Promoting Assistive Technology Use and Outcomes With Simple Data Requirements - HANDOUT

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Abundant evidence shows how assistive technology (AT) contributes to improved outcomes for young children with disabilities. However, when used in practice, AT is often not accurately and/or consistently documented. This limits the ability to link AT use with child outcomes. In this presentation, three US Department of Education-funded Model Demonstrations designed to promote the effective AT use will share simple techniques, tools and resources to improve AT use, documentation and data quality. Through our three model demonstration projects, we have various examples highlighting the benefits of using AT with young children. Here are a few of our stories:

Child stories
> 16 month old - Michael, notes from his early intervention team: (PT) I adapted Michael's high chair using a pool noodle, one wrap and Velcro. I made lateral trunk and head supports and foot rest. He played really well in the chair following the adaptation. (ECE) Today I used the new hanging toy bar that was made by *fabricATe* and Michael did really well. His grandmother was pleased that it can be easily stored away under the couch. What a great idea! (OT) My greatest success today with Michael (who is completely nonverbal) was using the PODD communication system. Because of that I was able to tailor my intervention to his interests. He was able to let me know when he was hungry/thirsty. Today Michael used the PODD to say something was wrong; then he had a seizure within 10 minutes.
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> 2 year old - Sarah was having a hard time at home: running around the apartment, unsettled, unable to play by herself. Her early intervention provider and the project AT liaison visited the home. They suggested a trampoline to help Sarah get the pressure and vestibular inputs she needed, but the local AT lending library trampoline was on loan to another family. So, her father bought a small trampoline and reported immediate improvements in Sarah's ability to self-regulate and play by herself for short periods.
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> 4 year old - Mayah had a diagnosis of apraxia. Her preschool teacher borrowed an interactive book from the local AT lending library. Mayah used the moveable pictures and symbols in the interactive book to relay the story in the book without needing to use her voice. After the book was returned to the lending library, the teacher made her own interactive books, because she knew it would be successful.

Provider agency story
> An early intervention provider agency in our state now includes an orientation to AT for every newly hired staff and during student intern orientation. They have adopted the mantra "AT is everyone's responsibility." They modified their clinical documents that now identify sections or complete forms for documenting AT service and devices. Additionally, they hold AT discussions as part of their ongoing coordination of care meetings for each client. Staff and families associated with this agency continue to be the most frequent users of the local AT lending library borrowing items intended for children birth - 5.

State agency partnership story
> The consideration of AT is part of the process of developing an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) for children ages birth to three, and developing an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for children ages 3 to 5. Sometimes a provider may lack the knowledge or awareness of AT; and as a result, they may not consider it when it would be appropriate to do so. Other providers use AT, but do not always document it. A lack of awareness about the full range and scope of AT may lead to a statement in IFSPs and IEPs that there is no need for it, while in fact AT is listed as a component elsewhere in the document. We help parents and educators understand the legal process around AT, called the consideration of AT, and how to properly include it and document it in the IFSP and IEP. Our state agency participated in a workgroup which took a deeper dive into the evidence that supports that providers throughout the state are appropriately documenting AT via a survey to state directors of special education, and a survey to parents. Both surveys were analyzed and had common themes including lack of awareness of AT and lack of knowledge about how to appropriately document. An outcome of the workgroup was interagency collaboration and commitment to complete the state authored AT Manual and include a section specifically for birth - 5.

Resources that point to assistive technology use and importance of documentation

Easy Readings

Dunst, C., Trivette, C., Hamby, D., & Simkus, A. (2013). *Systematic review of studies promoting the use of AT devices by young children with disabilities.* Research Brief, Volume 8, No. 1. Tots-n-Tech Institute. https://www.ctdinstitute.org/sites/default/files/file_attachments/TnT-RB-V8.1-2013-AT-use-by-young-children.pdf

Trivette, C.M., Dunst, C.J., Hamby, D.W., O'Herin, C.E. (2010). *Effects of different types of adaptations on the behavior of young children with disabilities*. Research Brief, Volume 4, No. 1. Tots-n-Tech Institute. https://www.ctdinstitute.org/sites/default/files/file_attachments/TnT-RB-V4.1-2010-Effects-of-adaptations-on-behavior.pdf

Definition of Assistive Technology and other helpful information

ECTA http://ectacenter.org/topics/atech/atech.asp

Myths and Myth Busters about Assistive Technology for Young Children
https://docs.google.com/a/udel.edu/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=dWRlbC5lZHV8d2VlYXR8Z3g6NDcyMzM2MzA1ODIzYjQ1ZA

Helpful products produced by the three model demonstration projects

Let's Participate!
Website: http://www.letsparticipate.org/
1-page AT Planner: http://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/67030a_5d858b9bc22b4ccca4204777cd9bcc89.pdf

weeAT
Website: https://sites.google.com/a/udel.edu/weeat/
AT Planner, *"PEAT's Suite: Supporting a child's physical environment and assistive tool journey birth to five"* available from http://www.dec-sped.org/bookstore and active on https://www.facebook.com/PEATsSuiteJourney/
fabricATion inspirATion stATion where you can search for simple AT solutions www.fabricate4all.org

TIKES
Website: http://www.pacer.org/stc/tikes/
Trainings on demand http://www.pacer.org/stc/tikes/trainings-on-demand.asp
Exploring AT - handouts and webinars http://www.pacer.org/stc/tikes/trainings-on-demand.asp
Handouts to Support Including Assistive Technology http://www.pacer.org/stc/tikes/including-at-in-school.asp
Funding Assistive Technology http://www.pacer.org/stc/tikes/acquiring-at.asp