Building AT Capacity

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West Ada School District
March 2025

THE 2024 CASE CONFERENCE
SAVANNAH • NOV 6-8

Learning Outcomes

1. Identify common barriers to building AT capacity within a large school district on a limited budget, and ways we overcame those barriers.
2. Identify three district and/or state agencies to collaborate to maximize funding and training capacity
3. Describe collaborative training procedures to build AT capacity amongst special education staff

Assistive Technology (AT) Device

"Any item, piece of equipment, or product system whether acquired commercially, off a shelf, modified or customized that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a student with a disability."

Idaho Special Education Manual, p. 78-79

Assistive Technology Service

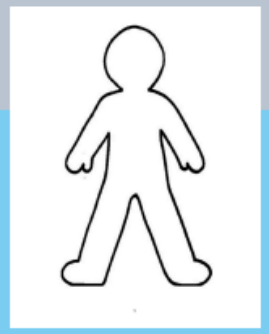
"Any service that directly assists a student with a disability with the assessment, selection, acquisition or use of an assistive technology device"

- An evaluation of the student's AT needs;
- Purchasing or acquiring AT devices;
- Selecting, customizing, and maintaining AT devices;
- Coordination with other therapies, school-based and private-based;
- Training for student and family; and/or
- Training for professionals

Idaho Special Education Manual, p. 78-79

WEST ADA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Who are we?

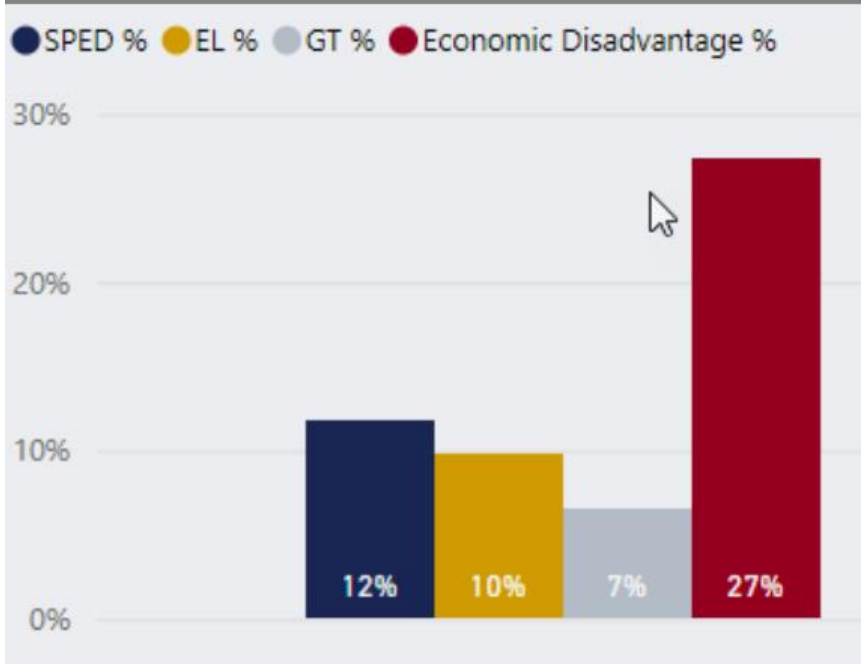


0.75 FTE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SPECIALIST

The challenge - how to implement AT district-wide?

WHO ARE OUR STUDENTS?

39,000 students
60 schools
Speaking 68 languages



Idaho Per Pupil Spending in 2021: $9,053.

