



A Family Guide to
**ASSISTIVE
TECHNOLOGY**

in *Connecticut*

SERC
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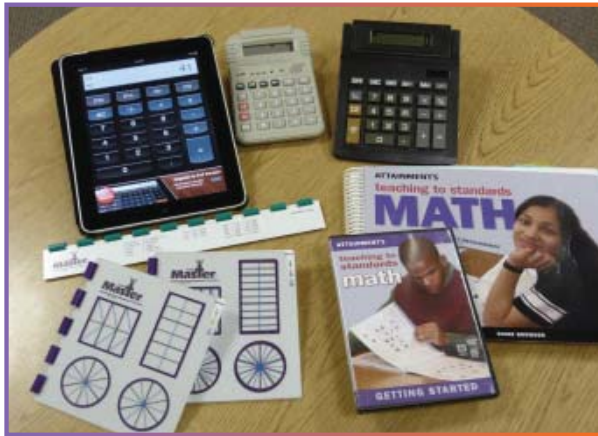


CT PIRC
CT Parent Information and Resource Center

What is assistive technology?

Assistive technology (AT) is anything that helps a child to perform a skill or participate in an activity. For example, AT can be anything from a simple device such as a wristwatch with larger numbers to something more complex such as a computer with specialized software.

According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), an assistive technology device is 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 children with disabilities.



Assistive technology equipment courtesy of CT Tech Act Project

How can assistive technology help my child?

Assistive technology can help children with disabilities be independent within their limitations and participate in social, academic, community, and vocational activities. AT can assist in the areas of:

- independent living such as:
 - eating
 - dressing
 - recreation and leisure
 - home living (cooking, cleaning, etc.)
- communication
- mobility
- vision and hearing
- reading and writing
- mathematics
- computer access
- recreational activities
- vocational activities





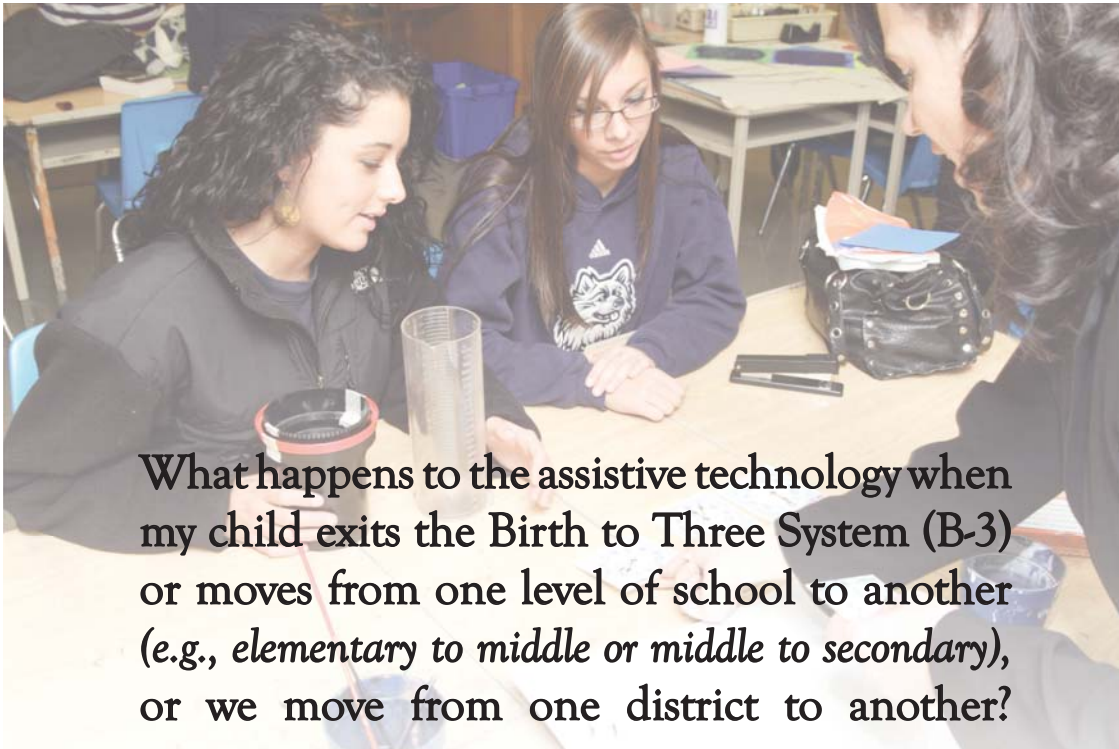
Who owns the assistive technology?

