

Education 101 PLUS

A Primer:

Education Advocacy in Georgia
for Students who Use or may Require
Alternative/Augmentative Communication

Atlanta Area AAC Parents
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PRACTICAL TIPS:

Hints to make you a more effective advocate your student

Discuss together as parents what vision you have for your student's future. Agreeing on a vision and keeping it in mind when making decisions is valuable to ensure that that your decisions are in furtherance of achieving your vision. Sharing your vision with other members of the team will help you find others who will support you in achieving it. Share it at every opportunity.

Know the strengths, gifts, abilities, interests, performance, and history of your student, and stress them at every opportunity.

GET IN the classroom, and know about your student's day.

Document, document, document. If you haven't done it in _____, you haven't done it.

Parents and/or other loving adults are important members of the IEP team. Their knowledge of their student is important to the development of a successful IEP,

and this is one of the reasons the law has given parents so much authority in the IEP process. Share your knowledge.

Parental signatures on an IEP are an option and are NOT required. Don't ever sign a document you that don't agree with or that you don't _____.

“Note-Takers” at meetings make mistakes. Audio record all meetings for use when reviewing the IEP document for accuracy. Correct any inadvertent errors to the document in writing as soon as possible after the meeting.

Be conscious of your own beliefs and how they may influence your ability to advocate in a thoughtful manner.

Maintain a copy of your student's records. Parents have the right to and SHOULD keep a copy of every document the school has on their student. You should review the file and be familiar with the school's view of your student. Spend some time before IEP meetings reviewing current documents and preparing notes as to recent progress or regression, skills that have been learned at home, and educational concerns.

IEP meetings - the rule of NO _____. IEP meetings are similar to all other important meetings, in that the more preparation, the better the outcomes are likely to be.

- If results of assessments or drafts of recommended goals and objectives will be presented, it will be helpful to review copies of these to review prior to the meeting. Request copies of all such materials, and a draft of the IEP, for review in advance of the meeting.
- If you intend to make a special request or present drafts of recommended goals or objectives, provide notice of the request or copies of the materials to the other members of the team in advance of the meeting as well.

How do I know if my student has a disability?

There are at least two ways in which a student may be selected to receive an evaluation:

- (1) Parents may request their child to be evaluated in all areas of suspected disability; or
- (2) The school district may ask to evaluate a student.

If the school district refuses to evaluate a student at the parents' request, it must provide parents with written notice that includes a full explanation of the reasons for the refusal.

Parents *must* give **informed** written consent before the school district may conduct an *initial* evaluation of a student. This consent to evaluation is not consent for the student to receive special education services.

Initial evaluations and eligibility must be completed within 60 calendar days of receiving parental consent, unless a state has regulations that permit longer

timelines. Georgia's regulations allow for extensions of the 60-day timeline for (a) student absences of 5 consecutive days, and (b) requests made within the 30 days prior to the last day of the school year.

What laws pertain to students with disabilities?

To receive special education services or accommodations, a student must be eligible under at least one of these two federal laws: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 (of the _____ of 1973). Students whose disabilities seriously hinder them from making progress in school are entitled, under IDEA, to receive "a free appropriate public education" (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE).

IDEA eligibility ends when the student graduates high school or turns twenty-two.

IDEA 2004 also specifically incorporates No Child Left Behind.

Section 504 stresses the concept of equal opportunity. Section 504 requires reasonable steps to ensure that students with disabilities have access to the school's full range of programs and activities.

What laws pertain to individuals who use or may require AAC?

There are many laws that pertain to individuals who use or require AAC which can be useful in accessing supports, planning for postsecondary transition, and otherwise. While we will not be reviewing these laws today, except to the extent that they may apply to primary and secondary education, they are listed with brief descriptions at the back of this hand-out for your reference.

What is FAPE?

Under both IDEA and Section 504, a student is entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Free means without cost to you. Appropriate means that the education enables the student to make meaningful progress.

Appropriate does not mean the education is perfect or the _____ (bad word!!!).

An education plan should be reasonably designed to provide meaningful educational help. Public means the local school system provides the education.

And education means not just reading, writing, and college preparation but can also include practical living, social, and communication skills or vocational training.

What are some differences between 504 and IDEA?

