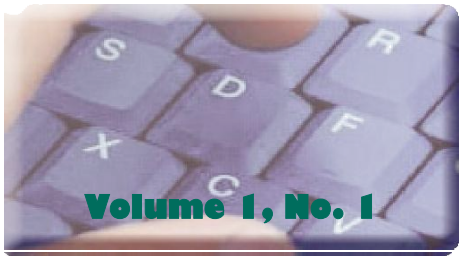


Assistive Technology Newsletter

Tech Talk

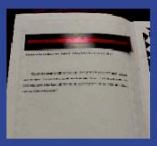
Helping students learn to their full potential

St. Paul Public Schools
Independent District #625
360 Colborne Street 55103

Using AT at Home

Visual Schedule

Organize your child's day with a visual schedule of the day's activities.



Reading Strip

A reading strip may help your child read.

Digital Books

Your child may read more independently with digital books.

Assistive technology can help your child in class, at home

What is assistive technology?

Public schools are required to provide assistive technology for students if needed to meet their educational goals. Federal law (IDEA 1997) defines an assistive technology device as the following:

"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 a child with a disability." -20 USC 1401 (1)

This definition is broad, but clearly, it identifies assistive technology as something that helps a child become more capable. Technology can help children who have disabilities do things that others can do without technology. When it is used this way, it is considered assistive technology. Assistive technology can be anything from a pencil grip to a computer system. Assistive technology can help children be more independent, more productive and have a better quality of life.

How can assistive technology help my child?

If school tasks are hard for your child, standard classroom tools and instructional strategies can help. If those aren't working, there are many assistive technology tools that can help with school tasks. These range from something as simple as the kind of paper used to high tech gadgets for writing.

Let's look at specific subjects to see how assistive technology tools can be used to help a student.

Reading

Reading tools include colored overlays, reading windows, line markers, hand-held talking dictionaries, and audio books (on computer or portable devices). Electronic tools can adjust text size, color and spacing of the text. Highlighting programs, text-to-speech support, online textbooks with audio support, and web-based tools also may be helpful reading tools.

Writing

Writing tools include low-tech tools like pencil grips, adapted paper, and hand-held spellers. High-tech tools include word processing with audio support, word prediction, visual organization and voice dictation programs (on computer or portable devices).

Math

Students who have difficulty with math may benefit from the following AT tools: abacus, number line, graph paper, talking calculator with large keys and large display, or onscreen calculator. Computer and other hand-held devices with math software also can be helpful.

Assistive tech–*continued on back*

Assistive tech–*continued*

Organization & Studying

Organization is important for many daily school tasks and assignments. Tools such as visual schedules, folder systems, and planners can help students stay focused, remember assignments, and stay organized. Graphic organizers, highlighters and sticky notes can help students study and remember information more success-fully. Other electronic tools can help students take notes and organize their schoolwork more effectively.

Communication

There are many low-tech tools to help students communicate including picture systems and object symbols. Many high-tech speech-generating devices also are helpful for students who need to clarify their speech or who communicate through augmentative communication.

Hearing, Vision & Physical Aids

Low and high tech tools to assist with vision and needs include hand-held magnifiers, computer screen readers and digital books in Braille and audio displays. Assistive devices to help with hearing include hearing aids, FM systems, and C-Print speech to text systems.

Aids to Daily Living

Students may need assistive tech-neology to participate in activities in their daily lives. Some examples of these aids to daily living include switch-activated toys, Velcro fasteners, seating systems, adapted lockers or utensils, and hands-free controls.

If you'd like to learn more about your child's need for assistive technology, contact your child's case manager. The annual IEP meeting is a good time to consider assistive technology and find out whether or not it may be needed to meet IEP goals and objectives.

For more information about the assistive technology consideration process in St. Paul go to

Specialed.spps.org/AT_in_IEP.html

St. Paul Public Schools has had an Assistive Technology Team since 1989. The Assistive Technology Team provides consultation to child student teams in considering the range of assistive technology options for student IEP needs using the SETT process and the AT Consideration guide. Experienced Vision and Hearing teams also consult with child study teams to consider student needs for assistive technology.

SETT framework helps IEP team make decisions

SETT is a tool to help IEP/IFSP teams gather and organize information. It is used when making decisions to help students meet IEP goals and objectives.

SETT stands for Students, Environments, Tasks, and Tools. When the team considers the Student, they look at the student's strengths and areas of concern. When looking at the Environment, the team considers the school settings for the student and looks for possible barriers. For Tasks, the team identifies specific tasks occurring in the school environment that the student needs to accomplish to make progress in meeting IEP goals and objectives.

When the team considers Tools, they look at devices, services, strategies, training, accommodations, and modifications—things that are needed to help the student succeed. With a need established, the team seeks to find the most simple, but effective tool, which is as similar to regular education peers as possible.

For the SETT framework to be successful, team members must work together to share knowledge, skills, and ideas. When the needs, abilities, and interests of the Student, the details of the Environments, and the specific Tasks required of the student in those environments are fully explored, then the team can decide which Tools need to be included in the student's IEP.