



What Administrators need to know about Assistive Technology

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Typical Administrative Roles

- Leadership
- Supervision
- Management
- Program Improvement



Administrator's concerns



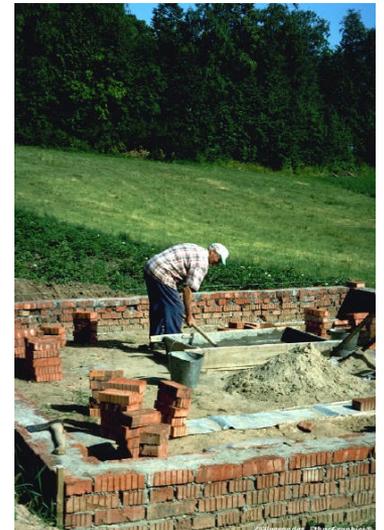
- ▶ Adequate yearly progress
- ▶ Safety
- ▶ Staff morale
- ▶ Return on investment
- ▶ Fair and ethical practices
- ▶ Compliance with federal and state laws
- ▶ Implementing district initiatives



- As a Leader, the administrator has a very powerful role:
 - Developing a vision for AT use
 - Creating a culture where AT use is valued
 - Holding all staff accountable to implement AT that is in the IEP
 - Encouraging collaboration, reflection, and pursuit of training about AT

Where do we start?

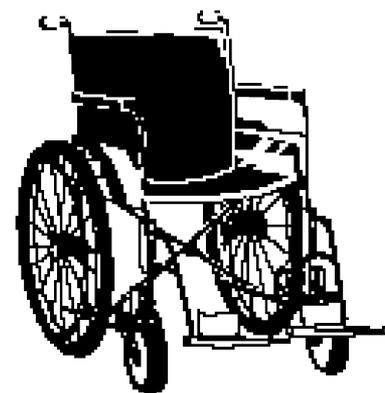
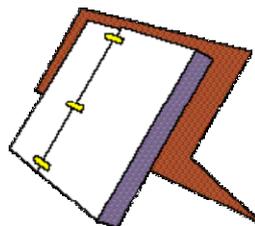
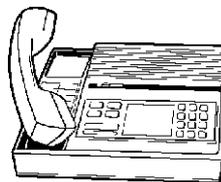
- ▶ Ensure understanding of the legal requirements and definitions.
- ▶ Give them information they can easily use.
- ▶ Reinforce the desired behavior.
- ▶ Direct focus to critical issues.





Know what AT 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 functional capabilities** of children with disabilities.





Know what AT services are

Legal definition— Any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the:

- Selection
- Acquisition, or
- Use of an AT Device

How they are provided in the district



AT Services include—

Functional evaluation in customary environment;

Purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing;

Adapting, repairing—make sure it works;

Coordinating with other services;

Training—child & family;

Training—educators.

District Requirement—

- (a) Each public agency shall ensure that assistive technology devices or assistive technology services, or both, as those terms are defined in 300.5–300.6, are made available to a child with a disability if required as a part of the child's—
- (1) Special education under 300.26;
 - (2) Related services under 300.24; or
 - (3) Supplementary aids and services under 300.550(b)(2).

Special Factors

300.346 (a)(2)

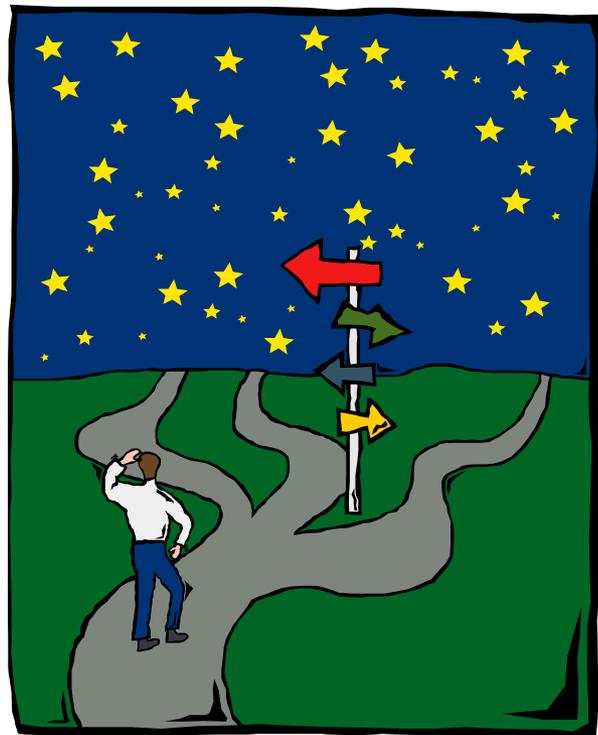
Consideration of special factors. The IEP team also shall -

- (v) Consider whether the child requires assistive technology devices and services.



Developing vision

- How can AT help struggling students perform better?
- How does AT fit into overall school improvement goals?
- What is each person's role in AT use?



