



## CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES - ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY (AT)

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### PURPOSE

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Assistive technology (AT) provides students with disabilities with the supports needed to allow them to develop, improve, or maintain their functional capabilities in a variety of tasks. Assistive technology for students with disabilities can include, but is not limited to, educational technology, which is a supplemental tool used by teachers to introduce or reinforce skills and concepts taught to all students, and augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), which enables a student with a disability to have a means of supplementing existing speech or replacing speech that is not functional.

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### DEFINITIONS

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**AT/AAC 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 functional capabilities

**AT/AAC service:** any service that directly assists in the selection, acquisition, or use of an AT/AAC device, including evaluation of the needs of a student with disabilities; purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of AT/AAC devices; selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing AT/AAC devices; coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with AT/AAC devices; and AT/AAC training or technical assistance

**AAC system:** a tool ranging from picture and symbol communication boards to a speech-generated communication device that may increase social interaction and school performance

**ATRC:** Assistive Technology Resource Center

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### CONTENTS

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This packet includes the following documentation:

- Procedures – Step-by-step detail of how AT/AAC device(s) and/or service(s) are committed throughout the district
- Roles and Responsibilities – Breakdown of roles and responsibilities for staff involved in the process of committing AT/AAC device(s) and/or service(s)
- Eligibility Criteria – Guiding principles to consider when discussing whether a student needs AT/AAC device(s) and/or services(s)

***The need for assistive technology (AT) and augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices and services must be considered at every IEP meeting and, when appropriate and based on individual student's needs, at Section 504 meetings.***



## PROCEDURES

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### PRIOR TO IEP/SECTION 504 MEETING TO DISCUSS ADDITION OF AT/AAC

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1. If AT/AAC need is suspected, parental consent for evaluation is needed.
  - a. Initial/Re-evaluation – At the domain meeting or at the time of a Section 504 referral, the IEP/Section 504 team decides if an AT/AAC evaluation should be conducted in order to determine the student’s individual needs in any relevant domain area (e.g., academic achievement, functional performance, communication, hearing/vision, and motor abilities).
    - i. If an AT/AAC evaluation is recommended, the local school district representative/Section 504 Coordinator (also known as the “Case Manager”) or Related Services Provider(s) submits an Assistive Technology Referral form and completes the Student Environment Task Tools (SETT) Scaffold for Gathering Data document after obtaining parental consent to evaluate.
  - b. Annual IEP/Section 504 Meeting - The local school district representative/Section 504 Coordinator or Related Service Provider(s) submits a referral for an Assistive Technology Referral form in SSM with parental consent and completes the SETT Scaffold for Gathering Data document after obtaining parental consent to evaluate. If a parent/guardian does not provide consent, the referral for an AT/AAC evaluation will not be submitted and the SETT Scaffold for Gathering Data document should not be completed.

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### AT IEP/SECTION 504 MEETING

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2. The IEP/Section 504 team considers the student’s need for AT/AAC devices and/or services using the Guidelines.
3. If the qualitative and quantitative data<sup>1</sup> collected does not support the student’s need for AT/AAC devices and/or services, the IEP/Section 504 team should document this determination.
  - a. If the student previously had access to AT/AAC, the team indicates this change in the IEP/Section 504 Plan.
  - b. The local school district representative/Section 504 coordinator ensures that any ATRC equipment not being used by the student is returned.
4. If the IEP/Section 504 team identifies a need for an AT/AAC evaluation, the IEP/Section 504 team prepares an ATRC Referral form and identifies a school-based team member to complete the SETT document.
5. If the qualitative and quantitative data collected reflects a need for AT/AAC based on the Guidelines and the student has current access to AT/AAC in his or her school program, the IEP/Section 504 team considers whether the student completes relevant tasks in a shorter period of time or the student’s performance improved, etc. with AT/AAC.
  - a. If yes, the student continues with access to the same AT/AAC.

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<sup>1</sup> Qualitative and quantitative data in this context includes data regarding (1) how the student’s access to the curriculum, ability to communicate or other functional capabilities is adversely affected by his/her disability, and the specific nature of the adverse effect; and/or (2) how and to what extent the IEP-specified instruction or accommodations, modifications, and/or other supports used during instruction were insufficient to support the student’s performance and/or participation in activities.





## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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### SCHOOL MEMBERS OF THE IEP/SECTION 504 TEAM

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*General education teacher(s), special education teacher(s), Related Service Provider(s), local school district representative/Section 504 Coordinator*

- Collect qualitative and quantitative data for the IEP/Section 504 team's discussion of whether the student needs AT/AAC devices and/or services.
- Participate in the IEP team's determination of the student's need for AT/AAC devices or services using the Guidelines to facilitate the discussion.
- If applicable, initiate the SETT process and submit the ATRC referral after parent consent is obtained.
- Attend training on device as determined by the IEP/Section 504 team.
- Collect qualitative and quantitative data on the student's use of the device at school and, where applicable, at home or other settings, after adding the device into the IEP/Section 504 Plan.
- For subsequent IEPs/Section 504 Plans, consider the need for AT using qualitative and quantitative data to support the decision.

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### LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE/SECTION 504 COORDINATOR

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- If the IEP/Section 504 team determines the student no longer needs AT/AAC, ensure that the ATRC equipment is returned.
- Arrange for implementation of AT/AAC that is available at the school.
- Submit a referral for an ATRC evaluation in SSM.
- Communicate the referral decision and/or evaluation date, and implementation plan to the parent/guardian.
- Within 10 calendar days of receipt of the ATRC's report, schedule an IEP revision or Section 504 meeting.
- Contact ATRC if there is an additional need for training, repair, or customization services related to AT/AAC. Reminder: AT/ACC evaluation MUST be completed within 60 school days from date of signed parental consent.

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### ATRC

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- Conduct evaluation process, if applicable.
- Assist school personnel with post-IEP/Section 504 meeting steps, including training, repair services, customization, and/or implementation supports.

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### SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR

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- Review annually the school's record of which students are using AT/AAC.
- Acknowledge receipt of AT/AAC devices/equipment from ATRC, if applicable.
- Acknowledge return of AT/AAC devices/equipment from parents, when applicable.
- Provide safe space for storage of devices/equipment.



- Contact ATRC immediately to report lost/stolen AT/AAC devices/equipment.
- Ensure AT/AAC devices/equipment follow the student within the school building and/or if student transfers to a different CPS school.

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### **PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S)**

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- Participate in the IEP team's determination of the student's need for AT/AAC devices or services at the IEP/Section 504 meeting.
- If the student is recommended for an AT/AAC evaluation, provide or decline written consent.
- If applicable, schedule a consultation with ATRC.
- If applicable, receive necessary training for appropriate use of AT/AAC.
- Report issues related to repair need, additional training request, and/or change in need to the local school district representative/Section 504 Coordinator.



## GUIDELINE

The IEP/Section 504 team should identify any AT/AAC devices or services required for student to interact with staff and peers, to access any portion of the curriculum, or to meet the social and/or communication needs of the student or assistive technology required for the student to access any portion of the curriculum or to meet the behavioral, adaptive, or other needs of the student.

An IEP/Section 504 team may decide that a student with disabilities needs AT/AAC devices and/or services only if documentation shows that the following Guideline has been discussed, and is supported by qualitative and quantitative data:

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## GUIDELINE

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The student's access to the curriculum, ability to communicate, or other functional capabilities are adversely affected by his/her disability. Examples include, but are not limited to, student who:

- a. Has speech or language skills that are impacted due to a medical or physical condition;
- b. Has speech that is highly unintelligible;
- c. Is nonverbal;
- d. Requires adapted materials to learn and complete typical classroom tasks;
- e. Requires supports to focus, transition, or interact with others throughout the day through use of visual or tactile supports, such as a visual picture schedule, visual timer, tactile schedule;
- f. Requires a significantly modified curriculum due to an intellectual disability; and/or
- g. Has a motoric deficit that impacts access to the school curriculum or environment.

To request an AT and/or AAC evaluation by ATRC staff, school staff should complete the *AT Referral* form found in SSM. Parent requests for AT and/or AAC evaluation should be made in writing to the local school district representative. If the request is made verbally, the local school district representative should instruct the referrer to put his/her request for evaluation in writing and assist with transcribing if the parents/guardians are unable to write out their request.