

SOONERSTART EARLY INTERVENTION

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

GUIDELINES

Oklahoma Assistive Technology for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities Birth to Three

INTRODUCTION

Assistive technology is one of the early intervention services authorized under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for children with disabilities birth to three years of age. Oklahoma has allocated funds to help provide assistive technology devices/services for children birth to three when funds are not available from other sources. To access these funds, children must be participating in the SoonerStart Early Intervention program.

DEFINITIONS

Assistive technology device means 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 children with disabilities.

Assistive technology service means a service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition or use of an assistive technology device. Assistive technology services include:

- * the evaluation of the needs of a child with a disability, including a functional evaluation of the child in the child's customary (natural) environment;
- * purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of assistive technology devices for children with disabilities;
- * selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing or replacing of assistive technology devices;
- * coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs;
- * training and technical assistance for a child with disabilities, or if appropriate, that child's family and

training or technical assistance for professionals (including individuals providing early intervention services or other individuals who provide services to, or are otherwise substantially involved in the major life functions of individuals with disabilities).

TYPES OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY DEVICES

Assistive technology devices fall into one of the following categories:

- ❖ Vision
- ❖ Assistive Listening
- ❖ Self-care

- ❖ Positioning
- ❖ Mobility
- ❖ Communication
- ❖ Early Reading
- ❖ Early Writing
- ❖ Early Math
- ❖ Computer Access
- ❖ Play
- ❖ Environmental Control

ASSESSMENT AND PROVISION OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Assessments for assistive technology devices should be conducted by a multidisciplinary team. This team should include the parent and persons with experience in providing assistive technology devices/services. The team may also include the resource coordinator and other team members as appropriate. The SoonerStart program recommends that assistive technology devices be used as part of the assessment process for fitting, demonstration, and extended trial. Assistive technology devices for assessment have been provided by Oklahoma ABLE Tech via an established Memorandum of Understanding with the State Department of Education and the State Department of Health. Additionally, assistive technology devices are available for assessment and short-term loan from various statewide programs such as Oklahoma ABLE Tech, Oklahoma Assistive Technology Center, Oklahoma Library for the Blind and other community based programs.

Assessment for assistive technology devices may occur as part of the initial multidisciplinary evaluation when a child is referred to the SoonerStart early intervention program. It may also occur as part of follow-up to the initial multidisciplinary evaluation or at any other time while the child is receiving SoonerStart services. SoonerStart supports the idea that assessment of the child's development and assistive technology needs is an on-going process rather than a one-time event. The team assessing assistive technology needs should address the following:

1. Child's developmental needs and function.

IFSP teams will consider the child's age and the need for technology to support the achievement of outcomes that address the child's abilities and overall development. The IFSP team will identify the most appropriate device for the child's current development. Because technology devices and the needs of children and their families change, devices should be used to enhance the child's current development and functioning, and address immediate needs.

2. Equipment and device options.

IFSP teams will consider a range of supports and services that address the needs of children and their families and may include a continuum of options ranging from creative use of existing resources (e.g. household items, toys, etc), to low technology devices, to high technology devices. The IFSP team will not limit their thinking to only those devices and services currently available within the SoonerStart program.

3. Child and family needs.

IFSP teams will consider devices that fit easily into the family's routines and will assist in the achievement of outcomes. In doing so, appropriate assistive technology devices should assist in the child's development and functional abilities.

4. Assistive Technology Service Coordination

Following the provision of assistive technology, the strategies section of the IFSP will reflect how SoonerStart will train children and caregivers in the use of the assistive technology device(s). Additionally, the IFSP will reflect the coordination of various services, such as other educational and/or rehabilitation plans and programs along with maintenance and repair of the assistive technology device(s) when needed.

5. **Funding.**

The resource coordinator, with the assistance of the parent and other team members, should identify funding for the assistive technology devices. When funding is not available, SoonerStart is the payor of last resort.

When equipment cannot be purchased through other resources (i.e., Medicaid, Title V, private insurance, other community, civic and service organizations) in a timely manner, the SoonerStart early intervention program will purchase equipment that is required by the infant or toddler with a disability to promote and enhance access to and function within the child's natural environment and to achieve IFSP outcomes. Assistive technology devices and equipment purchased by SoonerStart remain the property of the SoonerStart Program. The equipment may be used by the child/family until the child's third birthday

During the transition planning process, the SoonerStart team will include information on the child's assistive technology device and service needs and are encouraged to consider the Assistive Technology Device Purchase/Sale Agreement, see note below. SoonerStart may use public or private funding sources to pay for needed assistive technology devices and services; however, SoonerStart is the payer of last resort and will provide the devices and services in a timely manner.

