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# Assistive Technology & Transition

*Table 1. Acronym Guide*

Acronym	Definition
AT	Assistive Technology
IEP	Individual Educational Program
DVR	Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
CDE	Colorado Department of Education
SWAAAC	Statewide Assistive technology, Augmentative Alternative Communication teams
BOCES	Board of Cooperative Educational Services (a collaboration of school districts)
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
FAPE	Free and Appropriate Public Education
QIAT	Quality Indicators in Assistive Technology
QIAT-PS	Quality Indicators in Assistive Technology-Post Secondary
LEA	Local Education Agency
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
SGD	Speech Generating Device
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
COEF	Colorado Office of Employment First

**This document was created in collaboration with the Colorado Department of Education transition team, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Center for Inclusive Design and Engineering.**



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## Assessment of Assistive Technology (AT) needs:

### How do I know if AT would benefit my student?

- A team-based, AT assessment is an important part of determining whether a student can benefit from AT. There are many approaches to evaluating student learning needs and identifying assistive technology (AT) tools and strategies to support those needs. The [SWAAAC website](#) contains a variety of resources on assessment that includes: an overview of the assessment process, the on-going, dynamic nature of AT assessment, and common tools and protocols to help guide teams through the process. However, every district and/or BOCES has their own referral and assessment process. Visit the [SWAAAC Team Coordinators webpage](#) to find your school district or BOCES AT Team Coordinator.
- Assistive Technology Assessments often use a [SETT framework](#) (Student, Environment, Tasks, Tools) to identify the features of AT tools and strategies that will support a student with specific tasks in their educational environments. As a student's educational environments and tasks change, so do their AT needs. [Re-SETT](#) is a reflection of the dynamic, on-going nature of AT assessment.
- Assistive Technology assessments are tailored to the unique needs of each student. They are based on the need for additional support in the educational setting and this is usually determined in an IEP meeting.

### I am a family member, will my student benefit from AT?

- For students in the public schools, the IEP team is the first place to begin. The team can work with the AT team in the district and identify what technology a student may need to receive an appropriate education.

### Who are the community connections involved in evaluating and procuring equipment?

- In addition to the school team, some families also work with [outpatient clinics](#) or private practitioners to evaluate more complex AT needs. Private and public insurance such as Medicaid can sometimes pay for an evaluation and AT that is



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considered medically necessary. This may include wheelchairs, communication devices, etc.

- The [Division of Vocational Rehabilitation](#) (DVR) may be a beneficial resource for the evaluation and procurement of employment-related assistive technology.



## How does AT get into a student's IEP?

- An IEP (Individualized Education Program) is the document created by the school team, parents, student, and agency representatives (if applicable). The IEP identifies the student's educational program and defines the educational goals, services, and supports needed to help the student achieve identified goals. Each student receiving special education services has an IEP. The current special education law known as IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) states that an annual consideration of assistive technology devices and services is required for all children identified as having an exceptional need.
- IEP teams are required to consider AT as part of developing a plan to meet each student's unique needs. If the team determines that a student needs AT, they may have a team member with advanced training in AT do an assessment to figure out which type of technology is best for that student.



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## How do you know what AT to recommend?

- AT recommendations are based on student strengths/challenges, the supports/barriers that exist in the educational environment, and the specific academic tasks that are required of the student. See the [SETT Framework](#) mentioned above.

## Procurement of AT:

### How can a person or agency purchase AT devices?

- For AT considered medically necessary, purchases are made after an evaluation and a trial of multiple devices to determine the best fit. Funding complex technology solutions through medical insurance requires recommendations from a skilled professional such as a physical or occupational therapist or speech language pathologist.
- For simple, low-tech devices not fundable through medical insurance, some agencies will purchase them for individuals. Examples of these devices might include switches and switch toys, adapted eating utensils, etc.

