

Supporting Your Child's Learning

The more opportunities a child has to actively participate in everyday activities, the more learning will occur. Children with disabilities sometimes need different kinds of supports in order to participate in these activities. This support is called Assistive Technology (AT). AT devices can be low-tech or high-tech. Low-tech support can be something as simple as wrapping tape around a spoon handle to make it easier for a child to grasp. High-tech support includes equipment and items such as a computer, iPad, or a power wheelchair.

[Watch a video of this guide](#)

Assistive Technology

- Observe your child throughout the day. Note how she participates in each everyday activity. Is there an activity in which she has a difficult time participating? What about an activity that is going well for her? What is challenging? How could she be more involved in an activity?
- Think about your child's strengths and how he could use AT to participate in an everyday activity. Think about the things he likes or prefers to do. Use your child's interests to motivate him to participate in an activity. A child who enjoys lights may be more motivated to use a communication device that lights up when he presses a button to communicate with you.
- How will you know AT is encouraging your child's participation in an activity? Use the AT with your child during an everyday activity and pay close attention to what happens. How is she participating and learning in the activity now? Are there still challenges or barriers to her participation? Think about how the AT can be changed or whether she needs more assistance to learn to use it.
- After determining that the AT is a good match for supporting your child's participation in an everyday activity, think about how it might be used to encourage participation and learning in other everyday activities. Continue to observe your child during everyday activities where AT is used in order to know when he has become more independent and no longer needs the AT. At that time, reduce or eliminate the use of the AT.



A Quick Peek

Delia is a creative preschooler who is unable to say words. Her parents make sure that she can talk as much as her sisters by using a speech box. Delia's parents program her speech box so that it communicates lots of her wants and needs. When the family is having dinner, Delia joins the dinnertime conversation by pressing picture buttons on the device. She is a member of her family's conversation. As the family talks about new topics, Delia's parents add more words to her speech box.

You'll know the practice is working when...

- Assistive Technology makes it easier for your child to participate in the activity
- Your child is participating in the activity for longer periods of time
- Your child does the activity over and over again

This practice guide is based upon the following *DEC Recommended Practices*: Environment 1, 4, 5, 6
 The DEC Recommended Practices are available at <http://dec-sp.ed.org/recommendedpractices>

Access this practice guide and other products at <http://ectacenter.org/decrp>
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