

Technology for Toddlers? - You Bet!

Judie Lee, IPAT Director

Children with disabilities may have limited opportunities to independently explore and interact with their world. If solutions are not found to provide them these opportunities, they may fall behind in their intellectual and social growth. Solutions can range from simple adapted toys to computers. The rule of thumb is to consider what activities children are typically doing at a certain age and find a way for children with disabilities to participate.

Communication and language growth is significant in the first years. Technology solutions can promote communication development through simple picture boards, eye gaze frames, and electronic voice output devices. The childhood mobility milestones of rolling, sitting, crawling and walking can also be supported through technology. A variety of aids to assist in motor development are; standing frames, scooters and power chairs.

Children need to manipulate toys and engage in play to understand how things work and develop turn taking, sharing, and decision making skills. Toys adapted for switch use or customized with special knobs or other materials afford children these opportunities. Adapted computer activities address critical thinking, creativity, and other learning skills by providing a flexible and interactive environment. The standard keyboard is inappropriate for young children but there are many other ways young children can control the computer, such as, special keyboards, touch windows, pointing devices and/or switches. Reports of preschool use indicate that children can interact successfully with computer activities as early as 6 to 8 months of age.

WHEN do you consider assistive technology for children? - as early as possible. Consider technology solutions when a gap between understanding and expressing abilities is emerging: when the child's performance falls behind that of his educational peers; when a physical disability is impeding the cognitive development of a child; and/or when a disability is impeding the independence of a child.

Please contact IPAT for information regarding resources for training opportunities, available technology for loan, support groups, and other requests for very young children and their families.

An Option for Personal-Personnel Development

Assistive Technology for Individuals with Learning Disabilities - a Module

Recent advances in assistive technology (AT) have much to offer the individual with learning disabilities and those who support them. Assistive technology solutions can serve both as tools for instruction, as well as, tools for life. If you 'know' there must be something 'out there' that would make the individual with a learning disability more successful, but are unsure of what 'it' could be, IPAT has a module just for you!

This module was developed in direct response to numerous requests by teachers, parents, individuals with learning disabilities and other service providers for such information. The module is designed for individual or group learning and is intended for anyone interested in better understanding the potential AT has to compensate for specific learning disabilities.

The module provides: a rationale for the use of AT for individuals with learning disabilities; a functional and legal definition of AT; an overview of assistive technologies available to support 'written language, reading, listening and mathematics; information on how to select and evaluate the various AT options; and specific manufacturer information. It includes a script, handouts for duplication, resource section, suggested videotapes and over 40 transparencies. The entire module is available for the cost of duplication.

If you are interested in self-study or are responsible for staff development training call 1 888-214-2780 and place an order for your *Assistive Technology for Individuals with Learning Disabilities* module today. Make your \$25 check payable to the AT Info-Line and send to: AT Info-Line, Box 5510, Bismarck, ND 58506-5510.

Post Secondary Education and Students with Disabilities

In order to be effective self-advocates, students need to be informed about legislation with which colleges and universities must comply that protects the rights of people with disabilities. It is important to know about the Rehabilitation Act as Amended in 1998, Title IV Of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (especially Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and how these two pieces of legislation differ from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990. IDEA is the legislation that governs the provision of special education services to children and youth with disabilities in elementary and

secondary schools. IDEA does not apply to higher education. Colleges and universities do not offer "special" education.

Section 504 and the ADA protect the civil rights of people with disabilities and require post secondary institutions to provide accommodative service to students with disabilities. Accommodative services are essential to the success of many students 'with disabilities and often include the use of assistive technology (i.e. listening to a tape recording of written material while reading it, using a computer to write out exams or papers, utilizing an assistive listening device in lecture situations, being allowed extended time to complete an exam).

Services required by Section 504 and ADA are provided at no cost to the student. However, once admitted to a college or university, it is the student's responsibility to self-identify and provide documentation of their disability. Otherwise, the college or university, need not provide any accommodation.

Typically, colleges and universities will have either an individual or an office on campus whose purpose is to coordinate support services and accommodations for students with disabilities. They are not required to alter admissions requirements, nor are they required to alter programmatic requirements for students with disabilities once they have been admitted.

Once in college, students need to become comfortable with describing to others both their disabilities and their academic and assistive technology needs. Self-knowledge and establishing communication with support service providers are the keys to success for individuals with a disabilities at post secondary education settings.

CONSUMER CONNECTION That Goofy Tip-Top Wheelchair Lift by Wally Itrich

Hey Mom, "LOOK!" the ten-year-old boy cried out as the lid of the new wheelchair carrier atop my Olds Cutlass opened skyward, hoisting my wheelchair in a mechanical arm to the height of nearly 9 feet.

"Jimmy [or Johnny, or Joey. ..who remembers?], you know it's not nice to stare.. and don't point."

