



**TN-TAN**

TENNESSEE TECHNICAL  
ASSISTANCE NETWORK

# Assistive Technology in the IEP

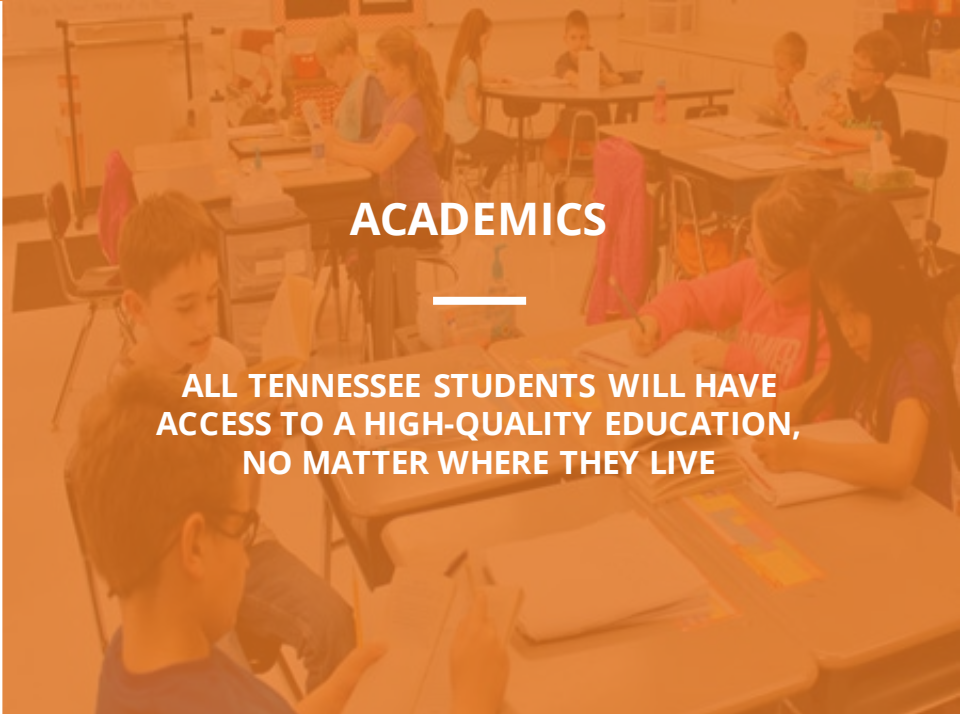
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Saskia, Splane





# BEST FOR ALL

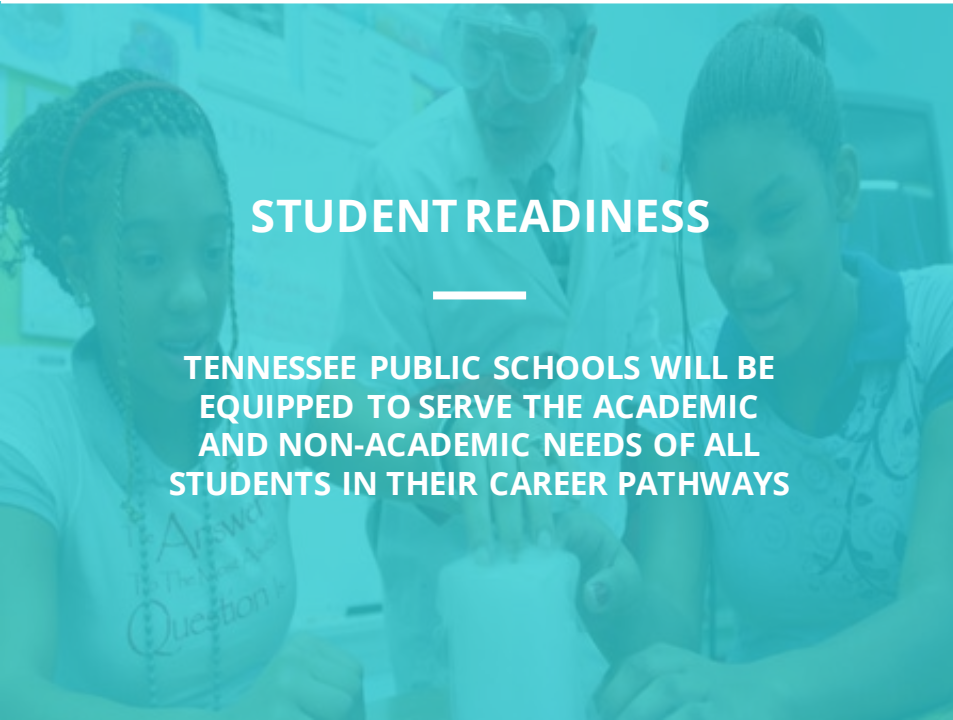
We will set all students on a path to success.



