

## Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Depending on your child's disability and needs he may qualify for an IEP. An IEP is an educational plan that allows parents, educational providers and the student to coordinate services that benefit the student throughout the K-12 system. It describes the strengths of the student, the skills that would benefit his learning, the services your school will need to provide, and what, if any, assistive technology (AT) can support your student in achieving his educational goals.

## Assistive Technology (AT)

Assistive technology (AT) can be as simple as a pencil grip or a pair of eye glasses. It can also be a wheelchair, speech software or a calculator. It is whatever technology, software, app or device the student needs to fully participate at school. Some students use AT to help them with their math homework, talk to their teacher and classmates, or get around their school independently. Figuring out what type of assistive technology may work for your student can take time, but there are ways your student can try AT before you write it into the IEP and request that the school purchase it.

## Device Lending Library

There are Device Lending Libraries in different locations across California. They provide short-term (30 day) loans to people with disabilities of all ages who want to try out a piece of assistive technology before making a purchase. Device Lending Libraries are not connected to the school systems, but they are valuable community resources that allow you to figure out what might work for you before you ask your school to buy it and add it into your student's IEP.

## Assistive Technology in Your IEP

Assistive technology will help your child accomplish educational goals. For example, some students have learning disabilities that cause confusion with numbers. Therefore, even if your child understands the steps needed to solve a math problem, she might benefit from using a calculator (AT) to check her answers. Another example of a student benefiting from the use of AT is if she is nonverbal and is required to make a speech in class. In this case, the student could use an iPad with a speech application installed or an augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) device to assist her in giving the speech.

It is important to know what Assistive Technology will help your child be a better student and fully participate with the rest of the class. The AT that the student uses for one class might be helpful in all of his classes. It all depends on the student's needs and what has been discussed and documented in the IEP.

Once you know what kind of Assistive Technology works for your student, you will need to bring it up at an IEP meeting, discuss it, and possibly describe how it will assist your student in accomplishing her educational goals. You will need to include the AT your student uses in the IEP. Your student's IEP is a working document and can be adjusted throughout the year based on her changing needs.

Encourage your student to speak up at her IEP meeting and describe what her needs are in the classroom. This type of self-advocacy will go a long way in school and beyond.

Visit the Ability Tools website to learn more about AT and the IEP process:

[abilitytools.org](http://abilitytools.org)

Learn how youth with disabilities are connecting, organizing and educating other youth around the state on issues they care about:

[YODisabledProud.org](http://YODisabledProud.org)

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*Find devices for sale or free:*

**[exchange.abilitytools.org](http://exchange.abilitytools.org)**  
**(800) 390-2699**



(800) 390-2699

| [www.AbilityTools.org](http://www.AbilityTools.org)

| [YoDisabledProud.org](http://YoDisabledProud.org)

