

## Assistive Technology in Education

Students with disabilities have a right to use Assistive Technology (AT) in public school. Education programs and school districts must make AT available to students with disabilities.

### What is Assistive Technology?

Assistive Technology (AT) is any device, technology, or equipment that is used to improve or keep your functional capabilities. AT services are services that help you use your AT. They can include evaluation for a device, help choosing a device, and training on your device.

### How do I ask for a device?

Talk to your student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 team. You can request an evaluation to determine whether your child needs AT. Your request can be made at any time.

### Will the school train my child to use the device?

The public school district must provide training to your child, teachers, and others, if necessary, so that your child can learn to use the device.

### What devices can the School District pay for?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act require education programs to provide both AT devices and/or services.

Public school districts must provide any AT devices or services identified in the IEP or 504 Plan. The district must provide any device that the student needs to receive a free, appropriate education in the least restrictive environment.

### How much of the cost will the School District cover?

School systems cannot charge families for services. Therefore, the school system must provide needed AT devices or services to you at no cost.

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### **Can the School District make us use my child's insurance?**

The school district **cannot** require you to sign up for or use your public health benefits (such as Medicaid) or private health insurance to obtain the AT. Each time the school district wants to use your public health benefits or private insurance, it must ask your consent. If you do not give consent the district still has an obligation to provide all necessary devices and services to your child at no cost to you. If you consent and there is an out-of-pocket expense, the district must pay that cost for you.

### **What if the school district won't pay for the AT?**

The school district must give you a written decision if it will not help you obtain an AT evaluation, device, or service that you believe your child needs to receive a free, appropriate education. You have the right to appeal this denial. There are several different ways to appeal the decision. You can learn more about these options on the [Rhode Island Department of Education](#) website.

For more information on how to appeal a denial of AT, contact Disability Rights Rhode Island at [info@drri.org](mailto:info@drri.org) or 401-831-3150.