

Documenting Assistive Technology in the IEP

As mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Individual Educational Program (IEP) teams must document the student's need for assistive technology devices and services within the IEP. Assistive technology may be addressed in one or more components of the IEP. The need for assistive technology may be addressed in the present levels of performance, in the listing of special education and related services, and in the annual goals, benchmarks, and objectives. Assistive technology may also be addressed in the supplementary aids and services section, in the modifications required for participation in statewide and district wide assessments, and in the modifications and supports required for school personnel. Assistive technology must always be addressed in the consideration of special factors component of the IEP.

The following information is provided to assist IEP with the documentation of assistive technology devices and services:

Present Levels of Performance:

Assistive technology is frequently addressed in the present levels of performance component of the IEP. This section provides a natural place to address assistive technology needs as an integral part of the student's curriculum taking into account the student's strengths as well as weaknesses. When documenting assistive technology in the present performance levels, the type of technology that is needed as well as the manner in which it will be used should be described. The following are examples of how assistive technology may be addressed in the present performance levels of the IEP:

John exhibits a severe expressive communication impairment. He communicates with peers and adults within his environment using vocalizations and a voice output augmentative communication device. He uses the augmentative communication device in all educational settings and appropriate vocabulary is programmed for each setting.

Due to her significant visual impairment, Susan is not able to see standard print instructional materials such as textbooks, worksheets, and written tests. She requires that all print copies be enlarged through the use of a photocopier or closed circuit television system.

Consideration of Special Factors:

Assistive technology is one of the special factors that must be addressed in the development, review, and revision of each student's IEP. Minimal compliance with the requirement to consider assistive technology is responding to the statement in the IEP which states "Does the student require assistive technology devices and services? ___Yes ___No If yes, describe: _____". If the IEP team determines that the student requires assistive technology, then the IEP must include a description of the assistive technology that is required.

The following are examples of how assistive technology may be addressed in the consideration of special factors:

Does the student require assistive technology devices and services? X Yes
___No If yes, describe: Johns requires the use of a talking calculator for all math activities that require calculation.

Does the student require assistive technology devices and services? X Yes
___No If yes, describe: Paula needs access to adaptive seating and positioning equipment (prone stander, wedge) in her classes in order to participate in her educational program.

Does the student require assistive technology devices and services? X Yes
 No If yes, describe: Karen uses an augmentative communication device with speech output to supplement her current communication skills. See present performance levels and annual goals and objectives for additional information.

Listing of Special Education and Related Services:

Assistive technology may also be addressed in the special education and related services component of the IEP. Typically assistive technology is provided as a part of the student's special education and related services and assistive technology devices and services are addressed within these services. There may be times however when assistive technology needs should be addressed separately. The following are examples of how IEP teams may address assistive technology in this component of the IEP:

Speech-Language Therapy	1 hour per week	8-15-00 through 6-10-01
Or		
Speech-Language Therapy (including training in augmentative communication device)	1 hour per week	8-15-00 through 6-10-01

Supplementary Aids and Services:

Assistive technology may also be addressed in the supplemental aids and services component of the IEP. Assistive technology is often provided as a supplemental aid and service when it is required for the children to function in the general education setting. The following are examples of how assistive technology may be addressed in the supplemental aids and services section:

Shaunda will have access to a portable word processor for all note taking in her general education classes.

Kendra will have access to a calculator for all math activities in her general education classes.

Modifications Needed for Participation in State-wide and District-wide Assessments:

With the re-authorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the IEP team must address the modifications that the student requires in order to participate in state-wide and district-wide assessments. For some students with disabilities, assistive technology may be a required modification. The following examples are provided to assist the IEP team in addressing assistive technology in this component of the IEP:

When participating in group testing situations, Marcus should wear his auditory trainer to optimize his ability to listen to verbal directions provided by the teacher.

Due to her severe visual impairment, Shantae requires that all testing materials including directions, if appropriate, and answer sheets should be provided to her in Braille.

In order to participate in tests that require a written response of greater than one paragraph, Stephen needs to use his portable word processor.

Instructional Modifications or Supports for School Personnel:

When addressing assistive technology, IEP teams should document the instructional modifications that the student needs in order to participate in and benefit from his or her educational programs. Additionally, the IEP team should address the supports that the school staff requires in order for them to effectively provide assistive technology devices and services to the student. The following are examples of how assistive technology should be addressed in this section of the IEP:

Paul's teachers will receive training in the use and programming of his augmentative communication device.

Kelly's special education and general education teachers will be provided with follow-up training and technical assistance as needed to aid them in integrating the use of her assistive technology devices (spell checker, word processor) into her school curriculum.

Annual Goals, Benchmarks, and Objectives:

When developing annual goals, benchmarks, and objectives, the IEP team should determine whether or not the student requires assistive technology in order to accomplish them. First the goals should be developed and then the need for assistive technology should be addressed. Assistive technology is not the goal. Rather, it is the means to achieving the goal for many students. The following examples are provided to assist IEP teams in addressing assistive technology in this section of the IEP:

Susie will express basic wants and needs in 80% of the opportunities using single word utterances and a voice output augmentative communication system.

John will compose a three or more sentence paragraph with less than two spelling errors when using a hand-held spellchecker.

Statement of Transition Services:

When addressing transition services required by the student, it is important to address assistive technology devices and services needed by the student and, when appropriate, to address assistive technology that may be required in post-secondary environments. The following is an example of how assistive technology may be addressed in this section of the IEP.

Colin's school staff, vocational rehabilitation counselor, and family will contact public and private agencies to assist him in obtaining funding for a communication device that can be used after he graduates from school. They will begin contacting agencies at the beginning of his senior year. The vocational rehabilitation counselor will identify potential sources to technical support that will be available to Colin after he graduates.

Minutes of the IEP Meeting:

The need for assistive technology devices and services may also be addressed in the minutes of the IEP meeting. Examples of statements regarding assistive technology are listed below:

The committee members present discussed Donnita's recent assistive technology assessment. Based on the recommendations of the assessment and her classroom performance, it was recommended that she needs to have access to her augmentative communication device in all school settings.

Analysis of the tasks required within all relevant instructional areas reveals that Carleta does not require assistive technology. She can accomplish all tasks independently using standard classroom tools.

Summary:

The IEP is a powerful document for ensuring that students with disabilities have access to the assistive technology devices and services that they need to participate in and benefit from their educational programs. Assistive technology devices and services required by a student with a disability should be clearly documented in the student's IEP. The type of technology that the student requires and the manner in which it will be used should be specified so that all parties to the IEP, including parents, have a clear understanding of the technology and how it will be used. Once assistive technology has been documented in the IEP, it should be provided in the manner in which it was specified.