Using Facts to Build AT Funding Story

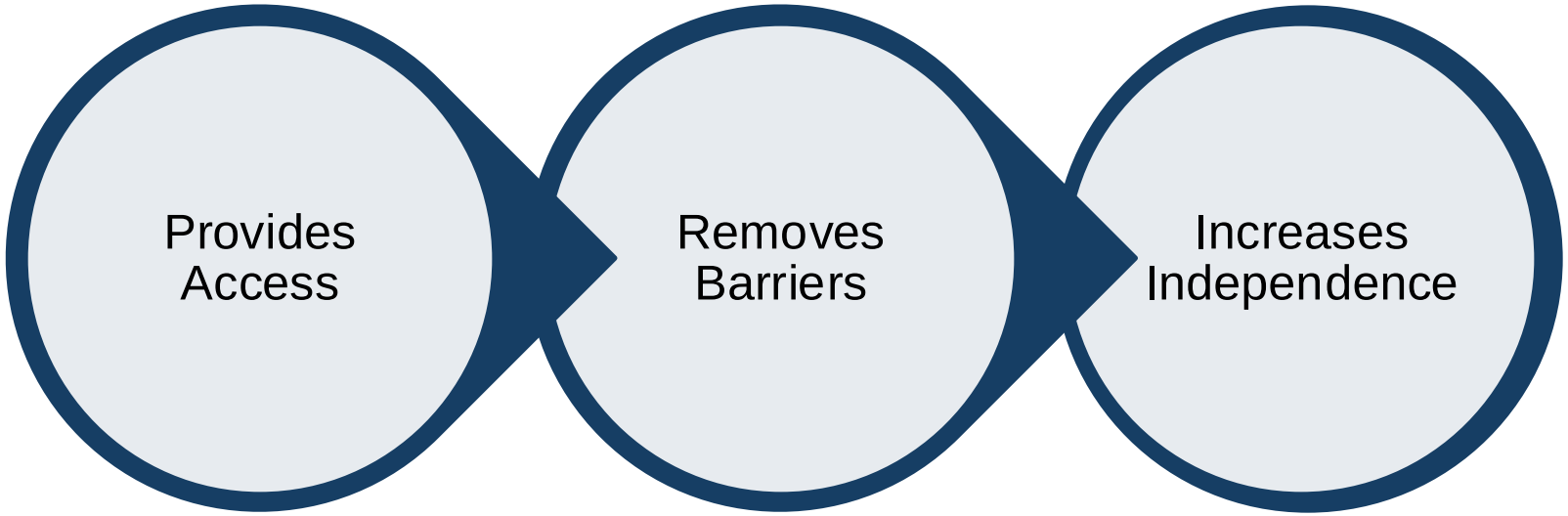
- Understand Pupil Funding
  - The states spending the most per pupil were New York ($29,873)…
  - The states spending the least per pupil were Utah ($9,552), Idaho ($9,670),
    - Largest Year-to-Year Increase for Public School Spending Per Pupil (census.gov)
- Keep running numbers of AT uses
  - # of high-tech communication devices
  - # of students alternatively assessed
  - Diversity statistics – ML, FRL, etc.

Build & Tell Your Story

Funding AT

- Grants (Writing Tools Grant Example)
- Leveraging Funds with per pupil spending (ex. Reading intervention)
- School Foundations
- Special Funding (ex. seclusion/restraint reduction)
- Use your statistics to ask for better pricing (ex. BOGO, sliding scale)
- When it is a tool for all, it is no longer a special education expense

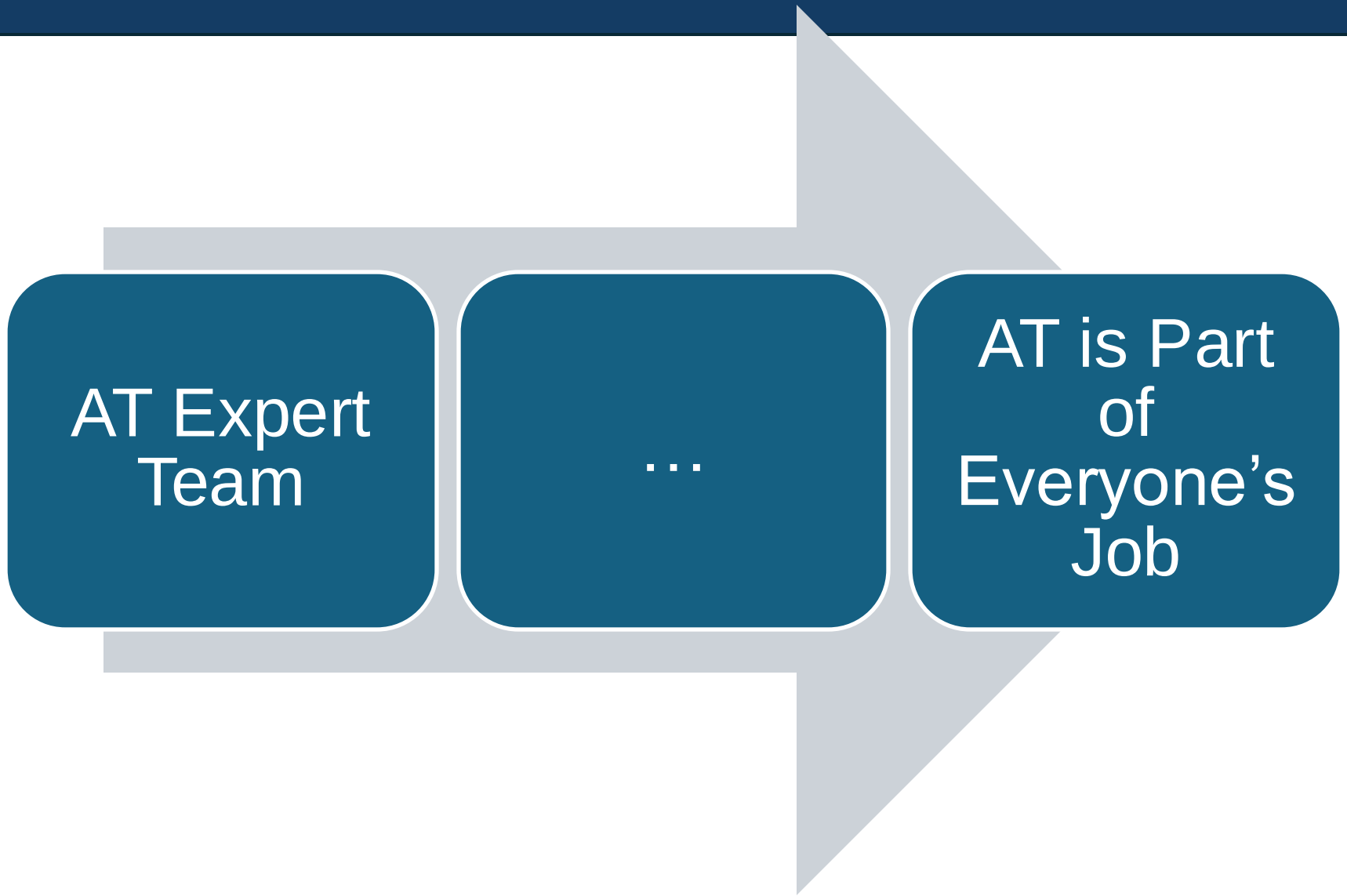
Why is AT important?



