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# ◆Philadelphia Teaching & Learning Collaborative◆

Quarterly News

Fall 2002

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## Basic Assistive Technology Terminology

**Adaptation**- a simple modification to a toy, material or object that will allow easier access to that object. Examples include: enlarging toy pieces, stabilizing a toy so it doesn't slide, and making turning pages of a book easier.

**Assistive Technology (AT)**- devices or services that focus on increasing, maintaining, or improving the functional capabilities of a child with a disability.

**Assistive Technology Assessment**- an evaluation conducted by a multi-disciplinary team to determine what type of AT device or service will best meet the child's needs.

**Assistive Technologic device**- any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. (Assistive Technology Act of 1998). Examples of AT devices include wheelchairs, computers and computer software, communication devices, a switch to activate a toy, hearing aids, and Braille.

**Assistive Technology service**- any service that directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device.

AT services include:

- the evaluation of the assistive technology needs of an individual with a disability, including a functional evaluation of the impact of the provision of appropriate assistive

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## *Inside This Issue*

Basic Assistive Technology Terminology	1-2
How does AT help a child?	2
AT & EI: How does it work?	3-4
Strategies for Toy Adaptation	5
AT on the Web	6



(Basic AT Terminology continued from page 1)

- services consisting of purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of assistive technology devices by individuals with disabilities
- services consisting of selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing assistive technology devices
- coordination and use of necessary therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices, such as therapies, interventions, or services associated with education and rehabilitation plans and programs;
- training or technical assistance for an individual with disabilities, or, where appropriate, the family members, guardians, advocates, or authorized representatives of such an individual
- training or technical assistance for professionals (including individuals providing education and rehabilitation services), employers, or other individuals who provide services to, employ, or are otherwise substantially involved in the major life functions of individuals with disabilities.
- **Augmentative Communication Devices-** low or high tech devices that help children who may have delays in expressive or receptive language. Examples include: sign language or communication systems that involve the use of pictures or objects along with voice output equipment.  
(Burke, C. Simple Technology Encourages Independence in Play and Communication for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities. University of Alabama at Birmingham Civitan International Research)

## How can AT Help Young Children?

AT can help young children:

- ♦ Make things easier to turn on.
- ♦ Help with seating or offer alternative play positions.
- ♦ Help a child play.
- ♦ Help a child communicate.
- ♦ Help a child see or hear better.
- ♦ Hold things steady or in place.
- ♦ Help a child to be bathed, dressed or fed.
- ♦ Help a child with early learning.
- ♦ Help a child move.
- ♦ Help a child control things.

(Source: Angelo, J. & Lane, S. (Ed.). (1997). Assistive technology for rehabilitation therapists. Philadelphia: F.A. Davis Company).



## **AT & Early Intervention: How does it work?**

### **How does a family obtain AT devices for their infant or toddler?**

Infants and toddlers receive assistive technology devices and services when their IFSP team decides these services are necessary to meet the child's needs.

### **How can an infant and toddler be evaluated to see if they would need AT devices or services?**

A multi-disciplinary team is used to evaluate a child for AT devices or services. This team should have someone who is knowledgeable about computer hardware and software, augmentative communication devices or other types of assistive technology equipment. The team should also have someone that is knowledgeable about how technology can be used to support the child and families' early intervention outcomes. Other service providers with additional training are also part of the evaluation team. Parents are always an important member of the team. The team will begin by finding out about the child's strengths, interests, and family routines in order to determine what type of AT device they should use during the evaluation. The evaluation usually takes place in the child's natural environment. When the team finishes the evaluation they will write out recommendations about the type of AT device or service that is most appropriate in assisting the child and family reach their early intervention outcomes. The team's recommendations should focus on the child's strengths and abilities.

### **Where are AT services provided?**

According to IDEA, AT devices and services "to the maximum extent appropriate to the child's needs must be provided in natural environments such as the child's home, a childcare setting, or other community settings where children without disabilities are found," If the IFSP team determines that AT devices or services are necessary they should be included in the child's IFSP. AT devices and services are provided at no cost to the family.

