



Bureau of Special Education
Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network

Assistive Technology Resource Pack for Early Intervention Families and Professionals: Frequently Asked Questions

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Assistive Technology Resource Pack for Early Intervention Families and Professionals: Frequently Asked Questions about Assistive Technology

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What is Assistive Technology?

Assistive technology means devices and services.

Device: “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 the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.”

Services: “Any service that directly assists a child with the disability in the selection, acquisition or use of an assistive technology device.”

Assistive technology (AT) is sometimes seen as only meaning a device, such as a communication system, that is expensive and difficult to obtain and use, or something that may not be needed by a child who is under three years of age. But “high tech,” complex AT devices represent only a small portion of the assistive technology that may be used to help infants and toddlers to participate in activities and routines in their homes and in community settings. An object or symbol used by a child to ask for “more”, Velcro placed on a toy so that a child can easily grasp and play with the toy, or using a non-slip surface, such as dycem, are all considered AT. For infants and toddlers with disabilities, AT has been defined as devices or services that allow children to engage in everyday activities that promote participation and learning.

AT is included as a service in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997(IDEA) under PL 105-119, Part C and the Pennsylvania Early Intervention Services System Act, Pennsylvania Act 212-1990. AT must be considered along with the child's other developmental, educational, therapeutic and social service needs. In addition, each child's need for AT services and devices must be evaluated and identified on an individual basis. As with any service, families have the right to due process if AT that a family may see as necessary is denied.

What are some examples of Assistive Technology?

The following is not a complete listing but rather some illustrative examples of AT:

- switches and adapted interfaces that can be used to adapt a toy to allow a child to activate the toy and play by themselves or with other toddlers
- off the shelf feeding utensils, bowls, plates that allow a particular child to eat independently
- toys that have been specially selected from those available at a local toy store or have been adapted for switch use, modified by adding Velcro, magnets or other adaptations.
- paper towel rolls, rolled up towels, or foam rubber that when placed in a stroller allows a child to sit safely for walks in the neighborhood or at the mall.
- assessment to identify adaptations or devices to assist a child to manipulate materials during structured play at her preschool.
- specially selected and adapted chair that allows a child to sit and play, eat, or participate in other activities and routines at home and in community settings such as child care.
- training for child care staff and parents in troubleshooting a communication device if it stops “talking.”
- pictures cut out from magazines and pasted on a board so that a child can make choices to communicate wants and needs at home and in community settings such as child care
- Big Mac or other type of switch device that when programmed allows a child to touch the switch to speak simple words and phrases at home

- specially purchased and programmed communication device with several programmed messages that “talks” for a child with limited verbal communication
- adaptations such as switches, touch screens, trackballs, alternate keyboards, or other ways to allow a child to access a computer to use game or preschool learning software programs
- the work of an adult to fabricate AT such as developing schedule or sequencing boards.
- assistance from a early intervention or school staff so that the family may locate potential funding sources for an adapted van so that their young child’s power chair may be transported.

When should AT be considered for a young child in early intervention?

AT can promote children’s participation and learning within typical activities/routines I home, child care, and community settings. Professionals should work with the family and child to identify the activities and routines that families do or would like to do with their children or that occur in classroom situations. They should discuss how children participate in those activities and routines and what families feel that their children are learning. Often, AT can help a child participate more fully in the activity/routine or the activity itself may provide a context for learning. For example, Trisha’s family said that Trisha participated in mealtimes and that they felt that was important because she was learning how to eat and socialize with her family. Trisha was able to finger feed but was not using a spoon so her mother fed her while eating her own meal. The Early Intervention (E.I.) team suggested a non-slip surface so that her plate would not move around when she was trying to scoop and provided her with a special plate that made scooping easier. Trisha was able to hold the spoon for longer times when the team suggested using Velcro to hold it onto her hand. She was also able to make choices about which food or drink she wanted by pointing to pictures provided by the E.I. team. All of these adaptations are considered AT and, in this case, their use allowed Trisha to learn to eat and communicate during family mealtimes.

What is the difference between an adaptation and AT?

Adaptations and AT both represent interventions that may be used to enable a child to participate and learn successfully. AT devices refer to items, products, or equipment such as equipment used to position a child with a disability (e.g., standing frame; adapted seating) or items such as toys, communication devices, or eating utensils. Adaptations are broader than but encompass AT devices are include environmental modifications made to address situations in a child’s environment. For example, when a child care teacher re-arranges a classroom (e.g., room arrangement) so that a child who is in a wheelchair can get around easily, the environment has been adapted to promote independence. When a teacher uses sign language to communicate with a child, this is an example of an adaptation in activity requirement but not an example of AT. Knowing the exact differences between AT devices and the broader group of adaptations is not important. What is important is recognizing that both adaptations and AT may promote children’s participation and learning in everyday activities and routines.

What is the difference between high-tech and low-tech AT?