## ACADEMICS

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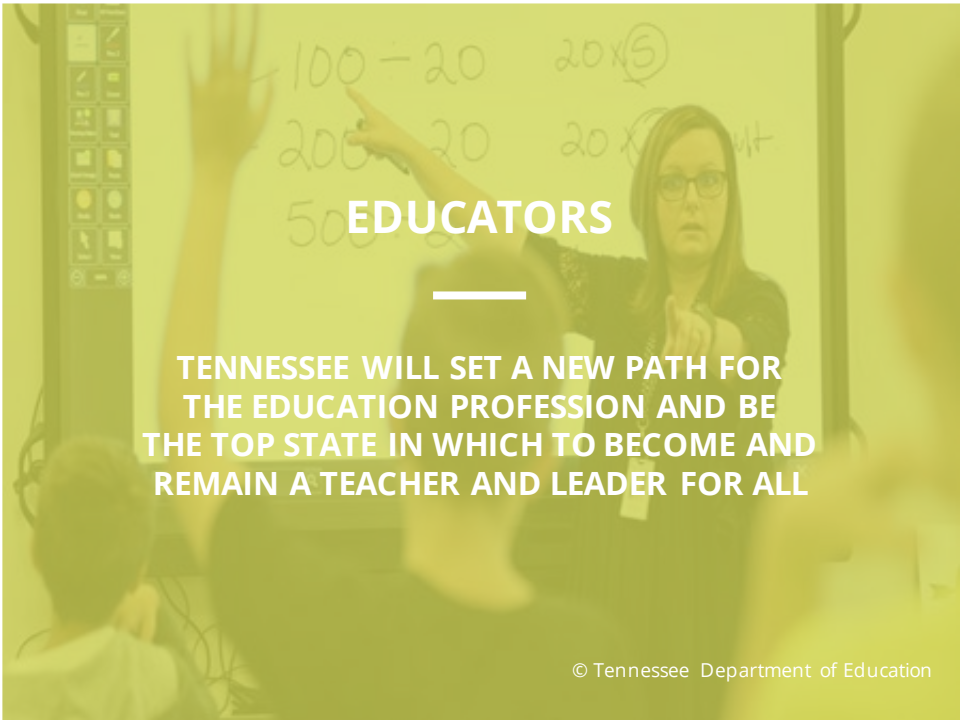
ALL TENNESSEE STUDENTS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION, NO MATTER WHERE THEY LIVE



## STUDENT READINESS

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TENNESSEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS WILL BE EQUIPPED TO SERVE THE ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS IN THEIR CAREER PATHWAYS



## EDUCATORS

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TENNESSEE WILL SET A NEW PATH FOR THE EDUCATION PROFESSION AND BE THE TOP STATE IN WHICH TO BECOME AND REMAIN A TEACHER AND LEADER FOR ALL



# Tennessee Technical Assistance Network (TN-TAN)

provides school districts, administrators, educators, and families access to high-quality training, resources, and supports designed to improve outcomes for students with disabilities, ages 3-22.

## **Intensive Behavior**

TRIAD at Vanderbilt University Medical Center provides technical assistance for complex behavior support needs and associated training. Supports include direct instruction for staff on behavior assessment and intervention implementation, as well as ongoing coaching to help students engage within their least restrictive environments.

## **Preschool**

AnLar assists in building capacity and systems to support meaningful access to preschool for students with disabilities. Supports include strategic action planning, professional development, leadership coaching, preschool program evaluation and support implementing evidence-based practices in inclusive settings.

