

Illinois Technology Conference for Educators 2006

Using Assistive Technology in the Educational Setting: Examples from Lake Zurich School District

For Successful Use of Assistive Technology in the Classroom:

1. ***Provide written instruction that is left with the device.*** This provides an explanation in how to use the technology. Individualized instruction manuals and instruction sheets are valuable resources for students and individuals working with students with special needs. The instruction provides valuable, simple direction on how the technology is used. Orientation and explanation should also be provided to teachers, para-professionals and any interested party who is working with the student.
2. ***Teachers make all the difference to assistive technology working in the classroom.*** If the teacher can embrace and use it, then the student can be successful at using it too. Teacher support is also needed for para-professionals who work with students to be competent in the use of technology.





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Disability Resources

United Cerebral Palsy

<http://www.ucp.org/>

Cerebral palsy is a term used to describe a group of chronic conditions affecting body movement and muscle coordination. It is caused by damage to one or more specific areas of the brain, usually occurring during fetal development; before, during, or shortly after birth; or during infancy. Thus, these disorders are not caused by problems in the muscles or nerves. Instead, faulty development or damage to motor areas in the brain disrupts the brain's ability to adequately control movement and posture.

"Cerebral" refers to the brain and "palsy" to muscle weakness/poor control. Cerebral palsy itself is not progressive (i.e. brain damage does not get worse); however, secondary conditions, such as muscle spasticity, can develop which may get better over time, get worse, or remain the same. Cerebral palsy is not communicable. Although cerebral palsy is not "curable" in the accepted sense, training and therapy can help improve function.

United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Chicago

<http://www.ucpnet.org/>

Infinitec: Infinite Potential Through Assistive Technology

<http://infinitec.org>

Infinitec, Inc. is a joint effort of the United Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Chicago and United Cerebral Palsy Associations, Inc., Washington D.C.

The UCPA Chicago program sponsors the Infinitec Web site and its many Infinitec Programs. Infinitec brings assistive technology to people with disabilities of all types, in the Illinois counties of Cook, DuPage, Lake and Kane.

The Mission of Infinitec is to advance independence and promote inclusive opportunities for children and adults with disabilities through technology. They can provide devices on a loan or trial basis, and a collaboration consultation with their staff through on-site visits.

Cast: Center for Applied Technology
<http://www.cast.org>

Cast's mission is to expand learning opportunities for all individuals, especially those with disabilities, through the research and development of innovative, technology-based educational resources and strategies.

Muscular Dystrophy Association
<http://www.mdausa.org>

"Muscular Dystrophy" is a broad term used to label gene-related disorders that affect muscles throughout the body. There are more than 20 specific genetic disorders considered to be Muscular Dystrophy. Most have the same result: a reduction in muscle strength due to weakening and deterioration. These various types of Muscular Dystrophies are specific to different muscles in the body and different rates of degeneration.

The muscular dystrophies (MD) are a group of genetic diseases characterized by progressive weakness and degeneration of the skeletal muscles that control movement. There are many forms of muscular dystrophy, some noticeable at birth (congenital muscular dystrophy), others in adolescence

Muscular Dystrophy Family Foundation
No Boundaries
<http://www.mdff.org/index.asp>

The MDFF is an agency whose mission is to fund adaptive equipment. From wheelchairs to van lifts to communication devices and beyond, MDFF can help you get the equipment you need to live with No Boundaries® . We offer comprehensive support programs to ensure clients' medical and emotional needs are taken care of.



The Williams Syndrome Foundation

<http://www.wsf.org>

Williams syndrome is a disorder characterized by physical and developmental problems, including an impulsive and outgoing personality, and intellectual disability. Other features include characteristic “elfin-like_ facial features. Although individuals with Williams syndrome may show competence in areas such as language, music and interpersonal relations, their IQs are usually below average and they are considered moderately to mildly retarded.

National Down Syndrome Society

<http://www.ndss.org>

National Association for Down Syndrome

<http://www.nads.org/>

Down syndrome is a disorder that includes a combination of birth defects; among them, some degree of mental retardation, characteristic facial features and often heart defects, among other health problems. The severity of all these problems varies greatly among affected individuals. Down syndrome is one of the most common genetic birth defects, affecting one in 800 to 1,000 babies. An extra chromosome generally causes it.

The National Fragile X Foundation

<http://www.nfxf.org>

Fragile X syndrome is a common inherited form of mental retardation. It affects about 1 in 4,000 males and 1 in 8,000 females and occurs in all racial and ethnic groups. Fragile X syndrome is a genetic disorder that runs in families. It is different from Down syndrome, another common genetic cause of mental retardation. An extra chromosome generally causes Down syndrome while fragile x syndrome is caused by an abnormality in a single gene.



American Foundation for the Blind (AFB)
Expanding possibilities for people with vision loss
<http://www.afb.org/>

Microsoft Co.
Resource Guide for Individuals with Visual Difficulties and Impairments
<http://www.microsoft.com/enable/guides/vision.aspx>

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities
<http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs13txt.htm>

The terms partially sighted, low vision, legally blind, and totally blind are used in the educational context to describe students with visual impairments. They are defined as follows:

- "Partially sighted" indicates some type of visual problem has resulted in a need for special education;
- "Low vision" generally refers to a severe visual impairment, not necessarily limited to distance vision. Low vision applies to all individuals with sight who are unable to read the newspaper at a normal viewing distance, even with the aid of eyeglasses or contact lenses. They use a combination of vision and other senses to learn, although they may require adaptations in lighting or the size of print, and, sometimes, Braille;
- "Legally blind" indicates that a person has less than 20/200 vision in the better eye or a very limited field of vision (20 degrees at its widest point); and
- Totally blind students learn via Braille or other non-visual media.

Visual impairment is the consequence of a functional loss of vision, rather than the eye disorder itself. Eye disorders, which can lead to visual impairments, can include retinal degeneration/detachment, albinism, cataracts, glaucoma, and muscular problems that result in visual disturbances, corneal disorders, diabetic retinopathy, congenital disorders, and infection.





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State Resources

Illinois Assistive Technology Project

1 West Old State Capitol Plaza
Suite 100
Springfield IL 62701
<http://www.iltech.org>

Illinois Assistive Technology Program (IATP) is a not-for-profit agency that promotes the availability of assistive technology (AT) services and programs for people with disabilities. IATP serves all people with disabilities regardless of age or income, their families, service providers, state agencies, private industry, educators, and other interested individuals.

IATP also has a device loaning program.

Special Education Services Division

Assistive Technology

Illinois State Board of Education

(217) 782-5589
http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/assist_tech.htm

Assistive technology includes both devices and services. As defined in IDEA:

- an assistive technology device means 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 a child with a disability.
- an assistive technology service means any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device.

During the IEP process, assistive technology must be considered for every child and then provided by districts if required in a child's IEP to access a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).



**Community Unit
School District 95**
*Serving the communities of Lake Zurich,
Hawthorn Woods, Kildeer, Deer Park and North Barrington*

**Kathryn Keirans, MEd, OTR/L,
Poster Session Presenter**

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Vendors

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