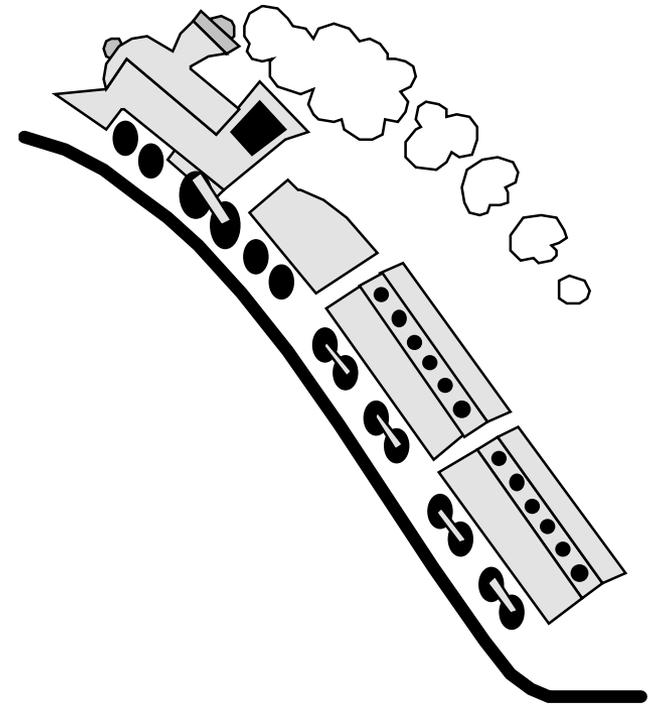
Know that Daily Use is Critical

Assistive technology is only effective when used on a daily basis to accomplish meaningful tasks.



“One of the things we discovered early on was our supervisors’ attitudes had to match what we were asking our employees to do or this process would not work.”

Steve Copp, President and CEO
Trans Coil Industries



Advocating for

- ▶ Policies
- ▶ Programs
- ▶ Funding opportunities
- ▶ Access to the network

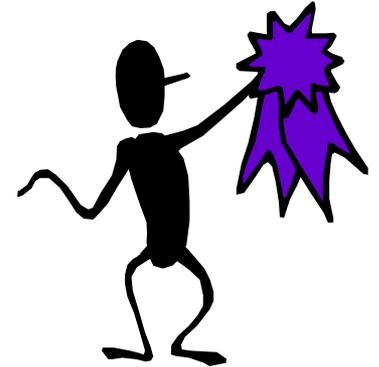


Supervision



- Know who has AT in their IEP.
- Ask how AT implementation is going.
- Look for its use during “Walk throughs”.
- Seek staff who are knowledgeable about and comfortable with technology.
- Highlight successes.
- Address AT as part of staff evaluation.

Valuing AT Use



- ▶ Choosing to mention it
- ▶ Asking teachers to share at staff meetings
- ▶ Taking time to talk to students who use AT
- ▶ Using technology yourself
- ▶ Including AT in technology plan
- ▶ Relating AT to overall school goals

Only the Supervisor can-

- ✓ Ensure that IEPs which include AT are implemented in a legal and ethical manner.
- ✓ Ensure staff have appropriate levels of AT knowledge to fulfill their role.
- ✓ Foster an environment with a low level of conflict.
- ✓ Address AT as part of staff evaluation.



Know the Importance of Staff Participation in Decisions

No sustainable change can be accomplished without core people struggling through the anxieties of complex problem solving toward a shared solution.

- Fullan (2003)



Recruiting and training

Ensure staff have appropriate levels of AT knowledge to fulfill their role.



Ensuring Adequate Knowledge

- ▶ Job descriptions
- ▶ Recruiting
- ▶ Interview questions
- ▶ Observations
- ▶ Staff evaluations



Ensuring Adequate Knowledge

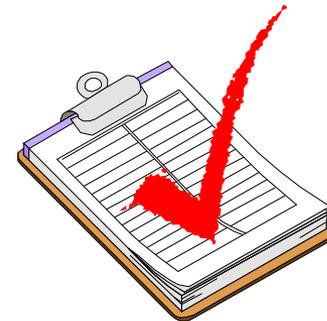
- Send to training and conferences
- Bring in training on site
- Create study groups
- Share information at staff meetings
- Make materials available
- Hold staff accountable



Staff Performance

Assess staff performance
in relation to AT both

- Informally
- Formally



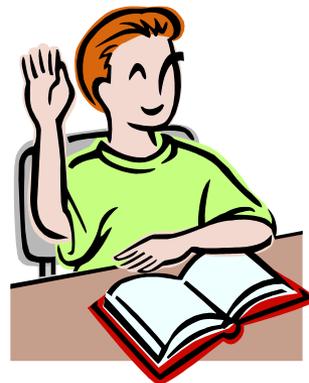
Informal Observations

- ▶ Students who use AT are gaining skills in its operation or use and can demonstrate them.
- ▶ Students who are supposed to use AT have it available to them in good working order at appropriate times.