Why is AT important?

Common Barriers

- Knowledge and Consideration of AT
- Training Resources
- Funding AT
- AT Abandonment


AT Expert Team
…
AT is Part of Everyone's Job

Clarifying the Process

Assistive Technology (AT) Flow Chart

1. Are there Areas of Concern?

School MDT Answers the Following Questions Relative to an Academic or Functional Life Skill

What is the task the student needs to accomplish?	What is this student's present level of performance on that task?	How does student's performance compare to that of his/her peers?	How is the student's disability affecting his/her performance?	In what environments does this task need to be done?	Are there environmental concerns or other issues that need to be considered?

YES! There is an area of concern where AT Tools and Strategies should be considered. Continue to Step 2.	Student does NOT need AT to make gains in their area of concern. Stop Here.

2. Considering Need for Assistive Technology

School MDT Focuses Further Attention on the Tasks the Student Needs to Do

2A. Review Answers to Step 1	2B. Identify additional needed information	2C. Collect needed information	2D. Gather and trial AT devices and services through current school resources or AT Library.	2E. Team determines what AT is needed. Continue to Step 3.

Contact AT Department if Assistance is Needed in Determining AT Butler.christy@westada.org	Contact AT Library to check out Additional Materials: krahn.jessica@westada.org

3. Implementation

School MDT decides how, when, and where the student will use assistive technology. Once a team has determined a student NEEDS an assistive technology device or service, it is the responsibility of the school to:

IEP Documentation Include devices and services in IEP and ensure they are available to the student	**Staff Training** Train staff. Arrange for additional training with AT Department, if needed	**Student Training** Train student in the use of the device/service	**Maintenance** Ensure device continues to be in good working order	**Continue to Step 4**

4. Monitoring Progress

School MDT monitors that AT is being utilized and is working as anticipated in four areas:

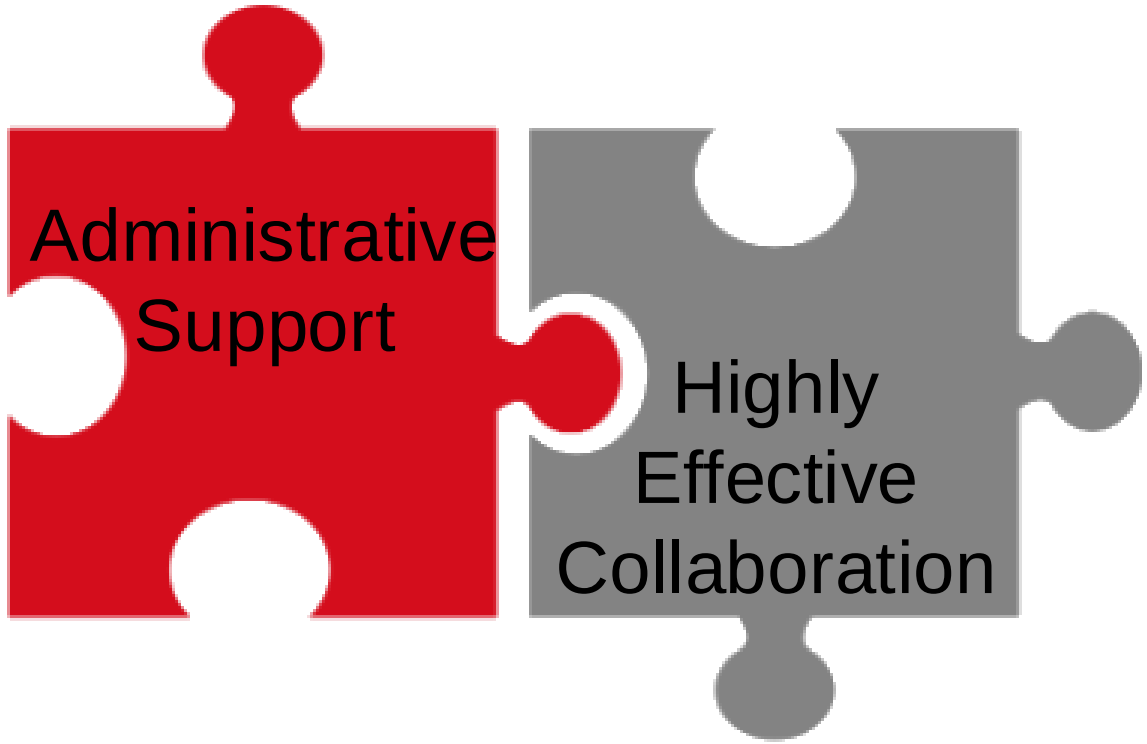
Operational Competence	**Functional Competence**	**Strategic Competence**	**Social Competence**
Has the student learned to make the device work? Can the student turn it on? Can the student make it do the things that the device is designed to do? How well can the student operate the device?	*How well does the student use the device to overcome educational barriers? How does the device help the student with functional life skills? (i.e., If using an AAC device, are peers able to understand what the student has to say? Has student's writing improved while using a portable word processor?)*	*Does the student understand when to use the device? Does the student know when the device will be helpful and when some other approach should be applied to eliminate a barrier? (i.e., If using AAC, does the student use the device to get attention when a gesture will not work? Is the device used for all writing or only for longer written assignments?)*	*Does the student use the device around other people? How does the device help the student in social and real-world contexts? Does the device restrict social interaction in any way? If it does, what does the student do to overcome the imposed AT barrier?*

5. Review AT Annually at IEP

Developing a Vision

1. Increase knowledge and implementation of AT across the district with an emphasis on UDL practices
2. Ensure all students have a means of communication and access to literacy instruction
3. Curriculum alignment with AT to support independence and access

Overcoming Obstacles



Increasing AT Knowledge & UDL Practices

3 Different Ways On 3 Different Days

- Consult Visits
- Newsletter Articles
- Trainings

Collaboration with IT & DIS

- Office 365 & Learning Tools
- 1:1 Devices

Increase Visibility

Special Services Support Request 2024-25

Have more than just a quick question and need some individualized assistance? Please use this form to make the request and a staff member from special services will be assigned to contact you.

5. I need support with: *

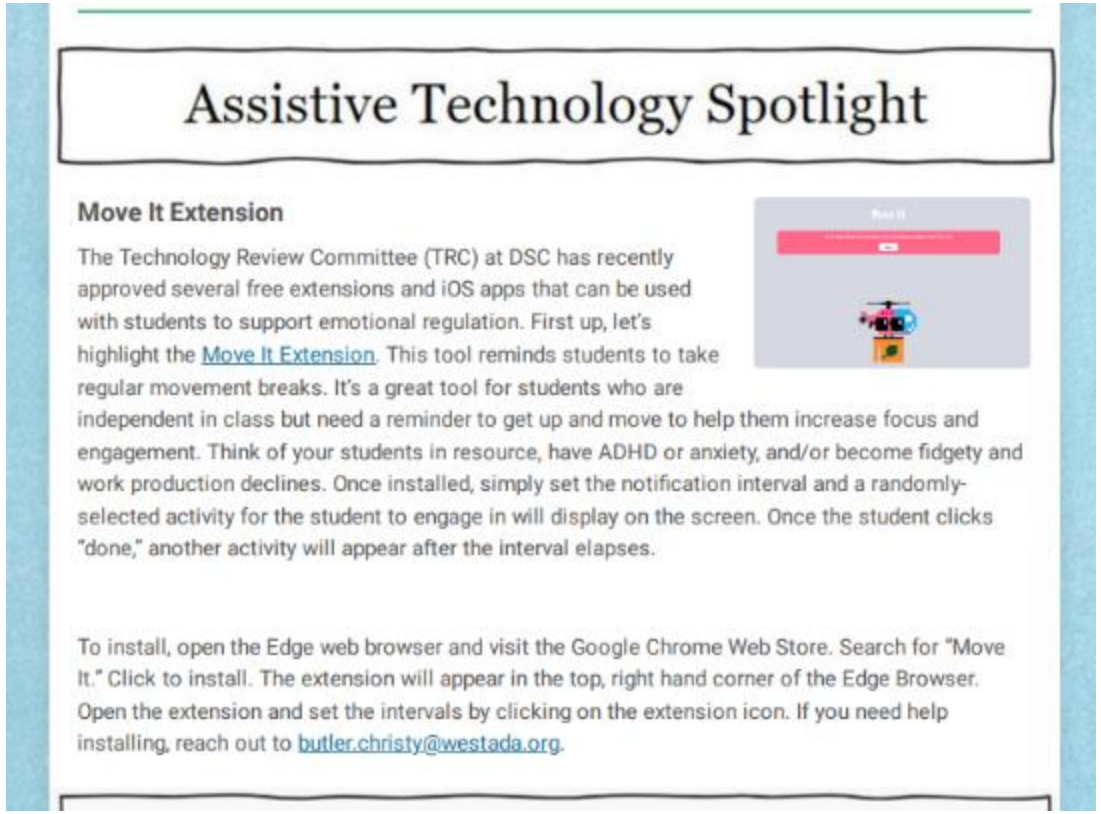
- [ ] Assistive technology
- [ ] Challenging behavior (if you are checking this box, it is good time to make sure you have behavior consultation included in the Optional Statement of Service Delivery on the IEP)
- [ ] Hearing evaluation request (email a copy of the completed Hearing Referral form **right now** to dscsped@westada.org)
- [ ] Classroom management
- [ ] Curriculum selection or training in use
- [ ] Enrich training (note: if you have an urgent Enrich need like help logging in, help with a process, quick question, please contact the Enrich Helpdesk at 208-855-4509 or email spedrecords@westada.org)
- [ ] IEP development