## **RTI<sup>2</sup>-A+RTI<sup>2</sup>-B**

Tennessee Tiered Supports Center assists districts and schools as they build and implement an aligned student support system. The center provides training, coaching, and resources for building an aligned framework for tiered academic and behavioral supports.

## **Autism**

TRIAD at Vanderbilt University Medical Center provides training, consultation, and coaching services designed to support educators in their classrooms and develop school and system-wide supports to address needs specific to students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

## **Assistive Technology**

The Assistive Technology Project (ATP) assists districts and staff in building capacity to provide assistive technology supports for students with disabilities. Supports include strategic action planning, professional development, direct coaching for staff, and access to AT equipment-lending libraries for assessment trials.

## **Secondary Transition**

Transition Tennessee provides a range of services to transition stakeholders to improve in-school and post-school outcomes for transition-aged students (14-22) with disabilities. Supports include tiered technical assistance for in-school transition stakeholders and resources and services specific to educator and family needs.

# Disclosures

## Financial Disclosures:

All speakers are employed by the Little Tennessee Valley Educational Cooperative in support of the Tennessee Assistive Technology Project (TN-ATP). Federal funding for this program is provided through a Tennessee Department of Education contract.

## Non-financial Disclosures:

There are none to report.





# Agenda

- What is assistive technology (AT)?
- Incorporating Assistive Technology in the IEP?
- How, when, and where is AT considered and documented in the IEP?
- Frequently asked questions

# What is AT?



# What is Assistive Technology (AT)?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) defines an assistive technology device as:

*“[A]ny 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 a child with a disability.”*

[34 C.F.R. § 300.5](#)



# IDEA Definition

*Any piece of equipment that helps a person with a disability increase, maintain, or improve their functional capabilities. See [34 C.F.R. § 300.5](#).*

- Options include electronic and non-electronic tools, hardware and software, devices, or equipment. These may be purchased, adapted, or fabricated.
- AT does **not** include a medical device that is surgically implanted or the replacement of such a device.
  - Example: cochlear implant





# What are AT Services?

*“[A]ny service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device.”*

[34 C.F.R. § 300.6](#)

School-based services might include

- evaluating assistive technology needs,
- purchasing/funding equipment,
- selecting, fitting, or repairing devices, and
- training the student, family, school staff, and others in the use of the recommended tools and supports.



# Incorporating AT in IEPs



# AT Pitfalls

- IEP teams are unsure of how to include AT in IEPs.
- IEPs including AT use a formulaic approach to documentation.
- AT is included in the IEP, but the relationship to goals and objectives is unclear.
- AT devices are included in the IEP, but no AT services support the use.
- AT expected results are not measurable or observable.



# Quality Indicators for AT in the IEP

#1 The district has guidelines for documenting AT needs in the IEP and staff are aware of them (ensuring consistency).

#2 Implementation support is documented by including all devices **and services** that the IEP team determines are needed.

#3 The IEP illustrates that AT is **a tool to support achievement of goals** and progress in the general curriculum, showing a clear relationship between student needs, AT devices and services, and the student's goals and objectives.

#4 The IEP content describes how assistive technology contributes to achievement of **measurable and observable outcomes**.

#5 Devices and services are documented and are used to consistently address student needs and achieve expected results.

Source: Bowser, G., Carl, D. F., & Fonner, K. S. (2015). *Quality indicators for assistive technology: A comprehensive guide to assistive technology services*. CAST Professional Publishing.



# Considerations and Documentation of AT in the IEP



# Consideration of AT in the IEP

- What are access points and barriers for the student?
- Which assistive technology tools and/or services would improve educational access?
- What training would the student need to successfully implement the AT tools?
- What method of data will be used to ensure the AT is effective?
- Who will provide support and training across the educational setting?



# Considering AT in the IEP

- IEP teams must consider assistive technology **annually**. See [34 C.F.R. § 300.324\(a\)\(2\)\(v\), - .324\(b\)\(1\)\(i\)](#).
  - Type of AT considered (be descriptive)
- Descriptive Information and Consideration of Special Factors in TN PULSE

# Consideration of AT in the IEP, cont.

What if the IEP team is considering AT but is unsure of what is necessary?