Eligibility: IDEA eligibility and the educational needs of the student are determined after evaluations by the eligibility team, which includes the parents, by first determining that the student is a “child with a disability.” The regulations for IDEA define a "child with a disability" to mean a child (i) with:

mental retardation,
hearing impairments (including deafness),
speech or language impairments,
visual impairments (including blindness),
serious emotional disturbance (SED),

orthopedic impairments (OI),
autism,
traumatic brain injury (TBI),
other health impairments (OHI), or
specific learning disability (SLD); **and**

(ii) who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services.

Section 504 eligibility is determined by the eligibility team, which may not include the parents, by determining that a student has any disability **affecting** education. Under Section 504, an individual is disabled if s/he has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits at least one major life activity. The definitions of eligibility under the _____ of 1990 (ADA) are patterned after those of Section 504.

Plans: Students determined eligible for special education and related services under IDEA will have an IEP; Students determined eligible for protection only under Section 504 may have a 504 Plan. 504 Plans are not required to be in writing, however, and they can be developed without parental consent. Although Section 504 does not require a meeting before a change in placement, it does have a _____ (LRE) requirement, codified at 34 C.F.R. §104.34, that is similar to the LRE mandate of the IDEA.

Protections: Section 504 is a broad civil rights law that protects individuals with disabilities from discrimination. Students who receive special education services

under IDEA are automatically protected by Section 504. Students with disabilities who have a 504 Plan, however, do not have the same procedural protections as those provided to students with an IEP under IDEA.

Participation in Extracurricular Activities: Section 504 prohibits any recipient of Federal financial assistance from discriminating against any individual with a disability or excluding such individual from participating in or receiving the benefits of any program or activity conducted by such recipient, or subjecting to discrimination any individual with a disability, based solely on the individual's disability. More specifically, the Section 504 regulations require school districts to provide nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities in "such a manner as is necessary to afford students with a disability an equal opportunity for participation in such services and activities."

Funding: IDEA, unlike 504, brings federal funding to schools. 504 is funded locally.

What are parents' options if they disagree with the school's evaluations?

If parents disagree with the results of **any** evaluation of a student as performed by the school district (including AT and AAC evaluations), they have the right to request what is known as an _____ (IEE) at school district expense. An IEE is an evaluation conducted by a qualified examiner who is not employed by the school district responsible for the education of a student. When parents request an IEE at public expense, the school district must, without unnecessary delay, (1) ensure the evaluation is performed, or (2) request a due process hearing in an effort to prove its evaluation is appropriate. If the assigned Administrative Law Judge finds in favor of the school district at the conclusion of the hearing, the parents are still entitled to an IEE, but not at public expense. Of course, parents have the right to have their student privately evaluated in any area, at *any time*, at their own expense.

What is special education?

Special education is defined as instruction that is specially designed, at no cost to parents, to meet a student's unique needs. Specially designed instruction means adapting the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction:

1. to address the unique needs of a student that result from his or her disability, and
2. to ***ensure the student's access to the general curriculum*** so that he or she can meet the educational standards that apply to all students within the jurisdiction of the school district.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION
IS A SERVICE –
NOT A _____.**

What is the parents' role in the IEP process?

The law is very clear that parents have the right to be equal _____ in the IEP process at all stages. Parents are equal members of their child's eligibility, IEP, and placement teams. The law requires that school districts take certain actions to include parents.

- a. The school district must notify parents of the meeting early enough to ensure that you have an opportunity to attend.
- b. The school district must attempt to schedule the meeting at a mutually agreed on time and place.
- c. The notice given to parents by the agency must indicate the purpose, time, and _____ of the meeting.
- d. The notice must also identify who will attend the meeting and inform you about the participation of other individuals on the IEP team who have **knowledge or special expertise** about the student.

What is an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)?

An IEP is a written statement for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in a meeting in accordance with requirements of law and regulations. An IEP is a legal document. It sets out the **individualized** instruction and related services for a student, but it is not a _____. IDEA does not require that the school be held liable if a child does not achieve the growth projected in the annual goals and objectives; however, the school is responsible for providing the special education and related services written into the IEP.

Who is on the IEP team?

An IEP Team consists of parents; at least one general education teacher of the student who is, or may be, participating, in general education classes; at least one special education teacher of the student or, if appropriate, one special education provider of the student; a local educational agency representative; one person who can explain what the student needs to be taught based on evaluation results (may be one of the above educators); at the _____ or the local education agency (LEA), other persons with knowledge or special expertise about the student, including related service personnel; and the student. Note that the entire team does not have to be present at meetings to amend an IEP, and an IEP can be amended by agreement without a meeting. Participants may be excused from meeting attendance with written permission (consent) from parents and from the LEA. If a participant is excused, and their area of expertise is to be discussed, they should provide written input.