## AT Specialists in the schools:

### What is SWAAAC?

- The SWAAAC (**StateWide Assistive technology Augmentative Alternative Communication**) Program is a statewide initiative supported and funded by the Colorado Department of Education and managed by the Center for Inclusive Design and Engineering at the University of Colorado Denver, Department of Bioengineering.
- Colorado SWAAAC and local Assistive Technology teams support learning by connecting students with disabilities to the tools and technology (assistive technology) they need to achieve their full potential.
- IDEA legislation mandates consideration of AT on an Individualized Education Program (IEP) to support a child's participation in their least restrictive learning environment. This mandate can promote access to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).



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- The Colorado Department of Education's school-based SWAAAC teams provide multidisciplinary Assistive Technology services to provide students with disabilities equal access to the curriculum and full participation in their education and classroom. There are over 60 participating school districts and 500 SWAAAC team members across the state of Colorado.

### **How do I find my AT specialists in a Colorado public school district or BOCES?**

- Most school districts in Colorado have SWAAAC teams to serve their students with disabilities. Teams may be called SWAAAC or Assistive Technology Teams or another name they have chosen. SWAAAC teams have a team coordinator whose contact information can be found on the [SWAAAC Team Coordinator webpage](#).

### **If my district is not listed as a participant, what should I do?**

- Check with your school district's Special Education Department if you do not see your district team coordinator listed under "Contact Us" on the SWAAAC website at [www.swaaac.com](http://www.swaaac.com).

### **AT implementation:**

#### **Who is responsible for maintaining an individual's AT equipment (updates, fixes, etc)?**

- The answer to this question depends...
  - If a student is still in the district and has AT on their IEP, the district is typically responsible for maintaining the AT to support a FAPE. The family and student are also responsible for taking appropriate care of the technology. Individualized Education Programs, or IEPs, expire when a student graduates from high school and receives a diploma. IEPs are created under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which applies to students until they graduate high school and receive a diploma or turn 21, whichever comes first.
  - After exiting the public school system, care and maintenance of AT typically falls to the student.



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- If eligible, DVR may assist with AT if it is determined necessary and appropriate to obtain, retain, or maintain competitive, integrated employment.
- If a student is not attending post-secondary education or not pursuing competitive employment, a referral to a [Community Center Board](#) may be an appropriate resource.
- In post-secondary education, the student may be responsible if the AT is personally owned by the student. If the AT is owned by a post-secondary institution; the institution is typically responsible.



### Responsibilities:

#### I am a general education teacher, what is my responsibility regarding AT?

- General education teachers are required members of the IEP team. The team works together to develop a plan for how AT devices and/or strategies are implemented in the classroom and to ensure the student's academic needs are met. General education teachers interact with students on a regular basis and are an important part of the learning process. Their input will assist AT Team members to identify any student and/or staff training needs.

#### I am a parent and I am just learning about AT. Where can I go to learn more?

- Visit the SWAAAC web site to learn more. There is a page there dedicated to [parent resources](#).



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## Borrowing and trialing AT:

### What is the loan library?

- The loan library is a library of Assistive Technology devices and resources available for loan to all Colorado's Public Schools. Items are borrowed via a designated Team Coordinator at each district or BOCES.
- Anyone may browse the [online AT loan library catalog](#); however, a SWAAAC team coordinator must make equipment loans.
- The loan library is designed to provide students in the public school system with access to AT equipment for evaluation and trial. It may also be used by SWAAAC team members to learn to use the equipment to effectively serve a student.