(Adapted from Assistive Technology for Infants and Toddlers. Families and Advocates

*The team's recommendations should focus on the child's strengths and abilities.*

## **For more information about AT in Philadelphia**

### **Philadelphia Teaching & Learning Collaborative (TLC)**

Thomas Jefferson University  
Child and Family Studies Research Programs  
Edison Suite 500  
130 South 9th Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
Tel. 215-503-4019  
Fax. 215-503-1640  
Email: [TLC@mail.tju.edu](mailto:TLC@mail.tju.edu)

**Teachers and service coordinators who are working with infants and toddlers in Philadelphia can receive consultation/technical assistance about AT by filling out the request form on page 7 or by calling 215-503-4019**

### **Pennsylvania's Initiative on Assistive Technology (PIAT)**

PIAT is a statewide, cross-age and cross-disability program under the Technology-related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act, as amended P.L. 103-218). PIAT's activities include: public awareness, information and referral, advocacy, and training.

Tel. 800-204-PIAT (7428) (voice)

Tel. 800-750-PIAT (7428) (TTY)

email: [piat@astro.temple.edu](mailto:piat@astro.temple.edu)

Web Address: [http://www.temple.edu/ins\\_disabilities/PIAT/piat.html](http://www.temple.edu/ins_disabilities/PIAT/piat.html)

**Pennsylvania's Assistive Technology Lending Library** is a free service provided to Pennsylvania residents of all ages and disabilities. The library loans AT devices to people with disabilities. Requests for devices can be made by a person with a disability, family member, friend or advocate.

For more information call:

Tel. 800-204-PIAT (7428) (voice)

Tel. 800-750-PIAT (7428) (TTY)

### **Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PATTAN)**

1-800-441-3215

Attn. Diane Kortz [dkortz@pattan.k12.pa.us](mailto:dkortz@pattan.k12.pa.us)

Short Term Loan Program for AT

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## Strategies for Adapting Toys



Here are some simple ways that you can adapt toys so they can be made accessible to all children.

### **Adapting Books**

#### **Page Fluffers** (Musselwhite & King-DeBaun, 1997)

Page fluffers are used to separate the pages of a book so that the child can use his or her whole hand or a headstick to turn the pages. Cut a piece of heavy paper (e.g., file folder) 1"x12". Space 12 paper clips evenly over the paper. Cut a piece of polyfoam the same size of the paper. Hot glue the foam onto the paper, leaving one side of the paper clips exposed. Cut into 12 pieces, 1" square. Use in books by affixing to the back side of pages, in a staggered arrangement.

#### **Book Holder** (Burkhart, 1993)

A book holder can be used to hold a book in a stable position with the front and back covers opened while a child is looking at a book. Cut out a piece of indoor/outdoor carpet 18" x 15". Cut two long rectangles of cardboard (e.g., poster board, folder) 2" X 12". Affix stickyback male (hook) velcro at the top and bottom of underside of cardboard rectangles. It will adhere to the carpet. Place book on top of the carpet square. Use the cardboard rectangles to hold front and back covers down.

#### **Enlarging Toys** (Center for Creative Play <http://www.center4creativeplay.org/adapted.htm>)

- \* Trace the toy piece on cardboard extending the cardboard around the toy piece. The cardboard can be glued to the back of the toy piece.
- \* To enlarge handles on toys, screw dowel rods or empty thread spools onto the toy handle or wrap masking tape or soft foam on the handles of pencils, markers, utensils, etc.

#### **Stabilizing Toys** (Center for Creative Play <http://www.center4creativeplay.org/adapted.htm>)

- \* To prevent the toy from sliding while the child is playing with it, place suction cups onto the bottom of the toy, use a gripping material such as Velcro, Dycem, shelf liner or a rubber pad under the toy. This will help keep the toy within the child's reach during play.
- \* A C-clamp can also be used to secure the toy to a table while the child is playing.

#### **Other Strategies** (Burke, C. Simple Technology Encourages Independence in Play and Communication for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities). University of Alabama at Birmingham Civitan International Research Center <http://www.circ.uab.edu/spages/cburk.htm>

- \* Velcro bells or rattle to a wrist band
- \* Gather pictures of foods for snacks, favorite toys for play, and people from magazines, photographs or pictures on the internet. Cover with clear contact paper available through discount stores and attach a small piece of hard adhesive Velcro to the back of each. Put pictures on a piece of indoor/outdoor carpet square (hard Velcro sticks to it) or on a piece of poster board that has strips of soft adhesive Velcro on it. During meals, play, and other times, encourage the child to choose among a few pictures to make requests.
- \* Velcro toys and pictures to an apron or vest worn by family to make them easier for the child to see, touch, and interact with.