What should be included in an IEP?

_____ (PLOP)

Annual Goals

Short-term Instructional Objectives

(only for students who are being tested with an alternative assessment)

Evaluation and Review Data

Placement Recommendations

Special Education and Related Services; Supplementary Aids and Services;
Program Modifications or Supports for School Personnel

Participation in Statewide/District-wide Assessments

Statement of Needed Transition Services

(mandatory at age 16)

Reporting of Progress

What should be considered in developing Annual Goals?

Annual goals must:

Be objective and measurable;

Address your student's present levels of academic and functional performance; and

Include a reasonable estimation of your student's expected progress by the end of the school year.

A goal should be listed for each specific area of need, and each goal should include:

A statement of the skill to be taught, which should include the manner by which the student will demonstrate mastery and the prompting hierarchy¹ to be used in achieving mastery (i.e., “Student will demonstrate knowledge of one-to-one correspondence to 10 using sign language or his communication device with decreasing visual prompts”);

The level of skill mastery being worked toward;

¹ Watch for details on a Presentation by Vicki Clarke on the Dynamic Goals Grid and prompting hierarchies, tentatively scheduled for 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 29, 2009.

The name of the professional who will be primarily responsible for teaching the skill;

The dates on which the student's progress toward mastery will be reviewed and reported, which dates should be staggered and logical (i.e., learn one-to-one correspondence to 10 by September and one-to-one correspondence to 20 by November.)

To ensure that expectations are not lowered for your student, you should consider:

aligning their goals with the State Performance Standards (<http://www.georgiastandards.org/>); and

attaching to their IEP a prompting hierarchy² that specifies that the least amount of prompting necessary be used initially and be decreased over time.

² Watch for details on a Presentation by Vicki Clarke on the Dynamic Goals Grid and prompting hierarchies, tentatively scheduled for 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 29, 2009.

What should parents know when considering Special Education and Related Services; Supplementary Aids and Services; and Program Modifications or Supports for School Personnel?

The “statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services, based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable, to be provided to the child, or on behalf of the child,” and the “statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided” are for the purpose of enabling the student:

1. To advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals;
2. To be involved in and ***make progress in the general education curriculum*** and to ***participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities***; and
3. To be educated and participate with other children with disabilities and nondisabled children in academic, nonacademic and extracurricular activities. (34 C.F.R . §300.320(a)(4)(i) - (iii).)

Under IDEA, “Related Services” means “transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education,” and “Supplementary Aids and Services” means “aids, services and other supports that are provided in regular education classes, other education-related settings, and in extra-curricular and nonacademic settings to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children.

These aids and services that accompany the special education program are an integral part of an appropriate education for students with disabilities. (For purposes of Section 504 (and the ADA), the terminology used is "related aids and

services.") These terms are very broad, should be individualized to the needs of your student, and **may** include, but are not limited to:

speech-language pathology services; audiology services;
psychological services;
physical therapy; occupational therapy;
recreation, including therapeutic recreation devices and services;
early identification and assessment of disabilities in students;
counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling;
orientation and mobility devices and services;
medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes only;
school nurse services; school health services;
social work services; interpreting services;
parent counseling and training; school staff training and materials;
vocational placement services;
assistive technology devices and services (including training and technical support for any professional substantially involved in the student's life);
materials and technologies based upon universal design principles,
one-on-one tutoring services; academic remediation services; and
transition services that are required before the mandatory age of 16.

What should parents know when considering placement recommendations?

_____ (LRE) is a placement term. The IDEA defines least restrictive environment as education provided to students, to the greatest extent appropriate, with their peers. The regulations further encourage that students be placed in their neighborhood schools in the general program. A student may only be removed from a general education placement if the nature or severity of the disability is such that the education of such student in the general education classroom with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. Schools must provide a continuum of placement alternatives (meaning an array of possibilities), and schools cannot predetermine placement based upon a label or otherwise.

