

California AT Act - Device Demonstration & Reporting Webinar Transcript

February 25, 2021

- [Kathrine] Thank you everyone for joining us today. My name is Kathrine Crowley, I am CFILC's Ability Tools program manager, and I'd like to welcome you to Ability Tools news installments and a series of webinars, outlining the activities established by the AT Act. Today, we will be providing an overview of the activity device loan or device demonstration. Last month, we discussed the activity training, because there was a natural potential step when thinking about how consumers become informed with the services available to them and begin to seek out services based on their individual needs. So we're gonna continue along with that experience of the consumer which would bring them to many possible activities as the next step, one of which could be participating in a device demonstration activity. Our training objective today will be to clarify the particulars of the activity device demonstration as it's defined by the AT Act. This is with the intention of facilitating more frequent and effective execution of device demonstration activities, and also facilitating more comprehensive and accurate reporting of device demonstration activities under the AT Act. So there've recently been new data briefs released that provide updated clarification about device demonstrations. Now, these are so new that they have been finalized but haven't even been posted since I last checked at least. So I'm positive that I have the most up-to-date interpretation of device demonstration to convey to you. The definition I extrapolated and confirmed my wording on through nationwide AT Act experts is as follows. A demonstration is an interaction with an at AT specialist who has technical expertise related to devices where the specialist provides an interactive exploration of typically more than one device in real time in order to increase the participants knowledge and understanding about the details and functions of the device with the intention of enabling the participant to make an informed choice regarding acquiring the appropriate device for their needs. The participant drives the demonstration and has the ability to have their individual questions about the device addressed. Additionally, there is an expectation for the specialists to provide any referral information that may be beneficial to the consumer receiving the demonstration. Now, you might be asking yourself, is this activity required activity for me to perform? Well, that depends. The State of California's Department of Rehabilitation and CFILC partnered to contract out the execution of device demonstration activities to 12 device lending and demonstration centers throughout the state. So, if you are a staff member of one these 12 device lending and demonstration centers who receive AT Act funding, then yes, device demonstration activities are required activities. Device demonstration activities exist within the state level category and are designed with the intention of facilitating a consumer's access to assistive technology. It's required by the federal government that the state level activities take up about 60% of the AT Act funding received by the state, with the remaining 40% going to state leadership activities. So there is an expectation and built in support for device demonstration activity implementation. A device demonstration activity is typically a response to a consumer or consumer representative reaching out for guidance in ascertaining if a form of assistive technology will make a positive impact in their lives. The objective of the activity is to assist the consumer in making an informed choice as to whether assistive technology is appropriate for them. If so, what kind? And to assist them in determining the best way to acquire the technology. This can at times occur when an individual walks into your center with questions and you provide an impromptu in-person device demonstration. But usually occurs when you have scheduled a time to perform an in-person demonstration. As this will allow you to be able to set aside a proper amount of time to dedicate to the interaction and will also allow you to truly reflect on the challenge they are trying to address and are prepared the most appropriate and beneficial options to demonstrate. You can meet them at their home, at your center, or in a mutually agreed upon public space. Device demonstrations can also occur when at an event like tabling at an expo or at a conference where you have devices laid out on the table to be interacted with. In situations like this, individuals can approach the table and you can provide a hands-on experience with the devices and lead the consumer through a comparison of the features. As long as you collect the performance measures, their demographic information, and were able to find out if they would be able to make a decision after the interaction, it does count as a device demonstration. You just must be sure to hit all three of those criteria for it to be a reportable device demonstration, decision, demographics, and satisfaction. If it helps, I found it useful to have a clipboard or a notepad app with the required questions written out, so I'm able to collect the information no matter where I am. However, COVID has certainly brought challenges to those types of in-person interactions, so for the safety of ourselves and our community members, we've been leaning more on scheduled virtual device demonstrations. A virtual device demonstration itself goes much like an in-person demonstration, you discuss the consumer's needs and present the AT options, which might be beneficial. You go over the features, compare and contrast with other features, listen attentively to any questions and concerns and gather the necessary information. However, when performing a virtual device demonstration, you have a lot more work to accomplish before this demonstration can even take place. First, you need to perform an assessment as you would with any scheduled demonstration to get an idea of what items and referrals you believe would be the most beneficial to the consumer. Where the activity differs though, is that in order to maintain best practices, you're going to be shipping these items to the consumer. In an ideal scenario, you have enough devices that you and your consumer will each have the same device in hand on the day of the demonstration, but it's understandable that you might not have multiple devices in your inventory or you might simply have all other devices out on loan at the same time of the demonstration. But