AT Spotlight in Weekly Special Education Newsletter

Assistive Technology Spotlight

Did you know there are many assistive technology resources available in the West Ada School District to support student behavior and emotional regulation? For the next several newsletters, we'll highlight a new tool each week that you can use right away to help students maximize their learning.

To get us started, take a look at the Wristband Template in Lesson Pix. These are great visuals for reminders or sensory strategies that students wear on their wrist. Wristbands can have multiple pictures or be wrapped in text. See some examples below or click on the picture to print.

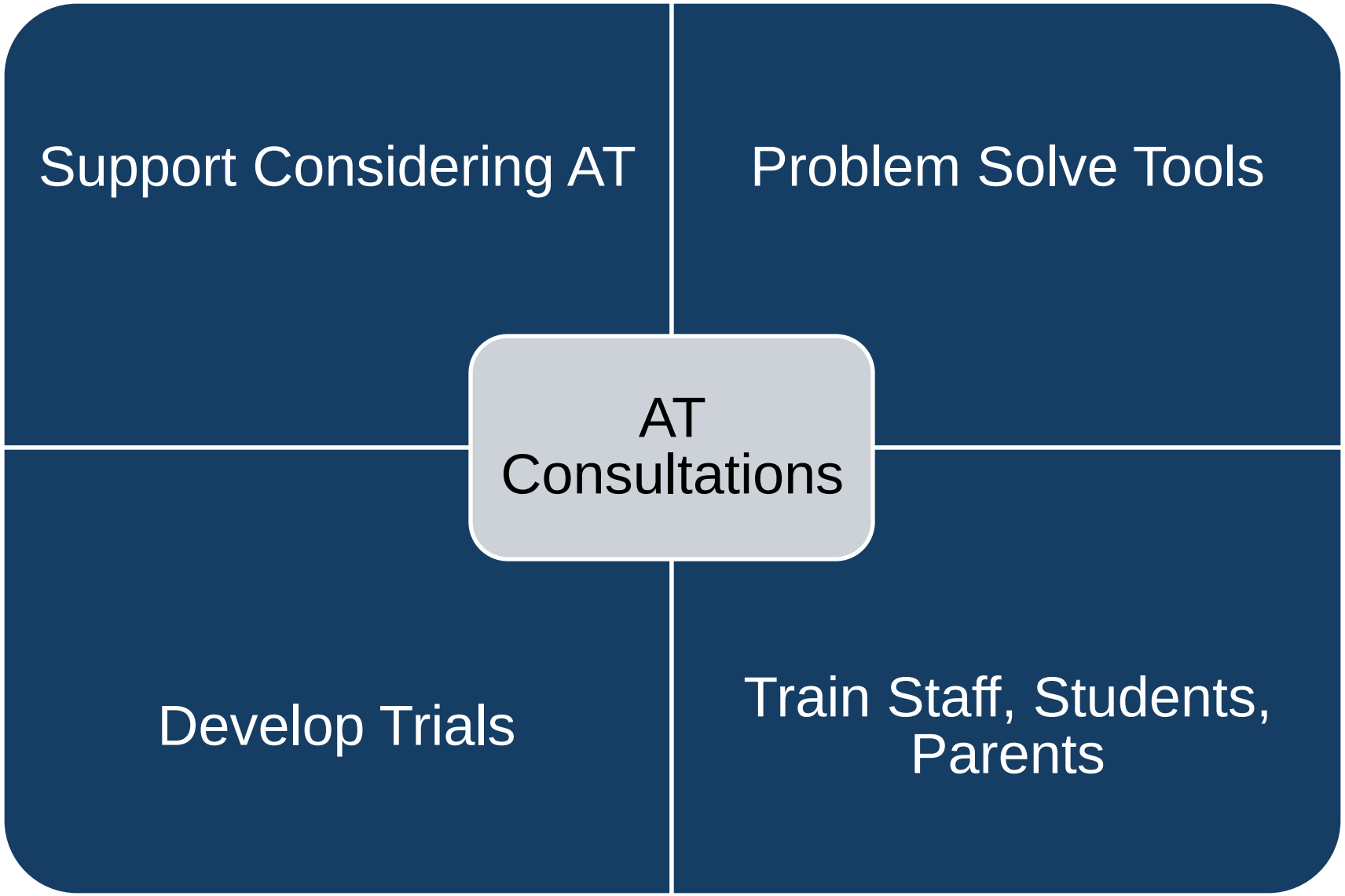


Assistive Technology Spotlight

Move It Extension

The Technology Review Committee (TRC) at DSC has recently approved several free extensions and iOS apps that can be used with students to support emotional regulation. First up, let's highlight the Move It Extension. This tool reminds students to take regular movement breaks. It's a great tool for