In reauthorizing the IDEA in 2004, Congress included the strongest language to date to clarify its high expectations for students with disabilities. “30 years of research and experience has demonstrated that the education of children with

disabilities can be made more effective by having high expectations for such children.” Students with disabilities should be educated in general education classrooms so that they can “meet developmental goals and, to the maximum extent possible, the challenging expectations that have been established for all children and be prepared to lead productive and independent adult lives”

*There is less education going on
in segregated classrooms than there is in general education classrooms.*

Expectations are lowered in segregated classrooms.

There is nothing “special” about the “special places.”

What should parents know when considering their student's Participation in Statewide/District-wide Assessments

The _____ (SEA) is required by the IDEA to “use universal design principles in developing and administering any assessments.”

The key concept of Universal Design (defined by the _____ of 2004 (the Tech Act) at 29 U.S.C. §3002(19)) is that materials and technologies be designed to accommodate the unique learning styles of a wide range of individuals, to be used by people with the widest possible range of functional capabilities, including products and services that are directly accessible (without requiring assistive technologies) and products and services that are interoperable with assistive technologies..

Examples include accessible websites, electronic versions of textbooks and other

materials; captioned and/or narrated videos; word processors with word prediction; and voice recognition.

A choice to have your student participate in alternative assessments often results in a lack of full access (and in some cases, *any* access) to the general education curriculum.

What should parents know when considering their student's Statement of Needed Transition Services (mandatory at age 16)

Certain transition services that will be a part of your student's transition plan will require much more time than the mandatory age of 16 affords for effective postsecondary transition. Parents should utilize Related Services and Supplementary Aids and Services to access these services immediately as a part of their Student's transition plan.

How often can an IEP team convene?

Parents may call an IEP meeting whenever they need to address a concern.

IEPs are reviewed and revised by the IEP Team, including the general education classroom teacher, as needed. This process occurs periodically but not less than annually. Issues usually addressed in an IEP meeting are:

1. determining whether the annual goals are being achieved;
2. addressing any lack of expected progress;
3. reviewing information about the student provided to or by the parents;
4. considering the student's anticipated needs; and
5. other matters (parents' concerns).

What are parents' options if there is disagreement with the IEP?

REQUEST ANOTHER IEP MEETING: Have the team come back to the table so the parents can further explain and provide documentation in support of their point of view.

REQUEST MEDIATION: Parents have the right to request mediation if they believe their child is being denied an appropriate IEP. Mediation is voluntary and cannot be forced upon either party. It may not be used to delay or deny parents' right to due process, is at no cost to parents, and the resulting written agreement is a binding, confidential statement.

FILE A COMPLAINT: Parents can also file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (an OCR Complaint) or the Georgia Department of Education's Exceptional Student Division (a State Complaint).

An OCR Complaint form can be completed online at <http://wdcrobcopl01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/OCR/complaintform.cfm>, or you can use this form as a guide to prepare your own Complaint and then mail it to

United States Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights
Region IV
61 Forsyth Street
Room 19-T-70
Atlanta, GA 30303

A State Complaint form can be accessed online at http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/DMGetDocument.aspx/Formal_Complaint_Form.doc?p=6CC6799F8C1371F6139CF8AF7C092BCDF6B126040C7B36761149BED063FDA443&Type=D.

Once completed, mail or fax it to

Nancy O'Hara, Director
Special Education Services
Georgia Department of Education
1870 Twin Towers East
205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive SE
Atlanta, GA 30334
(404) 656-3963
(404) 651-6457 fax
nohara@doe.k12.ga.us

A copy should also be sent to the Director of Special Education or Superintendent of your school district.

REQUEST A DUE PROCESS HEARING: When the parents of a student with disabilities and the educational agency disagree about the child's eligibility, placement, program needs, or related services, they can request a due process

hearing with the Office of State Administrative Hearings. A Due Process Hearing Request Form can be accessed at

<http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/DMGetDocument.aspx/Due%20Process%20Hearing%20Info%20and%20Form.doc?p=6CC6799F8C1371F64339A236569A6535DA5A15F929F9DE7A432820894E9B8627&Type=D>. Once completed, submit it to

your District Superintendent, with a copy to the GA DOE, Division for Exceptional Students. More information about OSAH, including its rules, procedures, and forms, can be found at <http://www.osah.ga.gov>.

