

Miami-Dade County Public Schools

Assistive Technology Procedures

The goal of Assistive Technology (AT) is to enable independence and to provide students with disabilities access to the curriculum and participation in school activities. IDEA defines an assistive technology device as “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” (IDEA, 2004, Section 602).

For example, a page up is an office supply item that holds paper upright for a student to read or copy from on the desk. A piece of equipment could be a calculator, and a product system could be a dynamic display communication device that can be programmed with messages.

IDEA not only defines “assistive technology device” but also defines “assistive technology service” as any service that helps a student with a disability select an appropriate assistive technology device, obtain the device or train the student to use the device.

AT is a continuum ranging from simple to complex. The IEP team should consider the least restrictive AT (simplest solution) before a more complex solution. The School Support Team (SST), which may consist of teachers, parents, therapists, AT Contact person (ATC), paraprofessionals, and school administrators, will identify the student and determine the area(s) of concern within the curriculum.

Overview of the process

IDEA requires each IEP team to consider Assistive Technology for the student at every IEP meeting. Consideration of assistive technology involves the discussion of the following questions:

- **What do we want the student to be able to do within the education program that the student is not able to do because of their disability?”** *Make sure you think about what the student needs to do across all educational settings.*
- **Is the student currently able to complete tasks with special strategies or accommodations?** *Some examples of strategies or accommodations are: the use of a peer partner, copies of notes or extended time. If these are successful, then assistive technology may not be required.*

- **Is there assistive technology currently being used to address this task?"** *Examples of this might include devices, tools, hardware or software.*
- **Would assistive technology help the student perform this skill more easily or proficiently, perform it in the least restrictive environment, or perform it successfully with less personal assistance?** *If so, then the IEP team must match assistive technology solutions to the task (using the AT assessment process).*

AT Assessment Process

If the IEP Team, after considering assistive technology for the student, determines that (a) the student needs AT to access his/her IEP goals, or (b) the student's current assistive technology needs to be reviewed, then parental consent for AT assessment will be secured, using the **Notice of Intent and Parental Consent to Conduct an Assistive Technology Assessment** (FM 7641). Members of the assessment team may include members the SST and other district support personnel, such as ESE Curriculum Support Specialist(s), or Local Assistive Technology Specialists (LATS).

Section 1003.575, Florida Statutes, states that "an assistive technology evaluation must be completed within 60 school days. The 60-school day timeline begins when the IEP team makes the recommendation for such an evaluation. During an IEP team meeting, if the IEP team recommends an assistive technology evaluation, then the parent would be asked to sign consent to conduct the evaluation procedures." The 60-school day timeline does not include weekends, school holidays or district designated teacher planning days. Please note, however, that no adjustments to the 60-school day timeline can be made due to student absence(s).

When consent is secured, the SST/IEP Team will commence the assessment (trial/s), using the **Assistive Technology Assessment and Implementation Plan (ATIP) (FM 7067)**. This PDF document includes embedded weblinks to AT resources, such as photos of AT tools, information and free downloads. School teams are encouraged to explore the links when completing the ATIP and considering appropriate tools for the student.

An AT Assessment includes a comprehensive description of how the student functions without AT support, identifies AT devices, tools and strategies that may support the student in achieving the goals and objectives on the IEP, includes the collection of data on the AT trial, and summarizes the team's plan for supporting the student during the trial and implementation.

Once the selected Strategies, Tools & Trials (pages 2-6) of the ATIP have been implemented and some data collected, if any of the following types of support are needed from District AT staff,

- written feedback on the ATIP and current AT trial/results
- tools/equipment for trial
- assistance with the assessment,

the SST will request such assistance by sending a digital copy (originals should be stored in the student’s cumulative folder) of the ATIP (FM 7067), with any preliminary data/outcomes, and a copy of the signed Notice of Intent and Parental/Guardian Consent to Conduct a Screening/Assessment (FM 7641) to:

- assistivetech@dadeschools.net or
- Mail Code 2861, Assistive Technology

*The District LATS will assist and guide the SST with the school based assessment trial.

*Please note that any AT assessment trials for tablet or laptop technology must include a LATS as a member of the assessment team.

Assistive Technology Assessment Report

If ATIP strategies and tools are successful, the **Assistive Technology Assessment Report** (page 7 of FM 7067) is completed by the SST, outlining the recommendations for AT tools and services required for the student to access his/her IEP goals. At least yearly, the team will review the ATIP and update page 7.

The assessment team will convene an IEP meeting to review the AT Assessment. Information from the ATIP and the Assistive Technology Assessment Report will be documented in the IEP (and updated at least yearly) in one or more of the following sections: **Present Levels of Educational Performance, Goals, Assurances, Conference Notes.**

Timelines for Completion of Assistive Technology Assessment

Obtain baseline data on student performance without AT (observation of the student)	Prior to IEP meeting or within 10 school days after IEP meeting
Obtain parental/guardian consent for Assistive Technology Assessment and Implementation Plan	At or after IEP meeting
Schedule next IEP meeting to review the results of Assessment	At IEP meeting when consent is obtained
Determine team member roles for assessment and implementation	AT IEP meeting or within 5 school days after IEP meeting
Assessment and implementation of ATIP strategies, tools and trials	Over the course of the assessment
Data collection of the ATIP strategies, tools and trials	At least weekly during the assessment period

Document the results on the AT Assessment Report and conduct IEP meeting to discuss the results of the assessment	No more than 60 school days after obtaining consent for assessment/evaluation
Review of the Assistive Technology in place and update the AT Assessment Report (page 7 of FM 7067) and the IEP.	At least annually.

Release of M-DCPS Assistive Technology to Student, Family, Agency

Upon a student's graduation or transition to a college/university, to home, or to a community agency, an assistive technology tool or device that has been assigned to, and used proficiently by, a M-DCPS student for at least one school year, can be released to the student, the family, or an agency to which the individual will be transitioning/attending. The **Assistive Technology Equipment Release/Transfer from M-DCPS to Family, Other School District or Agency** form (FM 6790) with the approval and signature of at least 3 ESE District Staff members, including at least one ESE Instructional Supervisor, and at least one LATS, is required.

RESOURCES:

District Assistive Technology website: <http://assistivetech.dadeschools.net>

District Assistive Technology web resource bank: <http://www.skloog.com/user/AssistiveTech>

AT Assessment and Implementation (slide show):
http://assistivetech.dadeschools.net/docs/ATIP_presentation.pdf

State of Florida Department of Education Technical Assistance Paper – “Assistive Technology for Students with Disabilities” (see pages 4-5 for information on the 60-school-day timeline for AT Assessment): <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6801/dps-2013-65.pdf>

FORMS:

FM 7641, *Notice of Intent and Parental Consent to Conduct an Assistive Technology Assessment*
 FM 7067, *Assistive Technology Assessment and Implementation Plan*
 FM 6790, *Assistive Technology Equipment Release/Transfer from M-DCPS to Family, Other School District or Agency*

CONTACTS:

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