students who are independent in class but need a reminder to get up and move to help them increase focus and engagement. Think of your students in resource, have ADHD or anxiety, and/or become fidgety and work production declines. Once installed, simply set the notification interval and a randomly-selected activity for the student to engage in will display on the screen. Once the student clicks "done," another activity will appear after the interval elapses.

To install, open the Edge web browser and visit the Google Chrome Web Store. Search for "Move It." Click to install. The extension will appear in the top, right hand corner of the Edge Browser. Open the extension and set the intervals by clicking on the extension icon. If you need help installing, reach out to butler.christy@westada.org.


Support Considering AT
Problem Solve Tools
AT Consultations
Develop Trials
Train Staff, Students, Parents

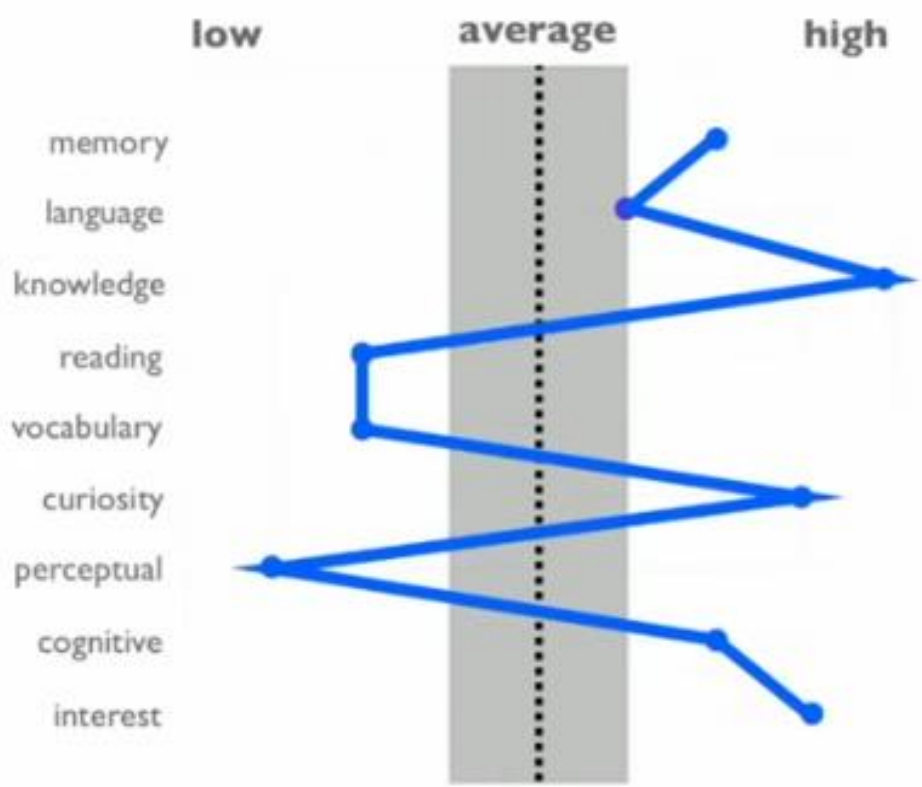
Trainings

- AT – Specific Trainings
- Embedded AT throughout District Trainings

Create a Culture of AT

Why UDL?