AAC TIPS:

Hints to make you a more effective advocate your student who uses or may require AAC

As parents of a student who uses or may require AAC, certain considerations should be made and incorporated into the IEP. For example:

With respect to selection of AAC methods for your student, you should consider that

- best practice is for individuals who require AAC to have both a low-tech (e.g., PECS, sign language, communication boards) and a high-tech (e.g., computerized devices) method of AAC,
- PECS can be more limiting in developing language than sign language,
- Sign language can be more limiting in communication than PECS in your student's natural environments,
- _____ (SEE) should be taught to your nonverbal student who uses sign language instead of (or in addition to) ASL to promote English literacy.

With respect to the acquisition of a high-tech AAC device for your student, you should consider that

- there is great value in ownership of the device by your student,
- selection of a device should begin with an AAC evaluation, preferably by a _____ (SLP) who specializes in AAC,
- if funding an evaluation is an issue, you should request an AAC evaluation of your student by the school SLP (who will most likely NOT be an AAC Specialist), and then request an IEE,
- parents can find SLPs who provide AAC services at <http://www.slplocator.com>.

With respect to present levels of communication performance, you should consider

- the Dynamic Goal Grid³ (<http://www.dynavoxtech.com/training/toolkit/details.aspx?id=32>), prepared by Vicki Clarke and Holly Schneider,

With respect to goals, you should consider

- that goals drive the placement,

³ Watch for details on a Presentation by Vicki Clarke on the Dynamic Goals Grid and prompting hierarchies, tentatively scheduled for 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 29, 2009.

- the Dynamic Goal Grid (<http://www.dynavoxtech.com/training/toolkit/details.aspx?id=32>), prepared by Vicki Clarke and Holly Schneider, to develop communication goals,
- the value in specifying the methodology in each goal and the specific _____ (SGD) by name,
- specifying the prompts to be used for each goal and attaching a prompting hierarchy⁴ to the IEP document,
- duplication of services arguments for your students who receive private therapies funded by Medicaid that require _____ (PAs).

With respect to placement, you should consider that

- your Student who uses a SGD will require many opportunities to practice communication with unfamiliar partners across many environments,
- in order for these opportunities to be valuable, such partners will need to have strong verbal communication skills,
- these opportunities are most valuable and productive when they are with your student's peers, and
- it is difficult to provide these opportunities to your student in a segregated placement.

With respect to literacy, you should consider that

⁴ Watch for details on a Presentation by Vicki Clarke on the Dynamic Goals Grid and prompting hierarchies, tentatively scheduled for 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 29, 2009.

- your nonverbal student will most likely need specialized, computer-based reading instruction to acquire the foundation (four blocks) for reading (e.g., Balanced Literacy, Accessible Literacy Learning (<http://www.mayer-johnson.com/ProdDesc.aspx?SKU=F1MJ338>)),
- while once the foundation is acquired s/he will most likely be able to progress with any reading program, your nonverbal student will still have issues with demonstrating reading ability,
- there are other Supplementary Aids and Services that will be beneficial to your nonverbal student in achieving literacy.

With respect to Assistive Technology and Services, you should consider using them to provide

- your nonverbal, preliterate student with tools to access to the general curriculum (e.g., accessible textbooks, writing software, word processors with word prediction),
- training and technical support for yourself, teachers, and other individuals “substantially involved in the major life functions of” your student.

With respect to your student’s Transition Plan, you should consider that

- being able to communicate is an important part of any transition plan for your nonverbal student,
- efficient, effective communication without speech requires much more time to learn,

- the access portion your student's communication should be included well before the mandatory age of 16 as a Supplementary Aid and Service (i.e., keyboard/keyboarding instruction, scanning software/scanning instruction, etc.)

Legal Advocacy Information concerning Students with Disabilities

<http://www.wrightslaw.com/>

Wrightslaw - From site: Parents, advocates, educators, and attorneys come to Wrightslaw for accurate, up-to-date information about effective advocacy for children with disabilities. I especially like their newsletter.

http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/pea_board.aspx?PageReq=PEABoardRules

Georgia Department of Education Website dedicated to exceptional students. Contains the **Georgia State Board of Education Rules Pertaining to Exceptional Students**.

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

Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights - From site: The mission of PACER Center is to expand opportunities and enhance the quality of life of children and young adults with disabilities and their families, based on the concept of parents helping parents.

AAC Resources

List-Serves

AAC Parents - <http://groups.google.com/group/AACParents?lnk=> - From Site: AAC Parents is a discussion group exclusively for parents of children who use AAC. Please honor the integrity of this group and only join if you are a parent of a child who uses AAC.