if there's only a single device to be handled, it's always best for the consumer to have the device rather than you, as you are the specialist who's already familiar with the device. And it's important that the consumer gets that hands on experience. There are instances where it's accepted practice that the device does not need to be in the consumer's possession, but best practice is what you should strive for. And it really is a last resort situation and should not be performed this way if avoidable. An additional element of virtual device demonstrations that must be taken into consideration is being mindful of what accommodations might be required in order for the consumer to interact with the device as they would for an in-person demonstration setting. Will the consumer be able to open the packaging themselves if they have fine motor disabilities? Well. the consumer be able to set up the device if it requires installation such as an echo dot and a wifi plug if they're unfamiliar with this type of device. If these are concerns, you should work with the consumer to see if there's anyone in their home or lives who can safely assist with the preparation you would have typically done during an in-person demonstration, and who might be able to persist during the demonstration in case any additional needs arise. If there isn't a way for them to have the assistance needed to interact with the device, then this might be one of those rare instances where having the device in your hands and not the consumers and it is an acceptable method of performing a device demonstration. Additionally, we should try to pay to ship the device back and forth as much as our resources allow, particularly, when considering the financial hardships that have come along with COVID. But that really does depend on the policies and procedures of your center. A point of note is that if the consumer hold onto the device past the demonstration to trial them, then you can record a device loan also. If this happens, please be sure to collect both performance measures, or if you send it out early, because their schedule allows for only a later demonstration, find out if they will be keeping it to work with, or if they had time to work with it before the demonstration that will inform you if it was also a loan. All of this information can and should be ascertained through conversation with the consumer during the demonstration. When you have them for the demonstration, get any demographic information you might've missed during their intake and collect the demographic information of any additional participants. After performing the demonstration, ask about all of the participants satisfaction with the demonstration, remembering that the satisfaction measures have nothing to do with the device itself, but rather their satisfaction with the usefulness of your demonstration. And finally, find out if the decision maker in the group, there could be more than one, was able to ascertain if their lives can indeed be improved by the use of an AT device. Now, the wording here is key, the options for the performance measure are one, a decision was made that AT would help, two, a decision was made that AT would not help, or three, no decision was made. The performance outcome measure may be related to either a specific or general consideration of whether AT might be useful for them. Even if none of the demonstrated devices were selected, the consumer still might be able to decide that AT would help. As with all other performance measures, the performance measures have little to nothing to do with the devices, specifically utilized in the activity and everything to do with the execution of the activity itself. If the consumer is able to determine that a type of AT would or would not be useful to them as a result of your work with them, then your demonstration was a success. One activity that is commonly conflated with the device demonstration is public awareness. There are a few ways to tool these activities apart from one another and determine which category you should report your activity under first. A device demonstration has a focus on devices and device categories with the inciting element being the desire to solve a challenge being experienced by a consumer. This is versus public awareness activities where the focus is on understanding of the nature, scope, and benefits of assistive technology and resources of the state AT program. An additional method of pulling these activities apart from one another is to look at what type of information is being conveyed in the activity. With the device demonstration, the specialist shows the features and benefits of devices and/or device categories. Whereas a public awareness activity gives a general overview of state AT program services. And finally, with a device demonstration, it is a mandatory element that the consumer make a decision on whether acquiring AT would be beneficial to them or not. Whereas with a public awareness event, no decision is expected or reported. Another activity commonly confused with device demonstrations are information and assistance activities. One method of determining where you should report your activity is to look at the type of service being performed. Device demonstrations show the features and benefits of devices and device categories with a focus on how these features interact with the needs of the consumer. This is in contrast to information and assistance activities, where the specialist is troubleshooting problems with the device. This leads to the next way to distinguish the two from one another. In the instance of a device demonstration, a device has not yet been selected for the consumer, and the entire objective of the activity is to guide the consumer in making a decision on whether acquiring an AT device would be appropriate and useful for them. This is vastly different from an information in assistance activity where the device is already in use and there's some confidence that it will meet the needs of the consumer, but there's a problem with the functionality of the device, whether it be a malfunction or a positioning issue that is impeding the user's ability to fully utilize the features of the device and the specialist is required to assist in overcoming that challenge. There is no decision expected or reported because in practice, the decision has already been made. One last activity frequently mixed up with device demonstration is training. As I always say, the best way to determine where an activity should be reported is by looking at the objective. And this is no different. In the