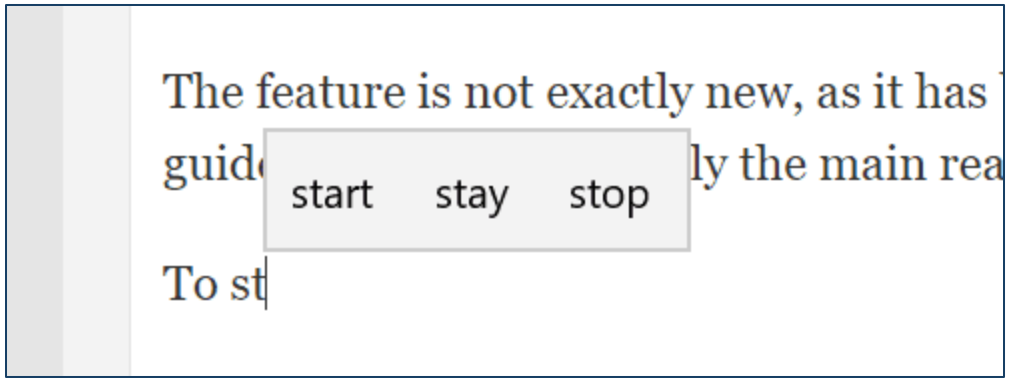
Designing to the Edges for Learners



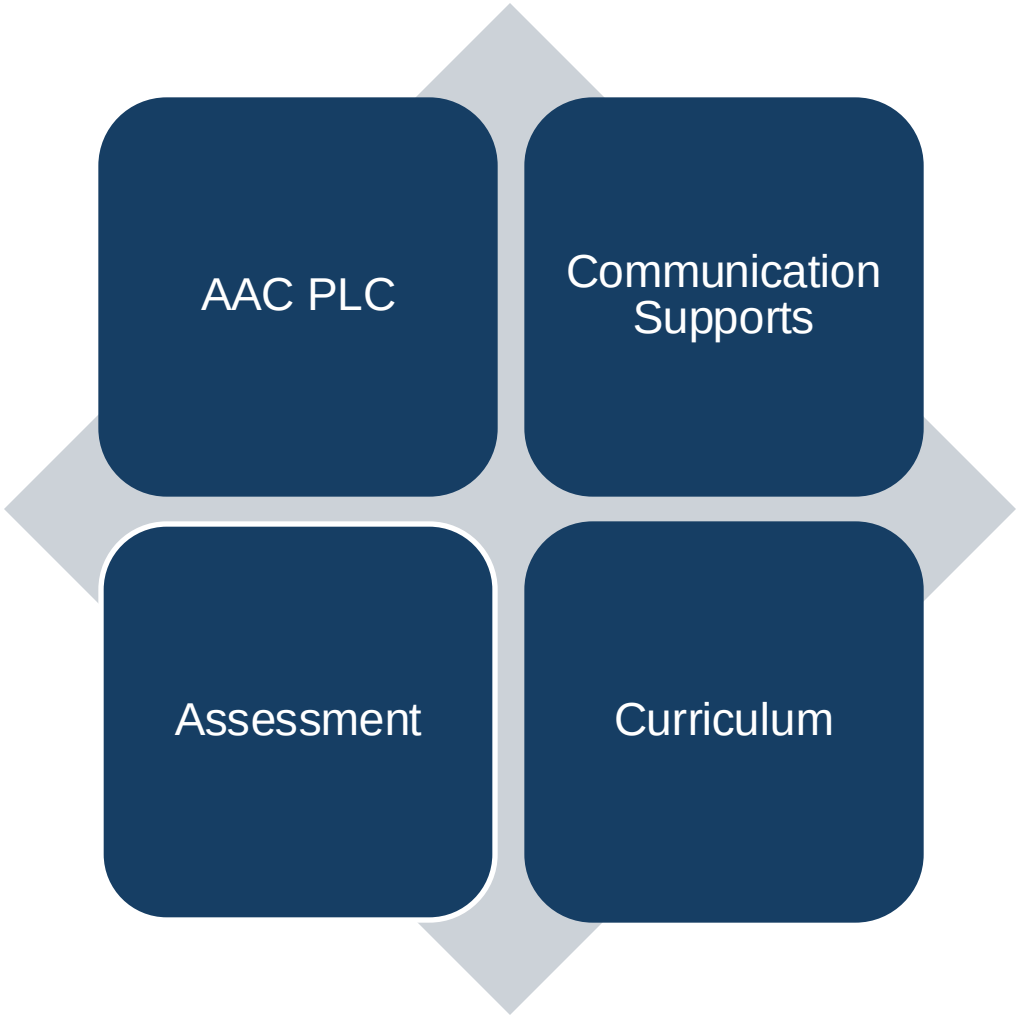
Supporting Diverse Learners with Universal Supports