High- and low-tech are terms used to describe AT devices. These terms describe devices that range from simple (low-tech) to more complex (high-tech) devices. Low-tech AT devices involve the use of simple external materials to allow the child to perform tasks and participate in activities. Low tech devices may include objects/symbols/pictures mounted on a communication board or even a digitized speech output device that may be used to communicate, pencil grips, adapted writing instruments and feeding utensils, switch-activated toys, or dycem to keep a bowl or writing paper from slipping. Low tech devices are usually inexpensive, often home-made, and may generally be operated “out of the box” without much modification or training.

High-tech devices are specialized and are usually marketed through specialized catalogues that are generally distributed to professionals. High-tech devices may be expensive, complex to operate, and may require specific knowledge and training to make appropriate selection decisions and to allow effective ongoing use. High tech devices include generic technology like computers as well as the devices marketed specifically for people with disabilities such as communication devices.

Whether high tech or low tech devices are being considered for a child, the most important thing is to work as a team to assess the child for assistive technology, considering such factors as routine tasks that need to be done in all the environments the child may be in throughout the day, communication needs that are currently not being met, the physical and cognitive skills and interests of the child and the wishes of family members.

What is AAC?

AAC is any device, system or method that improves the ability of a child with communication impairment to communicate effectively. AAC stands for augmentative and alternative communication, referring to any strategy or device used to enhance the expression and understanding of communication for children with complex communication needs. This includes “aided” approaches such as systems that produce speech and “unaided” approaches that don’t require any external products such as the use of facial expression, gesture, or sign language. AAC is used when a child does not develop communication in a typical fashion, or experiences a significant delay in language development.

An AAC device or system is not merely a substitute for how the child is currently communicating. Ideally, an AAC system includes more than one mode of communication, with the child using whichever is the most efficient given the activity/routine in which the child is participating and the people who are involved in the setting. Very often one of the modes of communication in an AAC system includes the use of some natural speech.

If I begin to use AAC with a child, will that keep the child from learning to talk?

Research has shown that the use of a language board or other AAC device or system (e.g., sign language) does not interfere with the development of speech. In fact, it has been shown that the use of AAC actually may result in an improvement in speech, and that a child using AAC may develop speech more quickly than he would otherwise. AAC allows the child to experience the power of successful communication and often motivates him to communicate

more. Also, devices that have vocal output (that is, they produce a spoken message) provide a consistent speech model for the child to imitate and may help him to learn to say his words more clearly. The use of a device may give him the support he needs to begin to develop natural speech if that is possible for the child.

If a child has a communication impairment that prevents speech from developing normally, consideration should be given to the use of AAC. Sometimes children's communication skills are good enough to be understandable by a few people – like a parent, teacher or someone who spends a lot of time with the child. For children who are understandable only to one or a small number of people, it may become frustrating when other people don't easily understand. It is important for children to be successful at talking with people who are not familiar so they can expand their circles of friends and acquaintances, and will be able to communicate with others. The use of AAC may help prevent or limit behavior problems and frustration while natural speech skills are developing.

Both professionals and families often wonder about using AAC devices that have symbols representing the messages when they don't think that children know what the symbols mean. There are many ways to represent communication messages on an AAC device. Objects, photographs, symbols or written words may be used. The choice of which is appropriate for a given child is made depending on factors such as the child's motor, cognitive and visual skills. As you begin to use AAC, however, it is not necessary to spend time teaching a child the meaning of the representation system (symbols, photographs, etc.) you have chosen. The child should learn to associate meaning with the symbols as she uses the messages and sees how that use impacts on the behavior of the people around her. For example, the child uses a message on a communication device to ask for a cookie and she gets one—she will start to associate that message with getting a cookie. Learning the meaning of the symbols (or whichever representation system may be appropriate for the child) will happen because of the immediate feedback she is given as she uses the symbol to communicate.

A child in my early intervention program might benefit from an AT device, but we're not exactly sure what he needs. Where do we start?

The child's team (including the parent(s) and others who are on the IFSP or IEP team) should look at how a child participates in each activity or daily routine to identify what the child is able to do currently and what circumstances are preventing or limiting a child's full participation in each activity and routine. For example, a team identified that Samuel was unable to communicate with the teachers and with other children in his child care program during any activity. Communication was required for participation in many of the child care activities including storytime where the teacher generally read a story to the children and then asked them to questions such as "what do you think happened next?" or "how do you think Jamie felt when the dog ran away?" Samuel was unable to respond to these questions and participate because of limited verbal expression. The team wondered if a communication device would allow Samuel to participate during storytime and other activities.

Simple, low-tech ideas should be tried first. Since Samuel was unable to communicate easily by talking, a simple picture board and a single switch with voice output were tried before considering a high-tech communication device. But in Samuel's situation, the team determined that these low-tech solutions did not provide sufficient opportunities for him to fully participate in ALL activities in the child care program.

When low-tech devices do not sufficiently address the limitation to the child's full participation in an activity or routine, the team should observe the child to determine what features of high-tech AT are needed to sufficiently "mediate" or address the limitations to participation. For example, if a child were unable to communicate verbally and also had vision difficulties, the AT device being considered needs to be one that will accommodate for vision difficulties while facilitating the child's communication. The team can then look for or create an AT device that will allow the child to communicate by touching symbols or objects. If the team is not familiar with the types of AT that are available, resources are identified later in this document to help teams identify and explore options for AT.

