



Division for Special Education Services and Supports

Assistive Technology (AT) Assessments

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An AT assessment can be a part of an evaluation if the IEP team needs to determine what type of device or service could support the student that is being evaluated.

AT assessments can be requested but under IDEA there is no information about what the assessment should include. What IDEA does say is the assessment must provide the IEP team with enough information to decide about, “Does the student need Assistive Technology devices and or services in order to receive FAPE?”.

Letter to Fisher, 23 IDELR 565 (OSEP 1995).

Using the consideration process, under special factors, the IEP team will consider if a student needs an AT device or service.
An AT formal assessment is not needed if the IEP team can determine the AT devices and service needs using available information/data.
An IEP team can request an AT consultation or an AT assessment when the team needs more information about a specific student’s needs. When a student has access issues and or complex communication needs, an assessment may be needed. Prior written notice will need to be completed about the decision to grant or deny the AT assessment requested by the family.
Stop to think about what is currently available to all students. IEP teams should be aware of that technology and not overlook what is available. If a student needs that technology because of specific features, be sure to indicate the device as necessary in the IEP for the student to receive FAPE.
When completing an AT assessment, be aware of the 60 day timeline . Always take into consideration a device trial period during an AT assessment.
When describing the features of a device, describe what the student needs to complete the task and stay away from naming specific brands.
Always consider the environment the device will be used. Is the noise level too loud or too soft for text-to-speech or speech-to-text? Are there WiFi issues in the building, etc? The IEP team should also consider if the student needs access to the AT device or service outside the school setting to receive FAPE.
IEP teams and LEAs should be aware of high-tech device options that could grow with the student even if mid/low tech could meet the students needs. The IEP team and LEA should do their due diligence in researching and determining what device or service is needed for FAPE.
AT conversations in the IEP should be around the tasks needed to be completed and what support the student needs in completing tasks. The tool should be the final discussion point once the features are identified for task completion.

Adapted from: Herseim,J.(2019) Dos and don'ts of AT assessments. Special Ed Connection. Retrieved from LRP March 2020



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