instance of a device demonstration, the purpose of the activity is to facilitate decision-making, whereas a trainings purpose is to build skills and competencies. Another clue is that device demonstrations typically focus on a single consumer. This is very different from trainings, as they're always focused on a group of equal participants. This isn't to say that you can't perform a device demonstration to a group of people, as we do this frequently when working with a consumer and participants who are there to support such as a family advocate or a personal assistant. And we must always remember to obtain their satisfaction measures as participants in the demonstration. But there are also instances where you might have more than one consumer looking to make a decision in a group, but you must be very careful that they must still be looking to solve a challenge that is shared between them, and they must both be able to participate fully in the demonstration process, retaining the ability to ask any and all questions regarding the device. Again, the intention must be to assist the participants in making an informed choice for their personal needs. This type of activity comes very close to being a training, so be careful to report it accurately if you find yourself in this type of situation. Another way to determine which type of activity you're performing is to know that a device demonstration exists in order to make an informed personal choice regarding the appropriateness of the device, device category or services. Whereas a training is for professional or personal development of skills and competencies in the utilization of a device, device category or services. And finally, when performing a device demonstration, the focus is on solving an individual problem as opposed to a training where the focus is on building skills to apply to problems. DOR has determined that the AT Act and AT advocates will be supported under the same roof as ILCs, which is very unique as California is the only state which does this. California AT advocates and the hub, Ability Tools, perform state leadership activities and Ability Tools as the hub performs and contracts out the performance of state level activities, as is the case with California's device lending and demonstration centers or DLDCs. One of our requirements as the hub is to collect, organize and report all state leadership and level activity data to the federal government. In order for us to count all of the hard work that gets done it needs to be individually reported by the centers performing the activities. National Assistive Technology Act Data System or NATADS is the web-based aggregate data reporting system used by the state AT programs to submit the required data elements of the APR as mandated by the AT Act. NATADS primary purpose is to serve as the official APR data collection mechanism. However, NATADS also has a web-based day-to-day data collection system that can optionally be used by state AT programs for collecting and managing data reporting for all activities, included in the state plan for AT, and required by the annual progress report. As a result of this day-to-day reporting option being available as a central reporting system capable of ensuring the validation of all of California's data, California's Assistive Technology Advisory Council and the Department of Rehabilitation made the decision that California would utilize NATADS for collecting the data relevant to our state's AT Act activities. Upon your reminder email this morning, you should have received two Word documents, titled, NATDAS Activity Guide - Main Inventory Entry, and NATADS Activity Guide - Device Demonstration Activity Entry. Now, I'm going to do a live walkthrough of the steps you'll go through to enter your device demonstration activities. We have gone through the process of checking and entering a new client into the system. So we can go ahead and skip that part. If you have any questions regarding that activity, then you can refer back to previous trainings or you can always give me a call and we can discuss it together. So first you're going to go ahead and log in and go to day to day, new. Once you know that you have a client or a consumer in the system, you can go directly to demonstration underneath the state level functions banner. From the day-to-day demonstration home page, you can go underneath the demonstration functions banner and select the button titled, Add Demonstration Activity. From there, you're going to land on the demonstration activity page. From here, you're going to go ahead and go under the banner title, Date and User, and you'll notice that it's already auto-filled with the demonstration date. You're going to want to modify that date to match the date which the demonstration activity you're entering occurred. The entered by field will automatically generate with the name on of the person signed into NATADS based on the login information used to enter the database, and cannot be altered. For this reason, it's important to always use your personal account so the data can be validated. Under the type of AT device dropdown menu, you'll see that it contains the recognized device category options, vision, hearing, speech communication, learning cognition and development, mobility, seating and positioning, daily living, environmental adaptations, vehicle mods and transportation, computers and related, and recreational sports and leisure. If you want to learn more about these different types of AT and the different categories as they're defined in the AT Act, I'm going to go ahead and send a link in the chat that is a link to the AT3 Center, and that page has a list at the very bottom of the page where you can click on briefs outlining the descriptions and the competencies, the core competencies regarding all of these device type categories. So from here, you're going to select whichever one is related to what you're looking for, and underneath that banner, you're going to see that there is going to be clients related to demonstration banner. This is where you're going to add the primary decision maker. Go to your add clients button, and find your consumer and select, you can search by whatever category you decide to search by, whatever is most useful for you and then type in the parameter that you're gonna search by and hit the search button. From there, you can click on the name of the individual that you want to go ahead and add to your sheet, and once you're done adding the clients that are going to be the decision-makers close out the sheet by hitting the close button in the