Who is a candidate for AT and what can I do to begin the assessment process?

A child should be considered a candidate for an AT device when the child is unable to perform activities (including communication exchanges) that typical peers are doing and his or her inability to perform these skills is negatively impacting on participation in activities and routines.

Once an AT device is being considered for a child, the child's IEP/IFSP team begins an ongoing process of assessment. It is important to note that assessment is a process that takes place over a period of time, includes observation within the child and family's typical activities and routines, and should involve all relevant team members including the family. The assessment process should focus on the child's strengths and needs as they assess for AT. The team should not start the assessment process with a focus on a particular device, but should concentrate on matching features of devices to the child's strengths and needs. This helps ensure that a child will receive the type(s) of AT that will work most effectively to promote the child's participation in activities and routines, is appropriate for their physical or developmental needs, and addresses any family needs and priorities. Information collected during the assessment process should include:

- documentation of AT tried with the child and family, including low and high tech devices and the results of each of the trials. Both PaTTAN and Pennsylvania's Assistive Technology Lending Library operate short term loan programs to facilitate the trial usage of AT. Information about how to borrow from these programs can be found at the end of the FAQs.
- an implementation plan for how the device will be integrated into the routines and activities in which the child/family participate.
- team participation (including the family) in the selection and use of the AT device and family involvement in the training process.

The child's IFSP/IEP team makes a decision concerning the selection of AT device(s). A plan is developed by the child's team for obtaining the AT device needed.

Who can help with Assistive Technology?

The child's IFSP or IEP team often need the additional expertise of individuals with specific information, such as information about available devices, ways of teaching a child to use a device effectively, or obtaining devices. In Pennsylvania the following people are available to support the child's IFSP or IEP team:

- The AT Consultant at each Intermediate Unit acts as a local resource person for AT. The listing of these individuals is provided at the end of this document, or may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) website (see website listing in this publication) or by calling 1-800-360-7282 (within PA).
- Early Intervention Technical Assistance (EITA), Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) consultants can provide assistance during the assessment process.
- A local early intervention/preschool provider who has training in AT devices and procedures will be able to provide assistance also.

Once we have some ideas for AT devices that may work with a child, do we have to purchase a device in order to try it with the child?

No, you do not have to purchase the device. In fact, you should always try devices with a child before you purchase the device. AT may be expensive and children's needs vary greatly, so it is important to make sure the features of the device meet the child's needs and actually promote participation in activities and routines when used by the child. Only devices that promote children's participation in activities and routines should be purchased.

The Department of Public Welfare and the Department of Education in Pennsylvania have provided funding to make available short-term loan equipment and resource materials to teachers or therapists. This equipment may be borrowed for any child from age birth through 21 for 6 weeks at a time. An equipment listing, an AT database for equipment descriptions, and the form for borrowing equipment through the short-term loan program are available on the PaTTAN website or by calling 800-360-7282, ext. 3308.

Pennsylvania's AT Lending Library (800-204-PIAT) lends devices to people of all ages and needs across the Commonwealth. Access their website <http://www.temple.edu/instituteondisabilities/atlend> for further information. The website includes a catalog of available devices, instructions for how to borrow, and information about training opportunities.

Where do I start once I borrow a device?

- Look at the child's daily activities and routines. Begin trying the equipment during a favorite motivating activity or routine. For some kids this may be sharing a book with a parent, teacher or sibling. For others, it may be taking a bath. Regardless of the activity chosen, it is important to keep a record of where the device has been tried and how it worked within the activity or routine. Be sure to note what features of the device worked well and which ones did not. Please, however, don't give up after only a few trials with the device. It may take the full 6 weeks of a trial period (or longer) to determine if the device will be useful and to understand the circumstances where it is helpful or not helpful for the child.
- If the device does not seem to be an effective way of increasing a child's participation in activities and routines (or in some activities and routines), borrow something else and try again. Be sure to try the device at various times of the day and in different activities throughout the day.

- Many children may need more than one device to participate fully in all activities and routines. For example, a child may be able to communicate during storytime using a high-tech communication device but when going to bed at night, it may work more effectively for a child to use a simple switch-activated voice output to say “goodnight” or “I love you.” Similarly, a child may use a picture communication board during school activities but a switch-operated voice output device may work better when riding in a car.

How is AT documented on a child’s IFSP or IEP?

- Specific AT devices should not be listed on the IEP/IFSP, instead the IEP/IFSP should include statements reflecting the child's needs and the features of the AT devices (ranging from low to high technology) that will assist the child in meeting those needs.
- The features of the AT device may be listed as part of the intervention strategy, the specially designed instruction, or the means for the child to obtain a goal or outcome, not as a goal to be accomplished. It is important to document how and when the child uses the assistive technology.

Once it is determined that a particular device(s) is appropriate for a child, how is that device purchased for the child? Who pays for the device?