Note: Oklahoma State Department of Education provides a mechanism for school districts, public agencies and/or parents to transfer assistive technology either through sale or transfer. The Agreement can be found within the OSDE Technical Assistance Document, Assistive Technology for Children and Youth with Disabilities.

SOONERSTART ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACQUISITION PROCESS

Step 1: Assistive technology devices and services are identified as necessary to meet an IFSP outcome.

Step 2: Determine if additional assistive technology assessment is needed.

Step 3: Identify appropriate assistive technology evaluator.

Step 4: Access expertise of local early intervention team members if available within the team or community.

Step 5: If assistive technology expertise is not available locally, contact the Oklahoma Assistive Technology Center (OATC) or other appropriate providers for consultation.

Step 6: Complete the assistive technology assessment process and make appropriate recommendations.

Step 7: Identify all possible resources to cover the cost of the recommended assistive technology devices and services. Possible resources include, but are not limited to the following:

- * **Medicaid** - A funding source that provides reimbursement for medical services for individuals who are financially and categorically eligible. Devices must be medically necessary for the child and must be prescribed by a physician. There must be a statement of the medical necessity to justify the equipment. Medicaid will also reimburse medically necessary services and devices which are unrelated to the child's developmental needs. Contact the local DHS office for more information.
- * **SSI-Disabled Children's Program (SSI-DCP)** - This state program provides formula, diapers (for children over three), adaptive equipment, including van lifts, and environmental aids. Children must be receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and under 16 years of age to be eligible. Apply at the county DHS office.

- * **Private pay** - The parent may choose to purchase device(s)/service(s) for the child with private funds. This can occur either when assistive technology is initially recommended by the multi-disciplinary team or during the transition process, at a reduced fair market value, for equipment that was formerly purchased by SoonerStart or other public or private resources.
- * **Private insurance** - The parent may choose to use their insurance company if their policy covers the cost of assistive technology devices/services. Parents may decline to use private health insurance based on financial cost considerations, such as a out-of-pocket expenses, co-pays, insurance deductions, or decreases in lifetime coverage.
- * **Alternative resources** - Private foundations, charitable organizations, service clubs, or other local groups may be approached to provide funding support for assistive technology devices/services.
- * **Other** - A combination of any of the above or some other creative source that results in provision of assistive technology devices/services.

Step 8: If the team is unable to access funding for assistive technology devices/services in a timely manner, then SoonerStart resources will be utilized. To access funding through SoonerStart the team must submit the SoonerStart Assistive Technology Request (see attached form) to Early Intervention Administrator, Special Education Section, Oklahoma State Department of Education.

Step 9 SoonerStart will review the documentation of the team's AT assessment, the need for AT to support the child's outcome(s), a letter of medical necessity or a letter of justification, and the attempts to access other funding sources within 10 working days. The documentation review is to insure that the IFSP team has provided adequate information regarding assessment and how it relates to the child's IFSP outcomes and all attempts at seeking other appropriate funding sources.

Step 10: The SoonerStart team will be contacted within 10 working days to request more information/documentation if necessary or to inform that the reviewed documentation is determined complete.

Step 11: Once the documentation has been reviewed and determined complete, acquisition of the equipment will be coordinated through the SoonerStart Program and provided to the family in a timely manner.

**SOONERSTART EARLY INTERVENTION
ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY
REQUEST FOR USE OF SOONERSTART FUNDS**

This request is to be completed by the Resource Coordinator and submitted to the Associate Director for Early Intervention, Special Education Section, Oklahoma State Department of Education. A response will be provided within 10 working days of receipt of this request.

Child's Name: _____

SoonerStart Team: _____

Assistive technology Device(s)/Service(s) Requested: _____

Please provide the information requested in Items 1 through 4 below. If the information is included in existing documentation, you do not need to duplicate on this form, but rather attach relevant documents (evaluation or assessment reports, applicable sections of the IFSP, assistive technology guide, etc.) to support your request.

1. State the IFSP outcome to be addressed by use of AT requested.

2. Identify infant/toddler present abilities and consideration of these abilities in relation to use of specific type of assistive technology requested.

3. Identify the environmental considerations for use of the technology at home, in the community, or other natural environments in which the child may participate.

4. Identify efforts to access other sources of funding and state the results.

Early Intervention Region: _____

Resource Coordinator: _____

Telephone Number: _____ FAX Number: _____

Date Request Submitted: _____

Identify Assistive Technology Assessment Team Members:

Date Request Approved: _____ Further information requested: _____

Describe further information needed to determine the requested device is appropriate:

If approved, suggested vendors and estimated cost: _____