### How do I access or request an item from the loan library?

- The SWAAAC Loan Library contains over 1500 assistive technology devices and resources. Search the catalog for switches, mounts, AAC devices, adapted curricula, executive function supports, and SO MUCH MORE.
- Anyone can view the [Loan Library Catalog](#) of equipment but only team coordinators may borrow from it.
- The SWAAAC Loan Library catalog details the entire inventory currently available to SWAAAC team members. Alexandria is searchable by anyone (teachers, caregivers, family members, related service professionals). It is a great resource of information including descriptions and features of devices, purchase price, and a picture of the item(s). Assistive Technology service



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- providers can direct AT stakeholders/clientele/consumers to Alexandria in order to preview potential AT solutions.
- Items are typically borrowed for 6 weeks, allowing one-week transportation both to and from the student ensures 4 weeks to trial the AT. Occasionally extensions are granted if there is no waiting list.
  - For additional information about the loan library visit the [loan library FAQ](#)

## What about 504 plans?:

### Regarding their AT, what are the steps under 504 ADA for students with disabilities exiting the schools?

- 504 plans ensure people with disabilities or chronic illnesses can receive reasonable accommodations in the classroom or workplace. They are developed under the Rehabilitation Act, and there is no age minimum or maximum to receive services. Thus, the 504 plan can transition with the student to higher education and/or the workplace. It can be useful for accessing disability services in higher education or can be shared with employers to allow for accommodations such as AT. Students will need to share their 504 plan in these new environments and advocate for the AT they may need.

## Resources:

### What important links might help me learn more?

- [SWAAAC.org](#) – contains numerous resources on different types of AT, the AT loan library, team coordinators and professional development.

### What should I know about AT and transition?

- Pre-graduation AT support:
- [QIAT-PS](#) Transition planning may include instruction to develop a student's independence with their AT and ability to self-advocate for their AT accommodation needs. (see link in resources)



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- Pre-graduation transition planning may include assisting students and families with identifying community AT support services and resources available post-graduation.
- Transition Services for students with IEP
- Beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child turns 15, or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP Team, and updated annually, thereafter, the IEP must include– (1) Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills; and (2) The transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the child in reaching those goals. 34 CFR § 300.320(b).
- Transferring Ownership of AT Equipment
- Through a cooperative agreement between CDE and DVR, students with AT accommodations can continue to use Part B- funded equipment if both the school district and DVR agree to the transfer of ownership. “Coordination between LEAs and State VR agencies to enable students with disabilities to continue using assistive technology devices as they move from one program to the other is an efficient, cost-effective means of facilitating transition from school to work-related services...”. Letter to Goodman, 30 IDELR 611 (OSERS 1998).
- If the student needs the same AT for training or employment purposes, then DVR may purchase it from the school when the student graduates. Otherwise, the student would then have to seek the same or similar device through DVR. The need for the device would continue to be reflected in the IEP with reference to DVR as the purchaser upon the student’s transition. The AT would also appear in the individual plan of employment (“IPE”), which must be developed by DVR before the student graduates. [DVR / CDE cooperative agreement](#)
- Post-graduation AT support:
  - The transition of AT is an important part of the transition process and should be discussed at the student’s IEP meeting. (see above)



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### Additional Resources:

#### On the SWAAAC.org web site:

- Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology – Post-Secondary (QIAT-PS) Can be found on the [SWAAAC web site](#)
- View the, [AT Transition Resources for High School and Beyond](#), recorded webinar on the SWAAAC YouTube channel
- [Assistive Technology and Transition](#) (scroll down to AT and transition)
- Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology Can be found on [the SWAAAC web site here](#)
- This section of the SWAAAC web site contains [numerous resources](#) that have been curated in order to support a solid introduction to the requirements and skills necessary to provide impactful assistive technology supports and services to students with disabilities.

#### Additional web sites:

- Colorado Department of Education Secondary Transition
  - The CDE Secondary transition team [offers numerous resources for students with disabilities](#).
- Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
  - DVR provides a wide [variety of individualized services](#) for people with disabilities to allow them to reach their employment goals. These services can include vocational guidance and counseling, short or long-term training, job seeking skills, job development and job coaching, and assistive technology and needed accommodations to participate with DVR and on the job.



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- [Training: Enhancing Employment](#) Through AT can be found here:
  - [CAST](#) is a nonprofit education research and development organization that created the Universal Design for Learning framework and UDL Guidelines, now used the world over to make learning more inclusive.
  - [Community Centered Boards](#)



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