If included on the IEP/IFSP, AT must be provided at no cost to the family. In some instances, however, the team should also explore ways to fund the device by other sources. For further information on alternate funding sources such as Medical Assistance, private insurance, charitable or private sources of funding, family driven funds, or other community or state funding possibilities, please consult the assistive technology consultant at your local intermediate unit, PaTTAN office or at the Pennsylvania Initiative for Assistive Technology.

Where can I get additional training?

The child's IFSP/IEP team, including the family, may receive training and technical assistance on the equipment through the local intermediate unit AT consultant, PaTTAN Early Intervention Technical Assistance, or other local sources. Training on how to operate specific high-tech devices is provided by manufacturers of the systems. Contact your local AT consultant at the intermediate unit for more information. General training on AT is provided, also, through each IU and can be arranged for birth to three programs through the County MH/MR early intervention coordinator.

How Can I Learn More About AT?

At the EXPO

Each year usually in late fall, PaTTAN sponsors an AT Expo at multiple locations across the state. At the Expo, there is a wide variety of assistive technology on display and manufacturer’s representatives are available to answer questions about the equipment. It is an excellent way to

get ideas about what is available and what to try with a child with disabilities. Information about dates and location of the Expo is available on the PaTTAN website at www.pattan.net

From PIAT

Pennsylvania's Initiative on Assistive Technology (PIAT)'s regional Assistive Technology Resource Centers (ATRCs) can provide demonstrations of devices that can be conducted at mutually convenient locations and scheduled upon request by parents and other IFSP/IEP team members. In addition, PIAT sponsors two comprehensive demonstration centers (one located in Pittsburgh and one in Camp Hill).

From Websites About Young Children and AT

What AT resources are available in Pennsylvania?

<http://www.pattan.net> Find a treasure trove of Pennsylvania-specific information regarding early intervention and access to assistive technology for Pennsylvanians birth-21. Learn about PaTTAN-sponsored training events, and link to information about PaTTAN's equipment short term loan program. The newest feature on the site is search capability that quickly lets you find out whether the product you are interested in is a part of the PaTTAN equipment inventory.

<http://disabilities.temple.edu/atlend> Learn about Pennsylvania's Assistive Technology Lending Library and how any Pennsylvanian with a disability can borrow a device to "try before you buy"—FREE!. Requests to borrow a device can be made by consumers, family members, providers, and even students who want to enhance their familiarity and competency with a particular system. Link to copies of the "Newsletter" to learn more about the AAC devices in the Lending Library, or move through the inventory to the manufacturers' website. Down-loadable forms are available on the website for (1) requesting the loan of a device or (2) making suggestions for items not in the inventory.

Where can I get information about using AT with infants and young children?

Tots-N-Tech (<http://tnt.asu.edu>) provides information as well as links to other websites related to AT and young children. Subscribe to the Newsletter to receive up to date ideas about using switches, AAC, or other devices/materials with infants and young children. Check out the Resource Guides for information about how to use AT with young children or ways to start a lending library.

<http://aac.unl.edu/yaack/> Augmentative and Alternative Communication Connecting Young Kids (YAACK) deals with issues related to AAC and young children. This site is full of great information and strategies for getting started with AAC. This is a great site to check out early on with if you have questions or are considering assessment for AAC with a young child. Very down to earth and user friendly.

<http://letsplay.buffalo.edu> Visit the “products” section of this informative website to find “pdf” booklets and one-page idea sheets on emphasizing play with infants and toddlers. Learn about battery-operated toys and games and how to select and use switches for play and communication purposes in a variety of environments. Explore computer play software and adaptive peripherals that help young children participate independently.

<http://www.afb.org/infant.asp> This website presents an electronic version of a recently published guide describing toys especially for children who are blind or with low vision (although there are some for other “special needs”). Most of the toys are available through “generic” toy stores.

<http://www.ataccess.org/resources/wcp/edefault.html> “We Can Play”, part of the Alliance for Technology Access website, presents twenty different activity ideas to use with children of all abilities. This resource includes directions on adapting a battery-operated toy and links to other web resources and books about play. The site also offers information in Spanish.

http://www2.edc.org/NCIP/library/ec/Power_1.htm This URL will take you to a resource in the “Library” of the website for the National Center to Improve Practice in Special Education Through Technology, Media and Materials (NCIP). *Baby Power*, a guide for families for using AT with their Infants and toddlers was written by Patsy Pierce, Ph.D., from the Center for Literacy and Disabilities Studies, University of North Carolina. Chapters include Parent-Professional Partnerships in Early Intervention (with a focus towards the consideration of AT), evaluation, as well as function-specific topics (seating and positioning/ communication).

What other websites have general information about AT and early childhood?

<http://citeed.org> . Center for Implementing Technology in Education. Many resources for teachers, administrators, and researchers may be found and many relate to working with preschool age children with special needs.

<http://www.fctd.info> Family Center for Technology. A majority of the information relates to use of AT with school-age students but a number of relevant handouts for families may be downloaded.