- The consideration process can be extended until the most appropriate AT tools/devices are identified.
- The IEP team can document this consideration process.

**Example statement:** *“Additional information is needed regarding appropriate access methods for alternative communication. Further trials with a variety of access methods will be completed and team will meet again to discuss results.”*

If, after trialing AT, the team is still unsure what would be the most successful for the student, the team could consider an AT evaluation.





# Considering AT in TN PULSE



Assistive Technology must be considered for all students regardless of disability area. [https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/special-education/Assistive\\_Technology\\_2021.pdf](https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/special-education/Assistive_Technology_2021.pdf)

5. Is assistive technology necessary for the student to access and participate across all educational settings? (Consider AT needs across the domains of cognitive and academic, adaptive, communication, physical, and social-emotional). If yes, you must enter the AT device/equipment in the Add AT section within Supplementary Aids, Services and LRE.

Yes  No

5a. Describe the AT considerations:

Provide a description of AT that the IEP team considered

If the team selects “yes” that assistive technology is needed for the student to access the educational environment, a description of the AT is needed.



# AT in Multiple Sections of the IEP

- Within present levels of academic achievement and functional performance
- Within measurable annual goals
- As a related service
- Within supplementary aids, services, and LRE

# Describing AT in Present Levels

- Include assistive technology in the student's present level of academic achievement and functional performance.
  - Current data about type and effectiveness of AT support
  - Include all types of AT used
  - AT can be included in multiple areas of present levels such as language, reading, math, prevocational, or speech.

# Describing AT in Present Levels



**EXAMPLE:** John continues to use the Bookshare program on his laptop to access reading materials with read-aloud support.

**EXAMPLE:** John has shown good progress with reading skill and no longer needs read-aloud support provided by Bookshare.

**EXAMPLE:** Lisa is able to engage effectively in class using the printed communication pages provided by speech therapy.

**EXAMPLE:** Lisa needs an AAC assessment to identify a more robust means of communication as the printed pages no longer meet her needs.

Indicate if the student's current AT is **effective** or **not effective** (and why)



# Describing AT in IEP Goals



The use of AT should be integrated into the tasks that support goal achievement.

- Using **voice dictation software**, student will compose sentences with five or more words in response to writing prompts with 80% accuracy.
- Student will use **multiple modes of communication (gestures and visual supports)** to provide responses to math problems three times daily with minimal prompting.
- Student will engage with play-based activities during center time without assistance by **activating toys with adaptive switches** twice daily, four out of five days/week.
- Given multimodal communication opportunities and consistent modeling, student **will use a dynamic display communication device** to participate in a conversational exchange at least once a day, four out of five days per week, as documented by teacher data and observation.

*Note: Examples provided for training purposes.*



# AT and Operational Goals

- Consider if the AT tool/device has operational skills that a student may need to learn.
- Operational skills might be included in goals
- Examples of operational skills
  - Keyboard layout
  - Turning a device on/off
  - Controlling the volume button

# Describing AT as a Related Service

- When considering AT as a related service, the IEP team can review:
  - training needed for student, staff, and family
  - who will complete the training/s
  - who schedules the training/s
  - AT location/s

# Describing AT in Supplementary Aids

Support(s) or training needed by school personnel in order to support the student in their goal(s)

(e.g., training on the intervention provided to paraprofessionals, training on an alternative communication system)

Describe training needed for school staff in order to help support the student. Provide information about who will do the training and the training needed. |

Assistive Technology

ADD ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

1. Type of AT Tool/Device
2. Provider Responsible
3. Description of the AT Tool/Device
4. Dates of AT Tool/Device usage
5. Location/s where AT should be used





# Other Considerations

- AT can be included in a student's strength
- AT provides adaptive access to an activity, it does NOT modify the activity or invalidate the construct being tested.
- Ensure consistent access to AT
- Consider AT during transition