## AT on the Web

**American Foundation for the Blind** – Toy Guide <http://www.afb.org/infant.asp>

**Amazon.com & ToysRUs.com** – Differently Abled Kids – Toy Guide - <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/browse/-/642868/002-5736263-2149661>

**Arkansas ICAN** - Adapted Toys- [http://www.arkansas-ican.org/fs\\_toys.htm](http://www.arkansas-ican.org/fs_toys.htm)

**Beyond Play** – Retailer of Early Intervention Products - <http://www.beyondplay.com/index.htm>

**Center for Creative Play** - Adapted Toys - <http://www.center4creativeplay.org/adapted.htm>

**Dragonfly** – Special Needs Store - <http://www.dragonflytoys.com>

**Dreamms for Kids** – Assistive Technology Solutions <http://www.dreamms.org>

**Enabling Devices** – Toys for Special Children - <http://www.enablingdevices.com>

**Exceptional Parent** – Toys - <http://www.eparent.com/toys>

**Let's Play Project** - <http://cosmos.ot.buffalo.edu/letsplay/AT/at.html>

**National Lekotek Center** - <http://www.lekotek.org/>

**NCIP**- Guide - <http://www2.edc.org/NCIP/library/ec/Power.htm>

**PIAT** – Tech Act Project - [http://www.temple.edu/inst\\_disabilities/PIAT/piat.html](http://www.temple.edu/inst_disabilities/PIAT/piat.html)

**Simplified Technology** – Assistive Technology and Augmentative Communication - <http://www.lburkhart.com/main.htm>

**TFH (USA) LTD** – Toys and products retailer - [http://www.tfhusa.com/us\\_home.html](http://www.tfhusa.com/us_home.html)

**YAACK** - AAC Connecting Young Kids - <http://www.mrtc.org/duffy/yaack/>



[http](http://www.mrtc.org/duffy/yaack/)

## Parent's Perspective on Assistive Technology

"My son uses a wheelchair and a positioning chair. There are many benefits to AT for the child and family. The chair helps him sit up and improves his posture. The wheelchair and positioning chair helps him participate in mealtime and play because a tray can attach to it. The wheelchair is portable and can be folded and put in a car. My advice to parents would be to get everything that the child needs and know how the equipment is supposed to work. AT has helped my child be successful!" (mother of a child who was in the Birth-3 program in Philadelphia)



## Request for TLC Technical Assistance in AT

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
First Last

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
First Last

Person Making Request for TLC-TA \_\_\_\_\_  
First Last

What outcomes does the team expect that AT might assist the child or family to achieve?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

In what activities might AT be helpful?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

What do you expect as an outcome from the TLC-TA?

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When is the next quarterly review meeting scheduled? \_\_\_\_\_  
Hour Day/Month

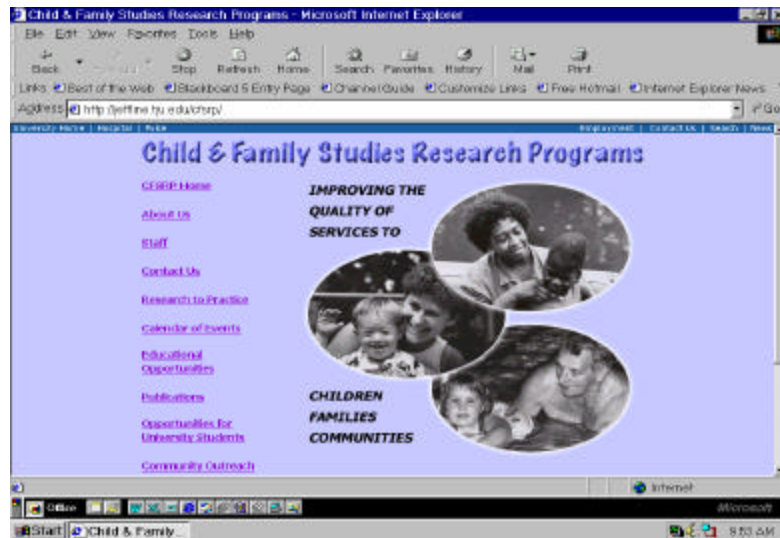
Who should be contacted to schedule the TA? \_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone #1 Phone #2

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Fax this form to 215-503-1640

**Check Us Out On the Web:** <http://jeffline.tju.edu/cfsrp>



## TLC Quarterly News

Philadelphia Teaching and Learning  
Collaborative  
Child and Family Studies Research  
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Department of Occupational Therapy  
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*Inside This Issue*  
*Basic AT Terminology*  
*AT & EI How Does it Work?*  
*Strategies for Toy Adaptation*  
*AT on the Web*