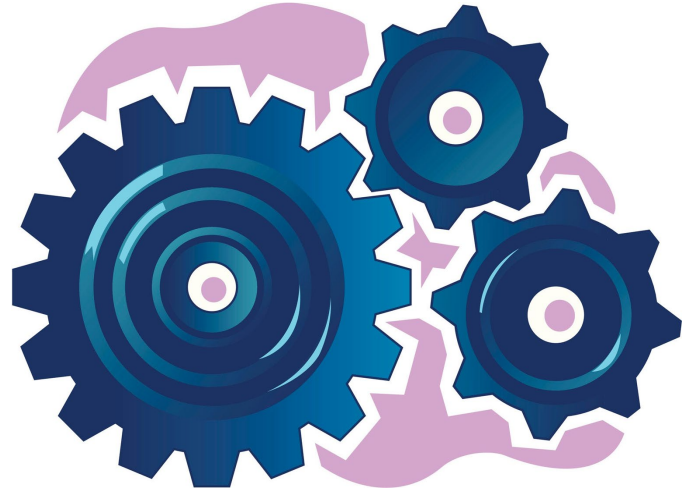
Teaching movements for communication



AT Services

Supports that help with:

- choosing,
- designing,
- fitting,
- customizing,
- adapting,
- applying,
- maintaining,
- replacing,
- and repairing AT



AT Services Example (1)

Training for:

- student
- family
- educators



AT Services Example (2)

Selecting and
customizing AT



Student Success Depends on Both AT Tools and AT Services



AT Trifecta



Tools

Services

Strategies

Consider AT

but first...

Consider Me.





or



**AT will prevent students from
learning.**



AT will not prevent students from learning.

U.S. Department of Education. (2024)



or



AT devices and services should only be considered for children with certain disabilities.



**AT is NOT cheating and does NOT
give students an unfair advantage.**

U.S. Department of Education. (2024)



or



**Any IEP team member can
consider, select, or implement AT.**



**Any IEP team member can consider,
select, or implement AT.**

U.S. Department of Education. (2024)

Fact:

AT is a collaborative approach.





or



**AT is only considered at the
annual IEP meeting.**



**AT should be considered throughout
the year, not just during the IEP
meeting.**

U.S. Department of Education. (2024)



or



Infants, toddlers, and their families do not benefit from AT devices and services.



No person is too anything to use AT.

U.S. Department of Education. (2024)

**“Technology allows others
to know my humanity.”**

- Jordan Zimmerman

The SETT Framework

The SETT framework, developed by Joy Zabala, is a tool to organize information and data around the particular student in a way that helps IEP teams better understand a learner's strengths, needs, and potential AT tools and/or services that may successfully address identified needs.



The SETT Framework, cont.

Student:

strengths, current performance and needs

Tasks:

tasks for learning the student will perform



Environment:

current learning environment(s)

Tools:

current or potential tools that may benefit the student

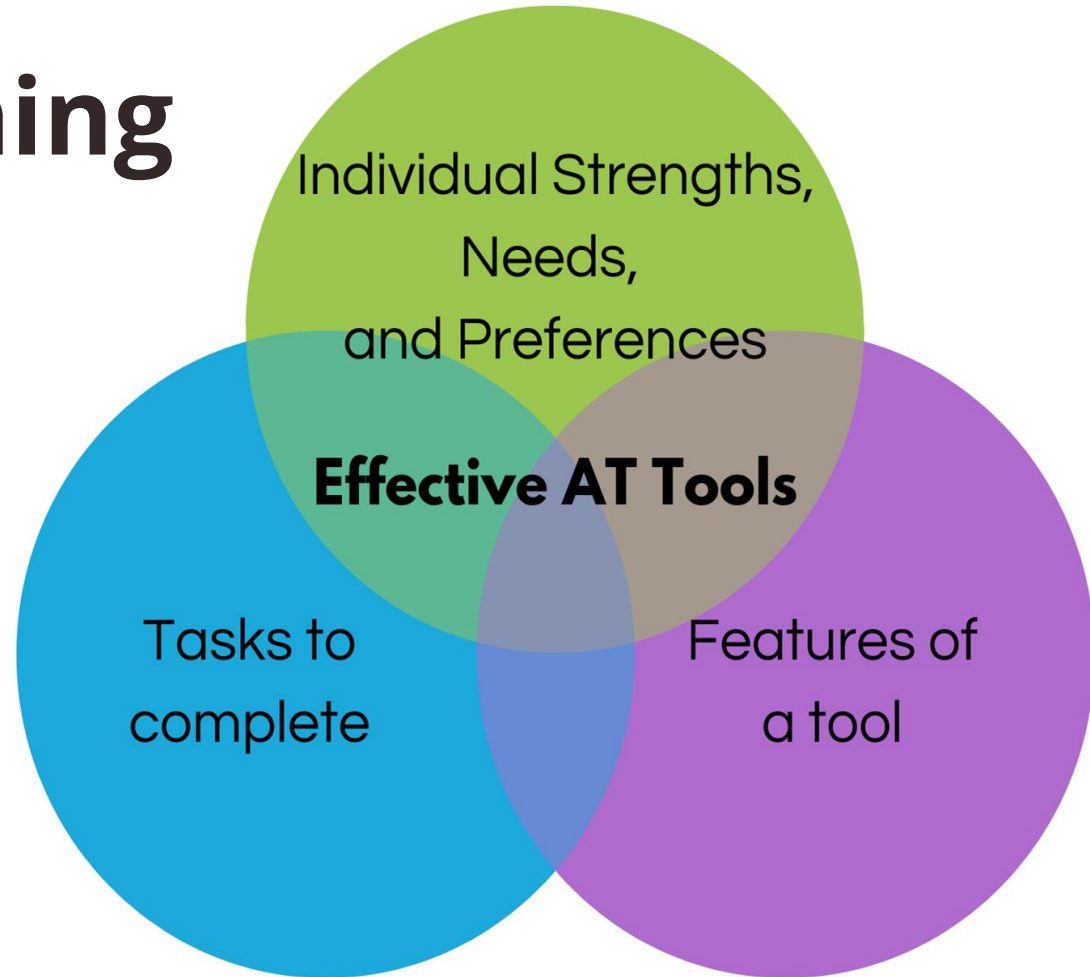
Potential Perspectives in the SETT

- Student
- **Family/caregiver(s)**
- Friend/classmate(s)
- Classroom teacher(s)
- Paraprofessionals/Instructional Assistant(s)
- Related Service Provider(s)
- Technology personnel
- Administrator(s)

Feature Matching

Feature matching is “the formal and informal process in which the attributes of AT that are needed and desired are determined.”

(Fonner & Behnke, 2018).



Feature Matching is: (1)

matching child's needs to a tool/strategy



SHOES



Feature Matching is: (2)

matching child's needs to a tool/strategy



Feature Matching is not: (1)

matching a tool to a child's needs

SHOES



Feature Matching is not: (2)

matching a tool to a child's needs



Let's explore some AT Tools!

Remember AT supports a variety of areas.

Gross Motor
Communication
Fine Motor
Independent
Living
Computer Access
Literacy
Sensory

Daily Routines
Social Skills
Behavior
Extra-Curriculars
Seating
Positioning
Vision
Post-Secondary
Education

Hearing
Academics
Feeding
Self-Care
Executive
Functioning
Employability
Socialization
Rec and Leisure

Tool Exploration Time

1. Choose an area relevant to your child's needs (next slide)
2. Explore the tools in that section
3. Repeat for other areas of need
4. Be ready to share your discoveries