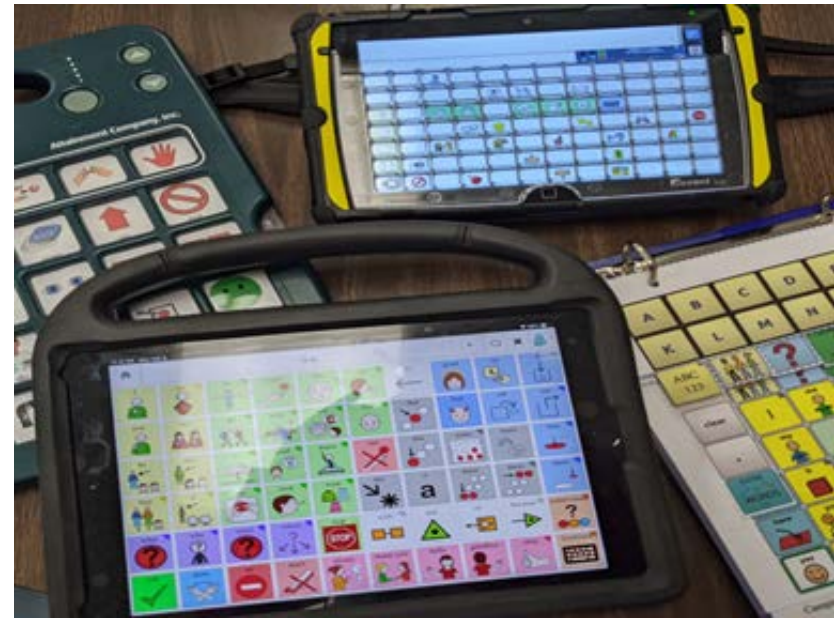
# Frequently Asked Questions



# Can I name the device by brand?

Any device owned and used by the student should be included by name.

Other AT supports should be described according to their comparable features and not necessarily by brand name.



Caution: If the child has a specific feature that would make changing to a different product difficult, the team may consider identifying the product by name to assure consistency.

\*Student uses a word prediction software program for composing written content.

\*Student uses a dynamic display communication system with 30-word icon display and high contrast symbols to increase expressive language during academic and non-academic activities.

# What are some options when the AT is broken or remains at home?

- The IEP team can document the situation and provide alternative devices with similar features as backup support.
- Ensure the student's IEP has a robust description of the AT tools/devices needed for educational access.
- The district is still obligated to provide FAPE.



## Should AT be sent home with the student?

IDEA states that, “*On a case-by-case basis, the use of school-purchased assistive technology devices in a child’s home or in other settings is required if the child’s IEP team determines that the child needs access to those devices in order to receive FAPE.*” [34 C.F.R. § 300.105\(b\)](#).

**Example:** a student using AAC will need access across all environments to communicate



# What about personal AT tools?

- What if the AT tool is a personal AT tool that the family owns
  - Document in the present levels whether the AT is personally owned or school-owned.
  - Districts cannot require that personally-owned AT be used at school if the family does not want it used at school.
  - IEP teams should consider who is responsible for the maintenance and repair of the personally owned AT.



# What about informational technology?

There are many pieces of technology that are universally accessible (e.g., immersive reader).

Informational technology can be considered assistive technology if the program, support, or device is necessary for the student to access the educational setting and curriculum.



# Closing Thoughts





# Resources

- [Special Education Framework Updated August 2018](#)
- [TN AT Project Wakelet Resources](#)





# Thank You!

## Questions?

Please contact us at [tnatproject@gmail.com](mailto:tnatproject@gmail.com)

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# TN-TAN End of Session Survey



TESS-Full

Please complete the evaluation survey using the following link or scanning the QR code:

[https://kusurvey.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_085eZrS8I4jZIIC](https://kusurvey.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_085eZrS8I4jZIIC)



## Required Information:

- Event Title:
  - AT in the IEP
- Learning Objectives:
  - Learning Objective 1: Identify the IEP requirements regarding assistive technology
  - Learning Objective 2: Review of AT consideration process
  - Learning Objective 3: Describe how, when, and where to document AT in the IEP



# Tuesday-Thursday Please Share Your Feedback:

You may access the PD by navigating here:

[https://stateoftennessee.formstack.com/forms/2023fpi\\_pd\\_survey](https://stateoftennessee.formstack.com/forms/2023fpi_pd_survey)