PACT – <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PACT/> - From Site: Promoting Augmentative Communication Together (PACT) is a community listserv for anyone interested in the field of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). This listserv extends to people who use or need AAC, their families, and the various professionals who provide AAC services. As a member, you can participate in discussions on relevant topics such as implementation and integration of AAC into the home, community and school environment, as well as job-related issues and funding concerns.

ACOLUG - <http://www.temple.edu/instituteondisabilities/programs/assistive/acolug/> - From Site: The Augmentative Communication On-Line User's Group (ACOLUG) is an Internet Listserv which allows users of augmentative communication and their families to communicate with each other and with professionals who are interested in augmentative communication. ACOLUG enables people who are separated by great geographic distances to "meet" and communicate with each other in a way that is convenient, comfortable and free! ACOLUG has a diverse membership of

more than 300 people representing 50 states and 15 countries. The membership is primarily users of augmentative communication ranging in age from 7 years old to mature adults. Family members also play a key role on ACOLUG.

Trainings/Classes (Note that many of the trainings offered on the following sites are not device specific, and therefore, users of any brand of AAC device may find them valuable):

Dynavox - <http://www.dynavotech.com/training/toolkit/>

Prentke Romich - <http://www.prentrom.com/training>

Dunamis - <http://www.dunamisinc.com/train.htm>

Nathaniel H. Kornreich Technology Center - <http://www.abilitiesonline.org/KTC/WebcastArchive.aspx> - From Site: The Kornreich Technology Center has hosted several series of free, web-only programs on issues in augmentative/alternative communication (AAC) and other kinds of assistive technology. Anyone can access these presentations from any internet-enabled computer. Programs done so far are archived here for immediate viewing. Speech-Language Pathologists can earn ASHA CEUs for viewing some of these programs.

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Communication Enhancement (AAC-RERC) - <http://aac-lerc.psu.edu/index-1023.php.html> - From Site: The AAC-RERC is a collaborative research group dedicated to the development of effective AAC technology. Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) refers to ways (other than speech) that are used to send a message from one person to another.

The AAC-RERC site features several webcasts of varying topics. A sample of webinars available at no cost:

- Maximizing the Literacy Skills of Individuals Who Require AAC - <http://aac-lerc.psu.edu/index-10925.php.html> - From Site: Janice Light (Penn State University) describes the components of effective interventions for young children who use AAC.
- Supporting Successful Transitions for Individuals who use AAC - <http://aac-lerc.psu.edu/index-5231.php.html> - From Site: David McNaughton (Penn State University) describes key supports to successful transitions for individual who use AAC
- Seating and Positioning for Individuals who use AT - <http://aac-lerc.psu.edu/index-46797.php.html> - From Site: Aileen Costigan (Penn State University) provides an introduction to important issues in seating and positioning for individuals who use assistive technology (AT).
- AAC Interventions to Maximize Language Development for Young Children - <http://aac-lerc.psu.edu/index-16147.php.html> - From Site: Janice Light (Penn State University) describes the components of effective interventions for young children who use AAC.

Informational Resources

YAACK - <http://aac.unl.edu/yaack/> - From Site: Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Connecting Young Kids (YAACK) is a website that covers issues related to AAC and young children. Its purpose is to provide information and guidance to families, teachers, speech/language pathologists and anyone else who is involved with a child with special communication needs. It is intended to be easy to understand and practical, and to cover a wide range of topics dealing with AAC and AAC-related issues of children at various ages and stages of communication ability, and with different strengths, disabilities and learning characteristics.

AAC Institute - <http://www.aac institute.org/> - From Site: We are a not-for-profit, charitable organization dedicated to the most effective communication for people who rely on augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). A worldwide resource for People with severe communication disorders or who cannot speak, their families and friends, Professionals and Educators, Researchers, Developers and Manufacturers, Funding and other Parties

USSAAC - <http://www.ussaac.org/aboutussaac.html> - From Site: USSAAC is the United States Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication, the national chapter of ISAAC, the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication. We are an organization dedicated to supporting the needs and desires of people who use AAC, as well as the professionals, manufacturers and family members making up our community.

The Family Center on Technology and Disability - www.fctd.info - From Site: The Family Center is a resource designed to support organizations and programs that work with families of children and youth with disabilities. We offer a range of information and services on the subject of assistive technologies. Whether you're an organization, a parent, an educator, or an interested friend, we hope you'll find information that supports you in your efforts to bring the highest quality education to children with disabilities.