Informal Observations

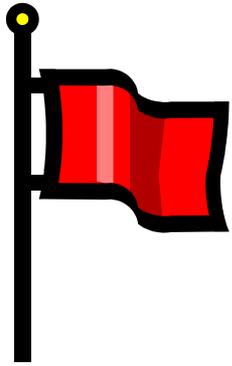
- ▶ AT is used for necessary tasks, so that the student using it is actively engaged in learning activities and is held accountable to learn.
- ▶ Personnel in the student's environments have the knowledge they need to keep AT operational.



Listen for:

- ▶ Positive comments about AT
- ▶ Appropriate questions about AT
- ▶ Knowledgeable discussions
- ▶ Planning for transitions





Red flags

- ▶ When asked about child's program, teacher refers you to the assistant.
- ▶ AT is rarely being used.
- ▶ Child does not appear to be held accountable for learning.
- ▶ AT used in a previous setting is not evident.

Formal Observation

- ▶ Inclusion in formal evaluation lets staff know that the administrator considers AT important
- ▶ Creates the expectation within the entire school that AT will be addressed by all teachers who have students using it.



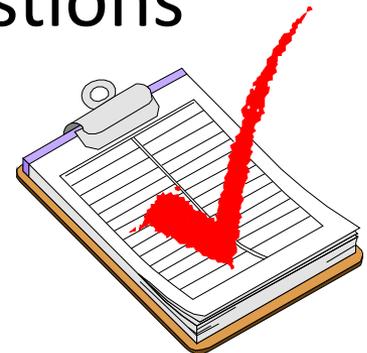
Management

- Ensure written guidelines are developed and widely disseminated.
- Create a climate of collaboration.
- Ensure AT services are provided in the most cost effective and efficient manner.



Operating Guidelines

- ✓ Processes that can apply to each child.
- ✓ Framework that helps IEP teams to apply that process for assessment, goal setting, and implementation.
- ✓ Answers to service provider questions about district processes



Providing AT Services

Ensure the provision of legal and ethical services

- Failure to implement is the most common complaint filed.
- To be effective AT must be used in meaningful tasks during customary activities.
- That means everyone plays a role.



Cost Effective

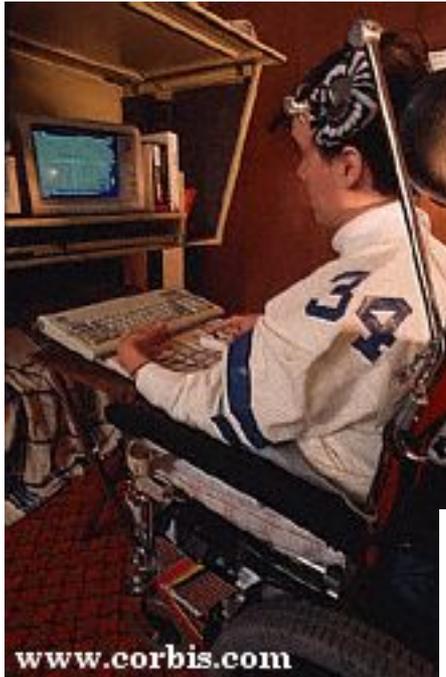
- ▶ Efficiency saves money.
- ▶ Consistency saves money.
- ▶ Continuity of use saves money.
- ▶ Long term planning saves money.
- ▶ Knowledge saves money



Teaching Assistant > \$20,000 per year



AT < \$1. to >\$10,000.



Which Students Need Assistive Technology?

**The SETT Framework:
Critical Areas to Consider When Making Informed
Assistive Technology Decisions**

As the language of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, P.L. 101-476) regarding assistive technology becomes widely known, much attention is being focused on school districts and the procedures and practices which school personnel use in arriving at decisions regarding the provision of assistive technology devices and services. Which students need assistive technology? What kind of technology is needed? Who is involved in making these decisions? What sort of data should be gathered to aid in the decision-making process? Much discussion has been generated about each of these questions. Though there are few quick and easy answers to any of these questions, the first three are generally addressed in some way by a combination of federal law and best practices in fields related to assistive technology. The answer to the fourth question is evolving and is the subject of this discussion.

Which Students Need Assistive Technology?

Two Views of Cost

- Cost – Dollar Amount
- Return on Investment



AT Works!!

- ▶ Progress on IEP goals;
- ▶ AT's contribution greater than any of nine other intervention strategies;
- ▶ Team approach is most effective.
 - -Watson, Ito, Smith, & Anderson (2010)

What Can You Do?

- Provide simple info on what AT is
- Provide a list of which student's have AT in their IEP
- Make connection between administrator's tech use and student's need for AT
- Highlight successful AT use and how it is making a difference
- Relate to areas of concern

Power of vision

A vision without a task is but a dream. A task without a vision is drudgery.

A vision with a task is the hope of the world.



Inscription in a church
Sussex, England, 1730