I leaned out of the car door and quickly interrupted, "Ahh, Mom... it's okay. It is kinds cool, don't you think? Hang around and watch it unload." The arm slowly moved to lower the chair to the ground. I reached out and set the ultralight chair aside, then pressed the hand switch to send the arm back up into the carrier.

As I gingerly transferred from the drivers seat to the wheelchair, the kid spouted, "What cha need that for?"

"Jimmy!"

Again I inserted, "Ifs okay, heck it's better that he asks." Then to the boy, "Need what, the carrier or the wheelchair?"

Jimmy thought for a moment. "Both!" Mom grimaced, and rolled her eyes.

"I need the wheelchair because I have multiple sclerosis and my legs don't work. I need the TipTop Wheelchair Lift so I can go to work and just get around without always having to find someone to carry' my chair and drive me around."

What I didn't tell Jimmy was that I'd happened to see an Ad for the lift in a magazine, and without reading further, called the 1-800 number listed or e-mail to tiptop@minot.com. Imagine my surprise to learn that TipTop Mobility, Inc., retailers of the lift was located in Minot, ND, and that the gadget was actually manufactured in my hometown of Dickinson, ND. Funding for the lift came through Vocational Rehabilitation.

"What's that multip--- whatever you said?" the boy bravely ventured. "Multiple Sclerosis. It's a mysterious disease that the doctors don't even understand. It really just screws up my neurological system--that's like the body's electrical system. It makes you real weak, and makes it hard to walk." Then I winked, "But I'm still cool."

"Yeah, I know," Jimmy said, "and so is that lift thing on your car. But, don't you think that name 'TipTop' is kinda. . goofy?"

"You got that right," I laughed, "but didn't it give us a chance to visit.. and learn something new?"

Jimmy smiled and sheepishly nodded. Mom also smiled, and nodded appreciation.

(For more information on the TipTop Wheelchair Lift call 1-800-737- 5958, or E-mail: tiptop@minot.com)

FUNDING NEWS

Training Supports Every AT Investment

Selecting and purchasing an assistive technology (AT) device ensures successful use of AT, right? Wrong! Assistive technology success also is

dependent upon the training provided to support the use and implementation of AT devices.

Just as systematic methods are needed to select and obtain the right assistive technologies, so too must systematic methods be utilized to identify and provide the training required to support them. The training required will vary as each technology user and support person has unique training needs. Some will need training on how a device works, how to program and troubleshoot a device, or how to integrate the device within a certain environment. Others will need AT training which addresses the legal responsibilities for providing AT, the AT assessment process, putting AT into individualized plans, computer assisted instruction, and software selection and integration, among many others.

Investing in assistive technology requires an accompanying investment in training to support the people using the technology, their family members, and the support staff involved in the AT process. Although budget considerations must be made, numerous training resources are available at little or no charge and can be included within existing staff development efforts.

State Tech Act projects, such as North Dakota's Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT), provide statewide, regional and outreach training on a wide range of AT topics in an effort to increase the skills of local service providers to meet the training needs of individuals. For more information about numerous state and national AT conferences and workshops, current IPAT training modules, contracted outreach sessions through the Anne Carlsen Center, or to share ideas for upcoming training opportunities, please call 1-800-265-IPAT or contact the IPAT Coordinator in your region.

EQUIPMENT SPOTLIGHT IntelliKeys®

Need an alternative to the traditional keyboard? Try the IntelliKeys by IntelliTools, an alternative keyboard that plugs into the keyboard port (using the included corresponding cable) of any Macintosh or PC compatible computer. Install no additional software, it is ready to use right out of the box and interfaces with all software programs designed to run using a standard keyboard.



The IntelliKeys keyboard consists of a 24 X 24 grid membrane and six standard overlays - alphabet, arrows, numbers, basic writing, Apple QWERTY and IBM QWERTY. The overlays are bar coded for ease of use and can be switched within a software application while it is running. As well, custom overlays can be created with Overlay Maker software,

response and repeat rates can be customized, and two switch ports are incorporated to meet the needs of a variety of users.

The IntelliKeys is suitable for all ages and can be borrowed from the IPAT Equipment Loan Library 800421-1181 or purchased from IntelliTools 800-899-6687, base cost \$450.

Mark Your Calendar

October 18-21, 1998

Making it Great in '98
Early Head Start/Head Start
Civic Center - Bismarck, ND
701-8574688

October 20-24, 1998

Closing the Gap
Computer Tech in Education
Radisson - Bloomington, MN
Jan Latzke
507-248-3294

November 16-18, 1998

Rehab Technology & AgrAbility for ND
Seven Seas - Mandan, ND
Ken VanBeek
701-328-8961

IPAT Equipment Expo! Sites

October 29,30

Developmental Center
Grafton, ND

November 16-19

Seven Seas - Mandan
Mike Bishop
800-265 -IPAT (4728)