<http://www.nectac.org/> National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC) has extensive resources for states and systems about AT with young children. Abstracted bibliographies, links to federally-funded projects about AT with infants and toddlers, and copies of state resource materials may be accessed by using the pull down topical menu and selecting AT.

Where can I find ideas and instructions for making items or obtaining pictures?

<http://tnt.asu.edu/ideas> The TnT website includes a searchable database of hundreds of low tech ideas that can be easily made by parents, teachers, or other professionals.

www.lburkhart.com/handouts.htm While the entire Linda Burkhart site is well worth exploring, this page serves as an index for “Make it Yourself” directions and workshop handouts, including “Make Your Own Talking Switch”; “Make a Mouse House”; and “Computer Play: Using Computers with Young Children” and “What We Are Learning about Early Learners and Augmentative Communication and Assistive Technology”. You will find other pages related to “Simplified Technology for Children with Disabilities” on the site.

http://www.challengingbehavior.org/do/resources/teaching_tools/ttyc_toc.htm Find ideas for how to make schedule boards, do social stories, or use other types of AT to help young children with challenging behavior including those with PDD, autism, or other types of disabilities.

<http://sss.scoe.net/seeds/resources/at/at.html> California professionals working with infants and young children with disabilities have developed this resource which includes a tool-kit of items that can be made and used in early childhood classrooms – complete with the curriculum materials to support use of various devices. Modules to provide training about AT with young children are also included.

Where can I find software?

<http://www.switchintime.com/FreeStuff.html> (address is case sensitive) Free single switch software! (for Macintosh only). This site makes available the following titles: CDJuke Box, Scan ‘n Read, Single Switch Bingo, ClickIt! Collection, and SwitchHitter.

www.kidsdomain.com This site contains recommended software downloads for both PC and Mac, including shareware (inexpensive, usually between \$10-15), freeware, and demos. Programs are clearly described, and are grouped by age, e.g. “beginners”, “ages 2-5” and general topic, and the index is searchable. Kids Domain also includes icons and graphics for both PC and Mac that can be used for a variety of activities.

<http://www.kidsfreeware.com> This site features free downloadable software consisting of mostly simple programs that cause colors, sounds, pictures, or other stimuli to appear on the screen. While most need keyboard input, some of the programs also foster mouse use. Try it! <http://www.computogames.com/keyboard.html> is a similar site, worth checking out.

What other AT resources are available?

Assessment

The Communication Matrix

<http://www.communicationmatrix.org/WhatIs.aspx>

- Designed primarily for parents but good for professionals as well
- Yields comprehensive inventory of communication signals

Scanning/Visual Field/Print Size/Attention Screening Task

<http://aac.unl.edu/screen/wordscan.pdf>

- Aphasia assessment task

Assistive Technology Consideration Checklist

<http://www.gpat.org/resources.aspx?PageReq=GPATConsider>

- Framework for considering assistive technology
- Serves as documentation of the procedure used to consider assistive technology
- Addresses all instructional areas in which assistive technology may be required
- Addresses a continuum of assistive technology solutions as well as standard classroom tools, modifications, and accommodations that are currently in place to address the student's needs

Device Assistant

<http://www.aactechconnect.com/da.cfm>

- Information on close to 100 AAC devices currently on the market from major manufacturers
- Information is provided in cooperation with all of the manufacturers
- Use feature-match tool to search for AAC devices; Do side-by-side comparisons; Get specifications for up to 40 different categories for each device; Download multiple manufacturer's flyers from just one website
- FREE TRIAL (full featured but 14 days only)

AAC Assessment in Early Intervention

<http://online.sfsu.edu/~nancyr/assessment.html>

- Child focused assessment tools including a participation inventory
- Parent focused assessment tools including family rating scales
- Additional assessment tools including observing communication in context

Digital Pictures and Other Symbols

<http://www.freedigitalphotos.net>

- Royalty free

<http://www.imaginesymbols.com>

- Free but must register

<http://learningmagicinc.com>

- Click on goodies

<http://dotolearn.com>

- Click on picture cards - line drawings in 1" and 2" sizes; commercial products for sale as well

<http://www.pics4learning.com/>

- Free images

<http://bry-backmanor.org/>

- Also picture recipes!

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/Dictionary.html>

- Free images

Search Engines and Clip Art Sites

- www.google.com
- www.alltheweb.com
- www.picsearch.com
- www.gograph.com
- www.jupiterimages.com
- www.awesomeclipartforkids.com

PictureSET

<http://www.setbc.org/pictureset/>

- Collection of downloadable visual supports (PDF and Boardmaker files) that can be used by students for both receptive and expressive communication in the classroom, at home, and in the community (e.g. going to church; to the dentist).
- Includes some partner-assisted layouts (Porter)

Sing, See, and Sign

http://www.scopevic.org.au/therapy_crc_r&p_nrsss.htm

- Supporting the use of signs and symbols in the routine of nursery rhymes
- Some may be unfamiliar to Americans!
- Check that signs are the same as ASL

Miami-Dade PreK Program

<http://prekese.dadeschools.net/prekspedoverview.htm>

- Requires Boardmaker; Click on “resources”
- Interactive books (...net/BMD/interadctivestorybooks.html) including “I can do it”, “If you give a mouse a cookie”
- Schedule boards (...net/BMD/schedulesroutines.html)
- Overlays
- Story symbols (imported into BM)
- And much more!