Areas of Need

Communication

Reading and Writing

Math

Executive Functioning

Vision

Hearing

Seating, Mobility,
Positioning

Recreation and Leisure

Socialization

Daily Living

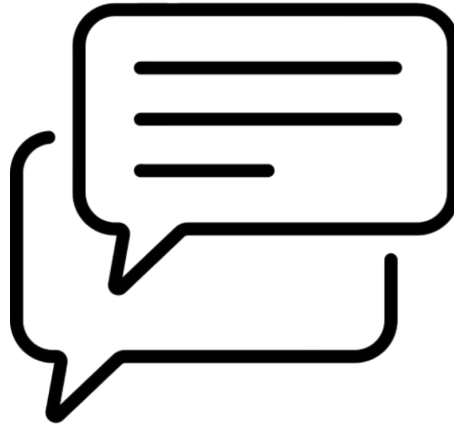
Independent Living

Post-Secondary Education

Employability

Employers and Colleagues

**Did you find any tools that
would help your child?**



How AT Can Help Your Child:

- meaningfully participate in the general curriculum AND
- participate in academic, social, or functional activities AND
- communicate AND
- hear and/or see AND
- access print materials AND
- navigate the school environment AND
- organization AND
- written communication and/or computer access AND
- participate in state and local assessments

Please note: This is not an exhaustive list

Assistive Technology Resources

Alt+Shift Lending Library

- Trial assistive technology for students with individualized education plans (IEPs) ages birth-26 in Michigan public schools.
- The short-term trial periods assist schools in determining effectiveness before acquiring the AT, discovering the potential of their learners.



altshift.education/lending-library

Alt+Shift Lending Library

We produce custom
keyguards
(3D printed and acrylic)



Photo courtesy of [Thingiverse](#)

info.altshift.education/Keyguards

Alt+Shift Lending Library

Select low-tech AT can currently be 3D printed and shipped at no cost.

Keep it if it works for your student, send back if not!

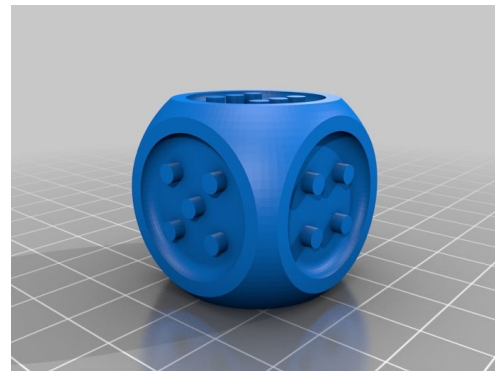


Photo courtesy of
Thingiverse

info.altshift.education/3DprintAT

Alt+Shift Lending Library

8 week loan periods

- Need a loan extension? No problem, so long as there is not a waitlist.

Don't see what you're looking for? Request an item!

altshift.education/request-new-item



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
- Loan Program



MATP is by people with disabilities for people with disabilities, their allies, and other community members.

mi-at.org/lending-library

MDE RBLV and DHH

Resource for Blind Low Vision - MDE

- Lending Library
- Resources
- Training



rblv.org

Resource for Deaf/Hard of Hearing - MDE

- Lending Library
- Resources
- Training



rdhh.org

Quick Wins

- Brief, individual modules focused on one high leverage practice
- Designed for immediate implementation
- Focused on assistive technology (including augmentative and alternative communication), math instruction, and accessible digital materials



altshift.education/professional-learning/quick-wins

Alt+Shift Newsletter

Sign up for our monthly newsletter to stay informed about upcoming events, lending library items, and implementation tools and/or resources.



altshift.education/stay-informed

Find Alt+Shift on Social Media



AltShiftEduMichigan



@AltShiftEducation

#AltShiftEd

Additional Resources

- [US Dept of Ed AT Myths and Facts](#)
- [Georgia Project for Assistive Technology Assistive Technology Consideration Resource Guide](#)
- [SETT Framework](#) (Joy Zabala)
- [Parent and Educator Guide for AT](#)

Questions



We are here to support you!

 **@MichiganAllianceForFamilies**

 **@michiganallianceforfamilies**

 **/MichiganAlliance**

For more information visit

www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org

Call 800-552-4821

En Español 313-217-1060

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Michigan Alliance for Families

In collaboration with



Michigan Alliance for Families is an IDEA Grant Funded Initiative of the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Special Education (MDE-OSE); the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP); and Michigan's Federal Parent-Training and Information Center (PTIC) funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs(OSEP).

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