



# Practice Tip Sheet

## ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY



### WHAT IS ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY?

"Assistive Technology device means an item, piece of equipment or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified or customized, that is used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capability of an eligible child" (Wisconsin Administrative Code - Dept. of Health Services, Chapter 90.03(2)). For example: Wheelchairs, gait trainers, Augmentative and Alternative Communication Devices (AAC), adaptive utensils, sensory equipment, and more.



### WHAT SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT USING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY?

- Assistive technology can be a beneficial addition to a child's Birth to 3 Program experience when used thoughtfully.
- Ensure your application of assistive technology aligns with the 7 Key Principles. (i.e. Principle 1: Infants and toddlers learn best through everyday experiences and interactions with familiar people in familiar contexts) (ECTA, 2008).
- Think ahead about safety measures you may need to educate caregivers about (i.e. can the child be left alone in the device).
- It may be helpful to collaborate with your own team as well as the child's medical team.
- Ensure that you take steps to cover liability and effectively document family education.

### WHAT DOES THE BIRTH TO 3 PROGRAM OPERATIONS GUIDE SAY?



#### 10.4.2 Assistive Technology Services:

This service consists of directly assisting the child and parents with the selection, acquisition, and/or use of an assistive technology device, including:

- Evaluating the needs of a child, including a functional evaluation in the child's usual environment.
- **Purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of an assistive technology device for the child.**
- Selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing assistive technology devices.

## WHAT ARE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF USING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY?

- A child may be able to meet a milestone sooner than they otherwise could have. (i.e. an AAC device to allow earlier communication)
- Some assistive technology, like standers and gait trainers improve bone density, circulation, muscle strength, and activity participation (Paleg et al, 2013).

## WHAT ARE CONSIDERATIONS FOR USING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY IN PART C EARLY INTERVENTION?



- How can the primary coach ensure the recommended equipment is incorporated into existing routines that are in line with the family's goals, priorities, living environment?
- What does the family already own that may work instead (i.e. a swim shirt one size smaller versus an expensive compression shirt)?
- How might purchasing an item (i.e. a wheelchair) affect the child's ability to get other equipment in the future due to Medicaid or other insurance billing?
- How long will the child need the equipment? Should the family purchase or borrow?
- How might the use of a checklist such as the ECTA Center Assistive Technology Checklist be helpful guide decision making?

## HOW CAN I FIND ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY TO USE IN PART C EARLY INTERVENTION?

- Request orders through the child's medical provider to purchase equipment through insurance
- Check the lending library of the WI Assistive Technology Act program:  
<https://wisconsinat4all.com/item>
- Check loan closets such as Kindred Kids and Katy's Closet
- Connect with your local school district or CESA



## WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY ABOUT ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY?

Wisconsin Administrative Code - Dept. of Health Services, Chapter 90.11(4)(a)  
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Sec. 303.13 (b)-(1)-(ii)