Speaking of Speech – AugCom Materials

http://www.speakingofspeech.com/AugCom_Materials.html

- Materials in PDF format, so even if you don’t have Boardmaker...
- Includes topic-specific and routine-specific communication boards
- Social stories

Intervention How-Tos

Prentke Romich – Teaching Materials Exchange

<http://teaching.prentrom.com>

- Manufacturer specific – e.g. teaching icon sequences

<http://aac.unl.edu/intervention.html>

- How to create a visual display

<http://www.aacintervention.com/litboards.htm>

- How to create literature-based communication boards

Special Education Technology – British Columbia

<http://www.setbc.org>

- How to use routines and choice making in the classroom

Priory Woods School

<http://www.priorywoods.middlesbrough.sch.uk/>

- How-to make your own switch activities

Online Switch Games

Help Kidz Learn

<http://www.helpkidzlearn.com/>

- Free software for young children and those with learning difficulties to play online
- Software is split into four sections: Games and Quizzes; Stories and Songs; Creative Play; and Find Out About
- Software can be played using the space bar or a few other keys on your computer's keyboard
- Software can also be used with special switches, for children who are unable to use the keyboard

Priory Woods School

<http://www.priorywoods.middlesbrough.sch.uk/>

- Online switch games (see “KIDS ONLY” section)

Vocabulary

<http://aac.unl.edu/VLN1.html>

- Core, high frequency vocabulary (includes infants/toddlers, preschoolers[conversation])

<http://aac.unl.edu/VSPRE.html>

- Samples of preschooler “small talk”

Building Your AT Skills

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L4byQzr4u-Y>

- Device how-to videos on the web

Assistive Technology Training Online Project (ATTO)

<http://atto.buffalo.edu/>

- Information on AT applications that help students with disabilities learn in elementary classrooms
- Visit the websites of AT vendors for online tutorials of their products

Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA)

<http://www.atia.org>

- The “AT Education” section contains online webinars, information on conferences and other events

Prentke Romich’s AAC Language Lab

<http://www.aaclanguagelab.com/>

- Information on which PRC products to use during each language development stage and how to use them
- Language lesson plans for each language development stage with smart charts
- Teaching materials exchange - the best therapy materials from PRC's Teaching Materials Exchange have been selected to support learning in each of the language stages. These materials provide extra practice along with fun games, books, and Power Point activities.
- Unity Curriculum - teaching tool written by Jean Walsh, a special educator, especially for teaching the icon sequences in Unity with an emphasis on how to teach the metaphors associated with the icons.

Teaching Others about AT

Miami-Dade PreK Program

<http://prekese.dadeschools.net/powerpoint.html>

- Teaching others about AT
- Check out the powerpoints on AT for seating, positioning and mobility

One Voice - "why AAC matters"

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Cw2Fp_Tlfc

- Teaching OTHERS about AAC through video

“In my language” (autism)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JnylM1hI2jc>

- Teaching OTHERS about AAC through video

AAC-RERC

www.aac-rerc.org

- Janice Light webcasts (1) on evidence-based practices to maximize the literacy skills of individuals who use AAC. Case studies (including videos of young children) illustrate effective interventions ;(2) AAC Interventions to Maximize Language Development for Young Children
- Manufacturers have video clips on their site (and often, on YouTube as well!) demonstrating THEIR device in use and the impact on people with complex communication needs

More Inspiration on AT and Adaptations

Miami-Dade PreK Program

<http://prekese.dadeschools.net/adaptationstation.html>

- Prewriting, play, participation, and more! (includes both do-it-yourself and commercial solutions)

Tots-n-Tech

<http://tnt.asu.edu/>

- Solutions by function, downloadable instruction sheets

Adaptivation

<http://www.adaptivation.com/>

- Photo album of ideas with pictures of practical applications that can be used in the classroom or at home.
- Manuals for some AT products
- Sample AT activity ideas from the resource book Recipes for Success Remixed (see the “Resources” page)
- Informational handouts on scanning, sequencing, etc. (see the “Resources” page)

Baltimore County Public Schools – Assistive Technology Resources

<http://www.bcps.org/offices/assistechnology/resources.html>

- Handouts, presentations, resource links, and adapted curriculum materials relating to communication

Priory Woods School

<http://www.priorywoods.middlesbrough.sch.uk/>

- Lesson plans, teaching ideas, interactive talking story books, simple programs and more (see “RESOURCES” section)

Funding Resources

www.aacfundinghelp.com

- Website of the AT Law Center (Lew Golinker); comprehensive information re: insurance; Medicare; FAQs

AAC-RERC

www.aac-rerc.com

- Everything you need to know about Medicare coverage and funding for SGDs
- Even if you are not involved with Medicare, there is excellent guidance for assessment and funding requests

Disability Rights Network of PA

www.drnpa.org

- Check out key AT publications, including MA appeals

Neighborhood Legal Services

www.nls.org

- Website of Neighborhood Legal Services of NY and the home of the National AT Advocacy Project
- Publications address special education, Medicaid, and more

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

www.asha.org

- ASHA has general information about coverage for services under Medicaid
- Several AAC manufacturers have funding departments and may have report writing “tools” or forms on line (e.g. PRC Funding Assistant; Dynavox Funding Manager, ACCI)

The Communication Bill of Rights

<http://www.scopevic.org.au/bill%20of%20rights.pdf>

- Post this where people with complex communication needs live, learn, and work!

