

Assistive Technology Consideration

As part of the Special Factors requirement in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004, for each child in special education, every individualized education program (IEP) team is required to *consider* a child's need for assistive technology (AT).

This requirement leaves us with several questions: What does it mean to *consider*? How will every IEP team do that? What is the difference between consideration and assessment?

In thinking about consideration, some things are pretty clear. First, *consideration* is a brief process, one that can take place within every IEP meeting and should not be confused with an *evaluation*. Second, in order to consider the need for assistive technology, at least one person on the IEP team must have some knowledge about assistive technology. You cannot consider something that you know nothing about.

Here are possible decisions an IEP team can make:

- AT is not needed. The student is making adequate progress through task modification, skill remediation, or other interventions specified on the IEP. Nothing new is needed for this student.
- AT is needed and is successfully being used, as determined most often through an Assistive Technology Decision-Making Process (ATDMP). In this case, it is appropriate to list particular AT services and devices on the IEP, being careful to include enough detail of features and device categories needed. You may choose not to specify the brand name, as this may limit your options.
- AT may be needed, but the IEP team is unsure what service or device would meet the student's needs. The team may decide that new AT should be tried and additional data should be collected to determine what an appropriate service or product might be. The ATDMP is initiated. The team may access additional resources outside of the local district.