

Categories of Assistive

Types of assistive technology have been classified into categories.

Each category below is identified with an explanation of the type of devices/adaptation that might be considered within each category. It should be noted that the examples are not an exhaustive list, rather they illustrate the types of devices/adaptations for each category. Refer to the descriptions of the categories when determining what type of technology applies to your situation.

Daily Living Aids

Self-help devices that assist persons with disabilities in daily living activities such as dressing, personal hygiene, bathing, home maintenance, cooking, eating, etc. Includes reachers, adaptive clothing, modified eating utensils, adapted books, pencil holders, dressing aids, adapted personal hygiene aids, bathing accessories, feeding accessories, feeding devices, grab bars/grips/handles, grooming, hygiene, incontinent supplies, mechanical transfer lift, shower/bath chair, toileting accessories, transfer board, wheeled bath chair/commode, time management aids, specialized spoons for self-feeding, bathtub seats, etc. Does not generally include architectural/home adaptations or modifications (see 5. Environmental Aids). Common sub-categories are:

Clothing and Dressing Aids

Eating and Cooking Aids

Home Maintenance Aids

Toileting and Bathing Aids

Seating and Positioning

Accommodations to a wheelchair or other seating system to provide greater body stability, trunk/head support and an upright posture, and reduction of pressure on the skin surface (cushions, contour seats, lumbar supports).

Education and Learning Aids

Cognitive Aids

Includes cognitive software focusing on categorization, matching, association, reasoning, decision making, problem solving, memory skills, perceptual skills, talking word processing, word prediction/completion software, cognitive retraining or rehabilitation tools, etc.

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Communication Aids

Products and equipment designed to help persons with speech disabilities or writing difficulties to communicate. At its very simplest, augmentative communication can be a page with picture choices or alphabet letters that a person points to. It can also involve highly sophisticated speaking computers with on-screen communication boards and auditory or visual scanning. Common sub-categories are:

Speech and Augmentative Communication Aids

Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) involves alternate methods of communicating needs, feelings, ideas, and perceptions through the use of electronic and non-electronic devices that provide a means for expressive and receptive communication for persons with limited or no speech. Includes communication boards, speech synthesizers, text-to-speech software and hardware, head wands, light pointers, mouth sticks, signal systems, telephony equipment, etc.

Writing and Typing Aids

Includes tactile devices, Braille devices, note taking devices, spelling devices, word prediction/completion software, modified typewriters, portable typewriters, etc.

Computer Access Aids

Hardware and software products that enables persons with disabilities to access, interact with, and use computers at school. Includes modified or alternate keyboards, switches activated by pressure, touch screens, special software, voice to text software, etc. Common sub-categories are:

Alternative Input Devices

Includes alternative and adaptive keyboards, expanded keyboards, Keyguards, alternative and ergonomic mouse/pointing systems, head-operated pointing devices, Eye-glaze pointing devices, mouth/tongue pointing devices, Morse code input devices, brain-actuated pointing devices, switches, touch screens, voice input systems, speech-to-text software, voice recognition/voice command software, dictation software, on-screen keyboards, cursor enlargement software, ergonomic computer-based equipment, etc.

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Special Software

Includes adapted software applications for people with disabilities, operating system adaptations for accessibility, accessible web browsers, etc.

Universal Design

Design methods, techniques and guidelines for making computers and their applications fully accessible to people with disabilities.

Hearing and Listening Aids

Products designed to assist the Deaf and Hearing Impaired. Includes assistive listening devices, hearing aids, cochlear implants, infrared/personal amplification systems, audio/FM loop systems, FM amplification systems, TV amplifiers, TV decoders, visual signaling and alerting systems, tactile alerting systems, telephony and accessories, text telephones, TDDs/TTYs devices, adapted phones, etc. Does not generally include products intended to facilitate computer access and usage (see 2. Computer Access Aids).

Environmental Controls & Switches

Primarily electronic systems that enable someone with limited mobility to control various appliances, lights, telephone and security systems in their room, home or other surroundings. Includes Environmental Control Units (ECU), electronic appliance switches, switch mounting systems, home automation systems, signaling and alerting devices, home alarms, television adaptations, smoke alarm and telephone ringers, etc.

Mobility

Products that help mobility impaired persons move within their environment and give them independence . Includes standing/walking aids, transfer aids, stair lifts, walkers, scooters, wheelchairs and three-wheeled chairs, adapted bikes and Trikes. . Common sub-categories are:

Ambulatory Aids

Includes canes, cane accessories, crutches, walkers, walker accessories, etc. Assistive Technology program, Orientation and Mobility Specialist, will direct student or parents with the information of obtaining a guide dog if evaluation seems appropriate.

Recreation and Leisure Aids

Products that help persons with disabilities to participate in sports, social, cultural events. Includes modified sports equipment , audio description for movies, adaptive controls for video games, adaptive fishing rods, cuffs for grasping paddles or racquets, etc. Common sub-categories are: Sport Aids, Toys and Games

Low to High Assistive

AT devices and services and be divided into **high-tech and low-tech.**

Low-tech AT examples:

- Eating utensils or toothbrushes with weighted handles or thick handles
- Communication boards with pictures to assist people communicate basic needs
- Easy-grip doorknobs, or car door openers to assist people with weak hands
- Big button phones to aid people with limited vision or hand control
- Tape recorders to assist students who have trouble with note taking
- Text telephones or phone amplifiers to assist people with hearing impairments
- A mouthstick to assist a person turn the pages of a book or push elevator buttons

High-Tech AT examples:

- Computers operated by voice recognition
- Special lifts which assist people to get in and out of a toilet or in and out of bed
- Talking calculators with scientific mathematical capabilities and graphing
- Reading machines which convert printed material into synthesized speech
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No/Low Tech to High Tech