International Society of Augmentative & Alternative Communication - <http://www.isaac-online.org> - From Site: ISAAC - the International Society for AAC - works to improve the life of every child and adult with speech difficulties. ISAAC members want everyone in the world to know about AAC.

Michigan State University Communications Lab ASL Web Browser -

<http://commtechlab.msu.edu/Sites/aslweb/browser.htm> - From Site: Welcome to Michigan State University's ASL Browser web site, an online American Sign Language (ASL) browser where you can look up video of thousands of ASL signs and learn interesting things about them.

American Speech, Hearing & Language Association - <http://www.asha.org>

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the professional, scientific, and credentialing association for more than 130,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists, speech-language pathologists, and speech, language, and hearing scientists.

Barkley Augmentative & Alternative Communication Center

(University of Nebraska, Lincoln) - <http://aac.unl.edu/> - Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) strategies assist people with severe communication disabilities to participate more fully in their social roles including interpersonal interaction, learning, education, community activities, employment, volunteerism, care management, and so on. This AAC website is designed to provide access to a wide range of information and resources related to the AAC effort. It is maintained by the Barkley AAC Center and the Munroe-Meyer Institute for Genetics and Rehabilitation at the University of Nebraska.

UW Augcomm Website - <http://depts.washington.edu/augcomm/> -

Excellent information can be found on this site on topics such as: Continuum of Communication Independence, Selecting AAC Vocabulary, Understanding AAC Features, AT/AAC enables

Abilities! - <http://www.ncds.org/> - From Site: Abilities! is dedicated to creating a world in which people with disabilities will live simply as people. In this world, people with disabilities will have the same opportunities as all other people, be treated with dignity and respect, and have access to all the benefits of our society.

Augmentative Communication, Inc. - <http://www.augcominc.com/> - From Site: Welcome to our website! Augmentative Communication Inc. (ACI) publishes resources that help keep busy professionals and individuals with complex communication needs up-to-date on important developments in Augmentative and Alternative Communication. ACI is also a partner with the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Communication Enhancement

Facebook Groups

Atlanta Area AAC Parents - When you join Facebook, send a request to join this group as it is a closed group. The reason the group is closed is so that parents feel free to speak openly in this forum regarding any issues they may have with their schools, providers, etc. Other AAC-related Facebook Groups include:

USSAAC

Speaking Differently

AAC User- Why Not?

Speaking with Symbols

AAC Users

QIAT

A.T. Tippers

**Moms Helping Moms – Augmentative
Communication Help**

Technology and Special Education

Assistive Technology in Education

Assistive Technology Laws

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), 42 U.S.C. § 12101

Prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in the following areas:

- Employment
- State and Local Government
- Public Accommodations
- Commercial Facilities
- Transportation
- Telecommunications

Organized by section, or “Title”

- Title I - Employment - Any employer who has 15 or more employees must offer “equal opportunity” to employment related activities
- Title II - State and Local Governments - Insists that all people with disabilities must be given equal access to public education, employment, transportation, recreation, health care, and other areas under their control
- Title III - Public Accommodations by Private Companies - Public accommodations must be made by all private companies, including private schools, restaurants, stores, hotels, doctors’ offices, etc.
- Title IV - Assistive Technology - All telephone companies must provide the necessary services to allow people who are deaf or hearing impaired to use telecommunication devices.

<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/cguide.htm#anchor62335>

<http://www.ada.gov>

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 29 U.S.C. § 1400

Originally passed in 1975 as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA), which guaranteed that eligible children and youth with disabilities have a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).

Amended many times, most recently in 2004.

<http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cstatute%2C>

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C. § 794(d)

Requires that all electronic and information technologies that are developed and used by any Federal government agency must be accessible to people with disabilities. These technologies include:

- Websites
- Video and audio tapes
- Electronic books
- Televised programs
- Any other type of media

Does not apply to the private sector or to organizations that receive Federal funds. (It does, however, apply to materials developed by those organizations for the Federal government and funded by government agencies.)

<http://www.section508.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=Content&ID=12>

Assistive Technology Act of 2004, 29 U.S.C. § 3001, et seq.

Also known as the “Tech Act.”