An AT device or AT equipment for children enrolled in the Birth to Three System is owned by the party that has paid the most for the device. If Birth to Three funds pay for more than 50 percent of the device, that device is owned by the Birth to Three System. Likewise, an assistive technology device is owned by the school district if the district purchases it. If third-party funding, such as the child's private insurance or Medicaid, ends up paying more than 50 percent of the purchase price of the device, then the device belongs to the family and must be used by only that child in school.



**My child uses assistive technology in school.
Can she also use it at home?**

A child should have the opportunity to use the same assistive technology at home that she uses in school. For example, when a student is completing homework assignments, assistive technology may be necessary to produce the expected results. Some school districts have policies that allow the devices to go home with the student overnight, weekends, or during holidays and vacations. In general, these kinds of policies are a local matter and may be determined according to local district needs. If, however, a student's individualized education program (IEP) includes a provision that says the student is to have access to an assistive device both in school and at home, then the school district would be obligated to allow the student to take a device home or provide two devices: one for home use and one for use in school.



What happens to the assistive technology when my child exits the Birth to Three System (B-3) or moves from one level of school to another (e.g., elementary to middle or middle to secondary), or we move from one district to another?

When a child exits B-3, assistive technology equipment owned by B-3 and used by that child may transition with him or her so that the child can continue to use the device at home, in school, or in the community as needed and appropriate. Children may keep devices purchased and owned by B-3 as long as the device is needed, but B-3 will no longer assume responsibility for repair or maintenance. Families whose children over the age of 3 continue to use AT devices owned by B-3 will periodically be contacted to see whether the device is still in use. Devices no longer needed are picked up, refurbished, and recycled by B-3 for use by other children.

A device provided by the district may not follow the child when he or she moves from one level of school to another or from one district to another. If an assistive device is necessary to fulfill the requirements of a student's IEP, however, such a device must be provided, and at whatever school the student attends. The child may be given a comparable device that fulfills the IEP requirements in the new school.

What can I do if the individual family service plan (IFSP) team or planning and placement team (PPT) determines, after evaluation, that my child does not need a specific assistive technology device, but I, as the parent, believe he does? Are there any sources of funding available for this purpose?

Funding for assistive technology is available from a variety of public and private sources. To receive public or private funding, parents must meet eligibility criteria for the specific program and provide sufficient documentation of the student's need for assistive technology.

Some private sources of funding include:

- private insurance
- loans
- nonprofit and disability organizations
- foundations
- civic organizations



For *More* Information

State Education Resource Center (SERC)

25 Industrial Park Road ♦ Middletown, CT 06457

Phone: 860-632-1485 ♦ Fax: 860-632-8870

www.ctserc.org

Smita Worah, Ph.D., Consultant

worah@ctserc.org, ext. 319

**CT Parent Information and
Resource Center (CT PIRC)**

www.ctpirc.org

Barbara Slone, Co-Coordinator

slone@ctserc.org, ext. 340

Published by:

State Education Resource Center

Marianne Kirner, Ph.D., *Executive Director*

Publications Unit

Jeremy Bond, *Communication & Publications Coordinator*

Thom Jones, *Media/Technology Associate*

Jodylynn Talevi, *Media/Technology Associate*

Debbie Williams, *Education Services Specialist*