bottom left hand corner. From there, you're going to continue down the page and find the banner that's titled, participants related to demonstration. You can select the add participants button that's located just above the records table, and a form is going to pop up over your page that allows you to search for a participant or rather entered participant by selecting their participant category, so they can identify as an individual with a disability, a family, guardian or authorized rep, reps of education, and so on. Select the appropriate, the appropriate designation as the person who's participating has identified, select how many participants are participating in that way and select add, and that will add that participant to your activity. If you notice in that records table, you already have the participants demographics from your client added into the participant demonstration information. Continue adding the participants until you have all of the people who are involved in the demonstration recorded. Continuing down the page, you'll see that there's a banner titled, inventory related to demonstration. You're going to select the add inventory button that's located just above the records table. From there, you're going to see that there are some options for your search parameters. You can select what you decide to search by and from there, you're going to type in the parameters that you decided to search by, so if you're going by inventory name, we can select there we go. So if you're going by your inventory name, you can type in what you're looking for, but you can also select on the options select from all key inventory categories, there'll be a check box. So this is gonna be particularly useful for you if you are going to be using multiple devices when doing your demonstration activity, cause there are situations where you may find it useful to pull an inventory item from a different category. Once you've selected a category at the top of the page, underneath the date and user section, under type of AT device, that's the category that you're gonna be pulling for for this form. But that isn't always how a device demonstration works, is it? Sometimes you are going to be demonstrating items against each other that might not be traditionally categorized together. So for example, you could be using a tablet which will be classified under computers and related category, but if you're utilizing it to compare the app, CoughDrop to a GoTalk 20, then you're demonstrating under this teaching communication category, and that activity should be marked as such. And so in order to be able to access that tablet that would be otherwise categorized in computers and related, you're going to need to select the checkbox for select from all inventory categories. That way you don't have any restrictions and you're able to add whatever items you need to be able to perform your device demonstration. From there you can continue down the page, and you'll see the banner titled referrals made, from here, you can select the add referral button that's located just above the records table and a page will auto-populate over your screen. You'll be able to select the referral type whether it's a funding source, a service provider, a vendor, and once you've selected that, you can put in the amount of referrals that you made, you might've referred them to a couple of vendors who you think might be useful to them, so you can put in one, two, three, however many you added. Select the add button in the bottom left-hand corner and it will add them to your page. From there you can continue down the page and underneath the performance measure results banner, you're going to select from a dropdown menu, the primary area the AT use, whether it's related to education, employment, or community living. Underneath that, you're going to find the dropdown menu for AT performance decision. You can select whether the AT will meet their needs, whether it will not meet their needs, whether a decision was not made or not, and whether they were non respondent. You're going to see that there is a banner titled, satisfaction results, as you continue down the screen, and there will be a record's table that above it, there's a button titled, add satisfaction. You can select that button, and there'll be a dropdown menu for your satisfaction type and you can select whether they were highly satisfied, satisfied, somewhat, or not at all, or non respondent. And you do this for all of the participants, the decision-maker and other participating parties, select if they were highly satisfied but only one person was, select one, click add in the bottom left hand corner and it will add that to the results. Continue selecting the add satisfaction button until you've recorded all of the satisfaction measures. So somebody was only somewhat satisfied, you can select that, select that it was one person, and add, and it will add all of your satisfaction measures to the document. Continuing down the page, you're going to find the anecdote section. So underneath this banner, you're going to see that there is a text box with a 10,000 character count limit. You're going to enter the following information. The date, month, day, year of the contacts, the medium, whether it was in-person or teleconference, the client and any participants involved, here you can add the names and demographics, individuals with disability, family, guardian, and/or titles, an IHSS worker, an educator, or a parent. You can add the staff involved, the first and last name and the title, so an AT advocate, a DLDC manager, and the organization, the name of the center. Describe the need addressed in any other details of note, describe what you demonstrated and the features you demonstrated. And then add in any referrals that you were provided, names of vendors or funding sources provided to the consumer. Continuing down the screen under the anecdote image banner, you will have the option to add a photograph, this is completely optional. If you wish to add an image, select the select button, and a window will appear providing access to your computer's files, select the file and the image you wish to attach. On the image alternative text field immediately below the select button, include all texts for the image you've attached. Select the save button beneath the left-hand corner of the image, alternative text fields, to complete the entry of your device demonstration activity and to continue onto the device demonstration view page in order to complete entry of your device demonstration activity. And now we can open it up for any Q and A.