Provides funds to states to support three types of programs:

1. The establishment of assistive technology (AT) demonstration centers, information centers, equipment loan facilities, referral services, and other consumer-oriented programs;
2. Protection and advocacy services to help people with disabilities and their families, as they attempt to access the services for which they are eligible;
3. Federal/state programs to provide low interest loans and other alternative financing options to help people with disabilities purchase needed assistive technology.

The Tech Act: http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=108_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ364.108

State Tech Act Projects: <http://www.ataporg.org/stateatprojects.asp>

Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act Amendments of 1998, 20 U.S.C. § 2302

Defines vocational technical education as organized educational programs offering sequences of courses directly related to preparing individuals for paid or unpaid employment in current or emerging occupations requiring other than a baccalaureate or advanced degree.

Requires schools to:

- Integrate academic, vocational and technical training
- Increase the use of technology
- Provide professional development opportunities to staff
- Develop and implement evaluations of program quality
- Expand and modernize quality programs
- Link secondary and post-secondary vocational education

Requires states to submit an annual report on how special populations, including persons living with disabilities, engaged in vocational education are faring relative to the state's performance guidelines

<http://www4.law.cornell.edu/U.S.C.ode/html/U.S.C.ode20/U.S.C. sec 20 00002302----000-.html>

<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/CTE/legis.html>

Fair Housing Act Amendments of 1988, 42 U.S.C. § 3604

- Addresses non-discrimination issues for potential tenants with disabilities.
- Makes it unlawful to deny housing to a renter/buyer because of a disability that the person may have.
- Mandates that reasonable exceptions to policies be made to accommodate individuals with disabilities.
- Allows tenants to make reasonable access-related modifications to property if necessary.

<http://www4.law.cornell.edu/U.S.C.ode/html/U.S.C.ode42/U.S.C. sec 42 00003604----000-.html>

The Hearing Aid Compatibility Act of 1988, 47 U.S.C. § 610(b)

Requires that all telephone equipment manufactured or imported for use in the United States after 1989 be compatible with hearing aids.

<http://www4.law.cornell.edu/U.S.C.ode/html/U.S.C.ode47/U.S.C. sec 47 00000610----000-.html>

The Television Decoder Circuitry Act of 1990, Section 3, 47 U.S.C. § 303(u)

All individuals who are deaf or have hearing impairments should have access to information and entertainment via television to the fullest extent possible through technology.

Requires that all new televisions with at least a 13-inch screen have the built-in capacity to display closed-captioned TV transmissions.

<http://www4.law.cornell.edu/U.S.C.ode/html/U.S.C.ode47/U.S.C. sec 47 00000303----000-.html>

Telecommunications Act of 1996

Title I - 47 U.S.C. § 255

Requires that telecommunications equipment and services be accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.

Telecommunication products covered include:

- Wired and wireless telecommunication devices (telephones, cellular phones, pagers, and fax machines)
- Other products that have a telecommunication service capability such as computers with modems
- Equipment that carriers use to provide services, such as a phone company's switching equipment

<http://www.access-board.gov/about/laws/telecomm.htm>

<http://www4.law.cornell.edu/U.S.C.ode/html/U.S.C.ode47/U.S.C. sec 47 00000255----000-.html>

Title II - 47 U.S.C. § 613

Discusses rules concerning closed captions and video descriptions of video programming.

<http://www4.law.cornell.edu/U.S.C.ode/html/U.S.C.ode47/U.S.C. sec 47 00000613----000-.html>

Federal Government Procurement of Accessible Information Technology, 29 U.S.C. § 794(d)

Individuals with disabilities cannot be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance or under any program or activity conducted by any Executive agency or by the United States Postal Service.

<http://www4.law.cornell.edu/U.S.C.ode/html/U.S.C.ode29/U.S.C. sec 29 00000794---d000-.html>

Workforce Investment Act of 1998, 29 U.S.C. § 701

Defines technology in the vocational rehabilitation process and its use in job planning, acquisition and retention of people with disabilities.

<http://www4.law.cornell.edu/U.S.C.ode/html/U.S.C.ode29/U.S.C. sec 29 00000701----000-.html>

Additional Resources

Family Center on Technology and Disability, <http://www.fctd.info>

National Disability Rights Network, <http://www.napas.org/>

A Guide to Disability Rights Law - U.S. Department of Justice, <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/cguide.htm>

American Association of People with Disabilities, <http://www.aapd-dc.org/>

Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities, <http://www.c-c-d.org/>