Online “Communities”

- For ASHA Division 12 Members: Division 12 listserv
- ACOLUG (go to <http://disabilities.temple.edu> keyword ACOLUG for directions to sign on)
- www.CommunicatePA.wikispaces.com
- Speaking of Speech http://www.speakingofspeech.com/Preschool_Page.html discussion board
- Yahoo groups and more!

Resources for Re-use

- Craig’s List
- Ebay
- <http://disabilities.temple.edu/programs/assistive/reep/>
 - Agencies and organizations across the state that partner with PIAT to establish/maintain facilities where AT that is no longer needed can be dropped off – and AT that is needed can be picked up (usually at no charge).
 - Includes link to the Reused and Exchanged Equipment Partnership Online Classifieds
- www.passitoncenter.org

Device Lending

Pennsylvania's Assistive Technology Lending Library

<http://disabilities.temple.edu/programs/assistive/atlend/>

- Free service that loans assistive technology devices to people with disabilities. It's available to Pennsylvanians of all ages and disabilities

Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network Short Term Loan Program

<http://www.pattan.net/supportingstudents/shorttermloan.aspx>

- Library of assistive technology and resource materials available to local educational agencies (LEAs) for trial and evaluation
- Provides assistive technology and resource materials to educators
- Provides LEAs with the tools to effectively assess and evaluate the assistive technology needs of students

Tot's-n-Tech Resource Brief 4 – How to Start a Lending Library

<http://tnt.asu.edu/practical-resources/briefs>

- Provides strategies and resources for starting a lending library

Borrowing From the PaTTAN Short Term Loan Program

- Any school district/early intervention program can participate in the PaTTAN Short Term Loan Program.
- To borrow a Short Term Loan (STL) Kit, complete the Request Form and mail, email (form is available on the website at www.pattan.net), or fax the request form to the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) – the address and fax number can be found on the form. To receive assistance in determining the STL kit you want to try, contact the assistive technology consultant at your local intermediate unit (consultant directory on PaTTAN website on AT webpage under Publications).
- The requested STL kit will be shipped to you as soon as it becomes available. STL kits are typically available for six weeks, but the length of the loan may be customized based on the individual's needs.
- All STL kits are shipped via UPS in mailing cases, shipping envelopes, or cardboard boxes. Keep all shipping materials for return shipment to the PaTTAN Short Term Loan Program.
- When the STL kit arrives, NOTE THE DUE DATE (ON FLUORESCENT PAPER) AND verify that the contents match the inventory sheet. Immediately contact the Short Term Loan Program if concerns arise.
- To inquire about the possibility of extending the loan, contact the Short Term Loan department NO LATER than one week prior to the due date.
- The day before the due date, repack the STL kit. Once again, VERIFY THAT THE CONTENTS MATCH THE INVENTORY SHEET. Return the STL kit to the place where UPS dropped it off originally.
- UPS will pick up the STL kit at the delivery location – there are no exceptions. If UPS does not pick up the kit within five days of the due date, please contact the Short Term Loan Program immediately at 800-360-7282 ext. 3506, or by email, stl@pattan.net.

Borrowing From Pennsylvania's Assistive Technology Lending Library (ATLL)

- Identify the Assistive Technology Resource Center (ATRC) that serves your county, or the local branch of Pennsylvania's Assistive Technology Lending Library nearest to you. To find your local branch or ATRC, contact Pennsylvania's Initiative on Assistive Technology, Institute on Disabilities at Temple University, 800-204-7428 (voice); 866-268-0579 (TTY); 215-204-9371, fax; atlend@temple.edu (e-mail), or check the web site at <http://disabilities.temple.edu/atlend>.
- You have a choice of using an online "loan cart" (available while browsing the library inventory) and online form to complete the request items before printing, signing, and submitting to your ATRC. If filling the form out online is not convenient, you can also print the English, Spanish, or large print versions before completing the form. Be sure to fill it out **thoroughly**. If you don't know what assistive technology devices can help, contact your ATRC for assistance.