- [Megan] Thanks Kathrine, and this is Megan, so please again, send any questions to us using the Q and A box on Zoom, or you can raise your hand to talk and we'll allow you to talk. Okay, so a question I see here Kathrine, somebody wants to know, does my center need to offer demonstrations for all of the device types?

- [Kathrine] That's a good question. No, you don't have to worry about being the expert in every category. You should try your best to develop professionally and to learn about categories that aren't as familiar to you. But as long as experts in all categories are represented across the state, there are opportunities for cross disability demonstrations across the full range of technologies. So it shouldn't be an issue. If you're interested in learning more about the core competencies, you can visit the AT3 Center website that I dropped into the chat while we were going through the guide and you can read up on the core competencies for each device category. It's a good refresher, it's a good way to kind of see where you are abundant in information and where you might wanna build up your information. I use it all the time.

- [Megan] Great, thanks Kathrine. We have a few questions here from McKayla about the image uploads that you just showed us on the tides. Does the image accepting window also accept PowerPoint presentations? And is there a limit to the number of images you can add?

- [Kathrine] Thank you, it's a good question. I, you know, I've never tried to add a PowerPoint presentation to this, to the image button. I don't imagine that it does because it only takes specific files, so I don't think that it's gonna allow that to occur. Regarding multiple images. I don't think that it allows more than one, but if that is something that you would prefer trying, I can definitely talk with the developer of NATADS and see if we can add in more opportunities to add in multiple images.

- [Megan] Great, and Mckayla says thank you. And Kathrine, do you think we could put on NATADS or send out a list of folks of that file types that it will accept, it's likely gonna be a JPEG or PNG or image files like that.

- [Kathrine] Yeah, it is true. It does accept a pretty good variety of images. And honestly, whenever I have something that doesn't work, I just copy the image into a Word document and then I save it as, and then decide what I want it to save as if I wanna turn it into a JPEG or not, but I can definitely find a list of them but it's really an easy kind of workaround to get around if you need to.

- [Megan] Great, and we have another question here which is, does the person with the disability need to be the person receiving the device demonstration? Or could it be a family member or teacher or somebody else that supports them?

- [Kathrine] Thank you, so it's definitely best practice for the person who will be using the device to be the one who's participating in the demonstration and decision-making process. If it isn't possible though, and then it can be appropriate for a family member or a teacher or some sort of service provider to participate in the demonstration and for them to make and report on the decision. But it is for sure best practice to have the person involved even if the other person might be leading it, you wanna definitely be able to work with the individual who's gonna be using the device and let them have that hands-on experience.

- [Megan] Thank you, Katherine. And that really ties back to our independent living philosophy which is, nothing about us without us, it goes through four device demonstrations too. Does anybody else have more questions for us? You can send them to us in the Q and A or raise your hand here on Zoom. Okay, I'm not seeing any other questions come in, Kathrine, could you tell us what's next, what's next out of Ability Tools, what's coming up for us?

