

# Assistive Technology Advocacy for Parents

## A Resource Guide

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### Insight #1

- Parents and educators often worry that providing assistive technology too early will remove the motivation for learning a task. However, there is no research indicating any adverse effects from using assistive technology. Fears about providing assistive technology too soon are unfounded and simply delay opportunities for learning. This is particular true in the areas of alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) and mobility but also extends to technologies that support cognitive tasks like reading, writing, and problem solving.

Learn More

Dunst, C. J., Trivette, C. M., Hamby, D. W., & Simkus, A. (2013). Systematic review of studies promoting the use of assistive technology devices by young children with disabilities. *Practical Evaluation Reports*, 5(1), 1-32. Asheville, NC: Orelena Hawks Puckett Institute. ([Obtain the PDF report here.](#))

### Insight #2

- Life is full of tasks and tools. A key issue for everyone to learn is how to use the right tool for the task. There is no one single tool that works for all. As a result, we want to be in the relentless pursuit of new tools in order to discover options that

- make routine tasks easier,
- save us time,
- reduce frustration, and
- improve the quality of our work.

### Strategies

- Parents and their children will experience a number of critical transitions during adolescence:

Middle School to High School	High School to College	School to Work
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- Parents are the only constant in annual IEP meetings. Here are some suggestions and strategies on how to advocate for assistive technology as part of the IEP process:

Revisiting Assistive Technology Advocacy  
[https://www.advocacyinstitute.org/advocacyinaction/AT\\_Advocacy\\_Update.shtml](https://www.advocacyinstitute.org/advocacyinaction/AT_Advocacy_Update.shtml)

- Technology is ubiquitous. As a result, be open to technologies in the form of apps, software, web sites, and specialized products. From entry-level jobs like cashiers and shipping clerks, almost every job requires some application of technology.
- Technology trends reveal that technology is going to continue to be mobile and connect to other devices and systems via the Internet. Voice assistants like Alexa and Siri and touch tablet interfaces will continue to replace traditional computers and keyboards. As a result, the future of assistive technology is likely to look like standard devices but with functions and tools that are personalized for the user.
- Don't be disappointed if some teachers and schools do not embrace assistive technology as much as you would like them to. Likewise, the use of assistive technology in high-stakes standardized text continues to be a problem. Even if your child's technology needs are not fully embraced in these situations, remember there are no rules about using technology out of school and throughout life.
- It is essential to help students with disabilities learn to advocate for themselves. That is, to explain to teachers how their disability impacts their work and the types of supports (including technology!) that they need to use to be successful. Here are some parent resources for learning more about self-advocacy and transition:

Best Practices in Self-Advocacy Skill Building

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/priority-selfadvocacy/>

- Some families devote so much time and energy to advocating for assistive technology needs in school, they lose sight of the bigger challenge of figuring out what comes next after high school. Helping your young adult find a mentor can be especially important for discovering their passions and talents. As you know, one of the fundamental outcomes of adolescence is a vision of self. This is especially challenging for students with disabilities because so much attention has been focused on what they can't do. Approach technology as a solution for helping young adults be successful in pursuits that they find meaningful.
- Continue to develop your child's sense of curiosity and wonder. If possible, seek to pose questions that allow your child to look things up in Wikipedia or ask questions of Alexa or Siri. The lifelong journey of developing expertise has clear milestones:

Novice	Advance Beginner	Competence	Proficient	Expert
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To access a teacher resource guide:

<http://uwm.kbd.on-rev.com/summer22/arcpa/resources/teachers.pdf>

To access a student resource guide:

<http://uwm.kbd.on-rev.com/summer22/arcpa/resources/students.pdf>