- To begin the processing, you may FAX the form to your ATRC. However, the item will not be shipped to you until the form with original signatures has been received by the ATRC. Unfortunately, we are not able to accept electronic signatures at this time.
- If the device is being shipped to/picked up from a large facility, SPECIFY THE EXACT ROOM / LOCATION / PERSON to whom it should be delivered / picked up from. Remember that delays in shipping or pick up mean delays for Pennsylvanians with disabilities waiting for assistive technology!
- You will be notified of an **approximate** date on which the device will be shipped to you (via UPS). If the item is not immediately available, you will be informed that you will be placed on the waiting list for the item. The ATRC contact person may have ideas about other places to see or rent the item, or suggest similar items to borrow in the meantime.
- When you receive the item, please check the contents. If you notice that a part is not included or an item is broken, report it immediately to the “circulating department” of the Lending Library (at the Hiram G. Andrews Center in Johnstown, PA), as per instructions in the kit. *If a missing item is reported upon receipt, you will not be responsible for replacing it.*
- When you are ready to return the device, please check the contents of the kit. **You will be responsible for ANY missing items.** In addition, please remember that incomplete returns mean delays for Pennsylvanians with disabilities who are waiting to borrow the item!

Early Intervention Kits available from PaTTAN - short term loan.

For a more detailed list of available kits check website – www.pattan.net - short term loan

All Turn It Spinner

Auditory-Oral for Early Intervention Resource Kit

Big Mack Switch

Bilingual-Bicultural Resource Kit

Buddy Button Switch

Busy Box - Finger Isolation Busy Box

Busy Box Kit

Busy Box Traffic Light

Calendar Box

Cap Switch

CheapTalk 4

CheapTalk 8

Cochlear Implants Resource Kit

Compartment Communicator with Speech –

3 Compartments

Cued Speech

EI Adapted Toy Start-Up Kit

Environmental Control Unit

Eye Brow Switch

Eye Talk (Eye Gaze Board)

Go Talk

Grip Switch

Hawk: Black Hawk

Hawk: Super Hawk

Hawk: Super Hawk Six

Hip Talk - 1 Message

Hip Talk - 4 Message

Hip Talk - 10 Message

Hip Talk - 16 Message

InfraRed / Sound / Touch Switch

Intellikeys - Mac

Intellikeys - USB

Intellikeys - IMac

Introduction to Auditory-Verbal for Early
Intervention Resource Kit

Italk2 Communication Aid

Jelly Beamer Wireless Switch

Jelly Bean Switch

Jelly Bean & Big Red Switches

Jelly Bean Switch & Holder

Language Enrichment Activities

Program/Learning by LEAPS and Bounds

Language for Learning

Large Target Area Switch Kit

Leaf Switch

Light Touch Switch

Lighted Plate Switch

Light Pressure Switch Kit

Lingo Wearable Communication Aid

Macaw

Message Mate 20
Message Mate 40
Mini Message Mate
Mini Rocking Lever Switch
Mounting Switch (Cheek Switch)
Object Stand Communication Board
One Step Communicator
Overview of Communication Approaches
Resource Kit
P-Switch
Pinch Switch
Plate Switch
Powerlink
Pull Switch
Say It Rocking Switch Plate
Scanning Ultra 4
Sensor Switch
Small Target Area Switch Kit
Soft Red Switch
Step by Step Communicator
Switch Latch Kit
Switch Latch Timer Kit
Taction Pad Switch Kit
TechTalk - 8 Locations
TechSpeak - 32 Locations
Texture Switch - Small
Texture Switch - Medium
Texture Switch - Large
Thumb Switch
Tilt Switch
Total Communication Resource Kit
TouchWindow - IMac
TouchWindow - Mac
TouchWindow - IBM
TouchWindow for 17" Monitor (USB) - Mac/IBM
TouchWindow for 17" Monitor - IBM
Tread Switch
Variable pressure Button Switch
VoicePal Max
Voice Pal Plus
Ultimate Switch
Vibrating Plate Switch
Voice Activated Switch
Wobble Switch

Examples of Early Intervention Kits

(These kits are made up of items that work together including switches, toys, adaptors and/or switch latch timers.)

2 Switch Operation Kit

This includes:

Switches:

Double Touch Switch
2 Jelly Bean Switches (blue & red)
2 Bass Switches (green & blue)
Left/Right Rocker Switch

Toy:

Adapted Cooking Toy

Other:

Switch Tester

EI Adapted Toy Start-Up Kit

This includes:

Toys:

Happy Chorus
Robbie Rabbit Toy
Lovely Puppy Fan
3 Plate Busy Box
Star Challenger
Music Box Radio

Switches:

String Switch
Big Red Switch
Green Bass Switch
Blue Plate Switch

Other:

¼ to 1/8" adapter
Powerlink 2
Powerlink 2 User's Manual

Switch Latch Timer Kit

This includes:

Switches:

Black Jelly Bean Switch
Read Bass Switch

Toys:

Giraffe Ring Toss Game
Bert & Ernie Car

Other:

Switch Latch/Timer
Battery Adapter
¼" to 1/8" adapter

Light Pressure Switch Kit

This includes:

Switches:

Touch Switch
Leaf Switch
Green plate switch
Easy Action Hand Switch
Green Soft Switch
Ellipse 3 Switch

Toy:

Lovely Puppy Fan

Other:

1/8" to ¼" adapter