- [Kathrine] Oh, so let's see. We have our final entry in this series, It's going to be technical assistance and state financing kind of built in together that made more sense for them to be a paired up entry. What else do we have? We have an event coming up. We have the event that we're putting together with the C4A, Megan, if you wanna chime in and get a little bit more information out there, it's the California coming together conference series.

- [Megan] Yes, this is Megan, I'm trying to grab the link for that. So we are doing a spinoff of the conference we hosted back in December, it was in partnership with the California Association of Area Agencies on Aging, C4A, and from that conference, one of our workshop sessions was on technology, assistive technology specifically, and we got a lot of feedback from folks that they wanted to have a spin-off conference focused on assistive technology. So we have that conference coming up, I'm gonna share the link in the chat, registration isn't open yet, but we do have it set up as an event page on Facebook. So you can be, keep up to date with what's happening. We expect registration to open up mid March and the conference will be focused around assistive technology, and particularly we're doing it on Earth Day, it's April 22nd, and we're going to focus on how we can reuse assistive technology and be friendly to our planet while we're using it. And we do have another question here from McKayla. She wants to know, where do we access the recordings of these Zoom trainings? Are we only allowed access to the ones we have attended? That is a great question, Mckayla, I'll go ahead and answer it since I'm un-muted here. So we have access to our trainings, every Ability Tools training is archived, and we do post them on our training library. I'm gonna go ahead and share that link in the chat there. When you go to the training library, it has a whole list of categories, to see the trainings that are the most recent, go ahead and select the all categories button, and then it'll show you the trainings we've done by date, and you can access them there. Thank you for asking that. Any other questions before we close out?

- [Kathrine] And we also have a couple more things going on.

- [Megan] Oh, right, thank you, Kathrine.

- [Kathrine] Yeah, we have, let's see, we have our latest and greatest vendor series coming up, we have a really exciting presentation that's gonna be occurring on St. Patrick's Day, I don't know what it is about us and wanting to do trainings on holidays. We have a training coming up on St. Patrick's Day for wheel pad, a pretty great new piece of AT that's coming out that you guys are definitely gonna wanna hear about, and we're also going to be starting a new smart home training series. It's gonna be very exciting. It's gonna be a monthly release where we're going to be going over specific concerns regarding smart home devices and, you know, smarting out your house. So there's a lot going on.

- [Megan] This is Megan, I apologize, I lost my Zoom window for a second. I'm gonna share another link, it's not an Ability Tools training, but it is something through CFILC and Are You Disabled and Proud program. We have a disability leadership speaker series that we're launching. The first inaugural event will be on April 13th and we're bringing in Alice Wong of the Disability Visibility project to speak with us about how she does her digital organizing online, and how she came to be Alice Wong, the person we all know that is great at connecting our disability community through Twitter especially. So if you'd like to register for that event, it's also in the chat. Anything else, Katherine, before we close out?

- [Kathrine] Just be sure to hit up the sanitation training that's being put on by the AT3 Center, I sent that out on the listserv and that is gonna be a pretty valuable training, it's being presented by Liz Persaud and Carolyn Phillips from Georgia Tech, and they are fantastic. And I can only imagine how really great that presentation is gonna be.

- [Megan] Perfect, and that is next week, is that right, Kathrine?

- [Kathrine] Yeah, it's coming up really soon, I'm pretty sure it's Monday or Tuesday, I'm not positive. I sent it out on the listservs and I will definitely be sending out another update.

- [Megan] Perfect, and if you did not get that link and you'd like to attend that sanitation webinar, again, it's being done by our National Assistive Technology partners at AT3 Center, so if you'd like to get that link and you did not see it, please let Kathrine know, you shall have access to her email, but I'm gonna throw it in the chat, just in case, it's kathrine@cfilc.org. Anything else, Kathrine, before we close out?

- [Kathrine] No, we sound very busy.

- [Megan] We do sound very busy, I'm tired, but excited looking at the schedule. Thank you everyone for joining us. When you close the webinar today there will be a quick SurveyMonkey that will pop up looking for some participant info from you, and then also to let us know how we did today and what else you'd like to see from Ability Tools. Thanks for joining and have a great rest of your afternoon.