

Determining Assistive Technology Needs

To help children with disabilities fully participate at school, district personnel often need to make decisions about assistive technology for their students. That is, the child with a disability may need an augmentative communication device, an adaptation to his/her curriculum or to a computer and/or modifications to their wheelchair or "workstation." How do they determine what technology, if any, is needed?

When making this determination, remember that schools make decisions all of the time about other accommodations for students. When a student is having trouble with speech, someone (usually a parent or teacher) identifies the problem and then the IEP team decides whether a referral to the speech therapist is necessary. If so, the therapist advises the IEP team about the accommodations needed for the student to meet his IEP goals.

To determine whether or not a student needs assistive technology, the IEP team needs:

- 1. AWARENESS** -- At least one member of team needs to know the range of assistive technology and how it can assist students. This information can be learned by attending workshops and reading periodicals.
- 2. CONSIDERATION PROCESS** - an established, reasoned process for considering whether or not a student requires the technology. This process can be supported with the use of a form that guides the team's thought process.
- 3. RESOURCES** - Someone with specialized knowledge who can provide the team with recommendations (similar to the role of the speech therapist above) and access to equipment and training.

Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey can help a district in all three of these areas. The agency offers workshops and newsletters that address assistive technology issues. It also has a sample form that can be used in formulating a consideration process. Workshop schedules, earlier editions of the newsletter and the form are available on our website, www.cpfnj.org.

Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey has a staff of trained professionals who are knowledgeable about assistive technology.

The agency also maintains a Technology Lending Center that loans equipment to schools and individuals.

We want to help districts make informed decisions that result in real progress, and so we hope that you take advantage of these resources by visiting our website or contacting Fred Tchang, Director of Rehabilitation Technology Services, at 888-322-1918 ext. 588 or via email at ftchang@cpofnj.org.

UPCOMING TRAININGS



Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey is offering the following workshops at these county-based Educational Technology Training Centers (ETTC).

For more information, contact Fred Tchang at (888) 322-1918 ext. 588 or contact the County ETTC.

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

November 19, 2003

"Using the Technology You Already Have!"

Camden County ETTC
9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

December 2, 2003

"Voice Recognition - What it Can Do for You and Your Students Today"

Camden County ETTC
9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

December 10, 2003

"Kid-ergonomics/Ergo-KID-nomics"

Camden County ETTC
3:30 to 6 p.m.

Employment Opportunity

Part-Time or Full-Time

Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey has an opening for a SPEECH PATHOLOGIST/Augmentative Communication Specialist to provide services at our Trenton office, and on-site, at homes and schools. We offer on-the-job training and professional development opportunities. Contact:

Fred Tchang
ftchang@cpofnj.org
888-322-1918 ext. 588

Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey
is Accredited by CARF
Community Employment Services



Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey has been recognized by the New Jersey Department of Education as a "Registered New Jersey Professional Development Provider."

We can help you educate students with disabilities.

CALL US FOR ASSISTANCE IN THESE AREAS:

-  **Curriculum Adaptations**
-  **IEP Development and Consultation**
-  **Transition Planning & Implementation**
-  **Vocational Assessments and Training**
-  **Assistive Technology**
-  **Augmentative Communication**
-  **Supports for Students with Learning Disabilities**
-  **Activities for Daily Living**
-  **Travel Training**
-  **Training for Teachers**
-  **Extended School Year Support**
-  **Substance Abuse Prevention**
-  **Violence and Bullying Prevention**
-  **Social Security Disability Benefits Planning**
-  **Educational Advocacy**

**CALL US TODAY AT
(888) 322-1918
OR EMAIL US AT INFO@CPOFNJ.ORG**

Building Extracurricular Activities Into the Transition Plan

There's more to the school experience than what happens in the classroom. Parents and educators should make an effort to get students with disabilities involved in extracurricular activities in order to best prepare them for the future.

This does several things:

- It gives students with disabilities a chance to expand their social circles, build new and different types of friendships. It also exposes them to different social settings.
- These experiences introduce students to the responsibilities and requirements that go along with being a member of a team or part of a group - useful on a job and in the community.
- The experience or things learned can help the student develop a skill and/or interest that can be utilized on a job or as a hobby after they graduate

Base choices on a student's interests and vocational goals. Sports fans may not be able to play football or baseball, but may be part of the team as a statistician or assistant to the coach. A student with a flair for writing might enjoy reporting for the school newspaper. Schools sponsor clubs and activities for just about every interest - finding the right fit may take some time but it's worth the effort.

Most importantly, students with disabilities should be encouraged to participate outside of the classroom for the same reasons students without disabilities are: being active in sports, student government or other extracurricular programs helps build well-rounded, well-adjusted individuals.

When working on the transition plan, don't forget to include these non-academic areas that build self-confidence, improve socialization and increase skills. For more information or ideas about transition planning, please contact Jackie Edwards at 888-322-1918 ext. 526 or via email at jedwards@cpofnj.org.

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Fill out the form below and fax, email or mail it back to us.

Fax : (609) 392-3505; Email: hpainting@cpofnj.org;

Mail: CP of New Jersey's "Educating for Success" 354 South Broad Street, Trenton, NJ 08608

Name: _____ **Position:** _____

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City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip Code:** _____

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