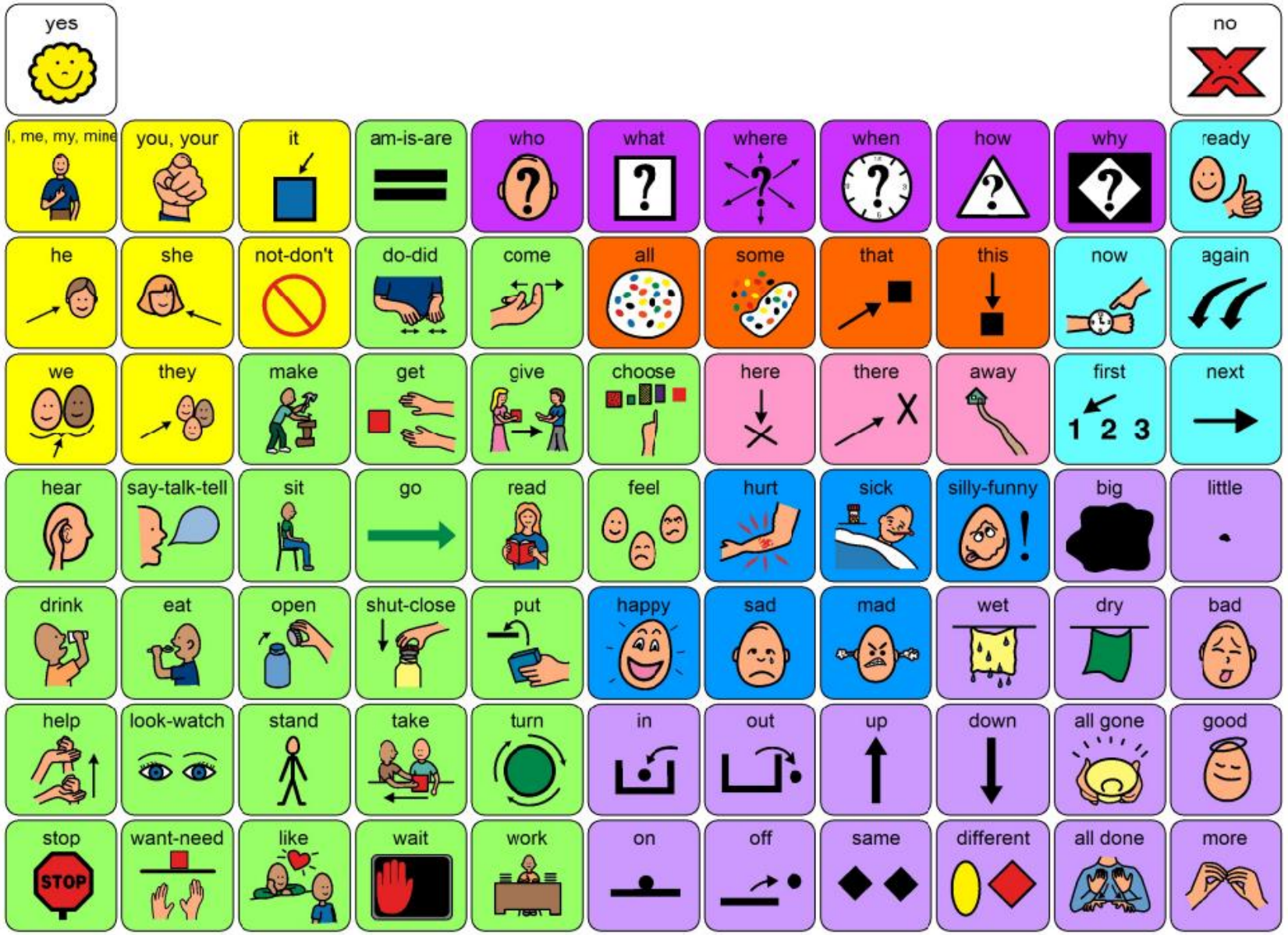
[Quick Guide to Immersive Reader]

Windows 11 Accessibility



Right to Communication & Literacy




yes
no
I, me, my, mine
you, your
it
am-is-are
who
what
where
when
how
why
ready
he
she
not-don't
do-did
come
all
some
that
this
now
again
we
they
make
get
give
choose
here
there
away
first
1 2 3
next
hear
say-talk-tell
sit
go
read
feel
hurt
sick
silly-funny
big
little
drink
eat
open
shut-close
put
happy
sad
mad
wet
dry
bad
help
look-watch
stand
take
turn
in
out
up
down
all gone
good
stop
STOP
want-need
like
wait
work
on
off
same
different
all done
more

Let's Play
Expectations
Big Problem
Small Problem
mad
sad
Choose How To Solve Your Problem
STOP

Continuum of Communication Supports

Partner Assisted Scanning

Eye Gaze Boards

Voice Output Buttons

Mid-Tech Communication Tools

Communication Apps

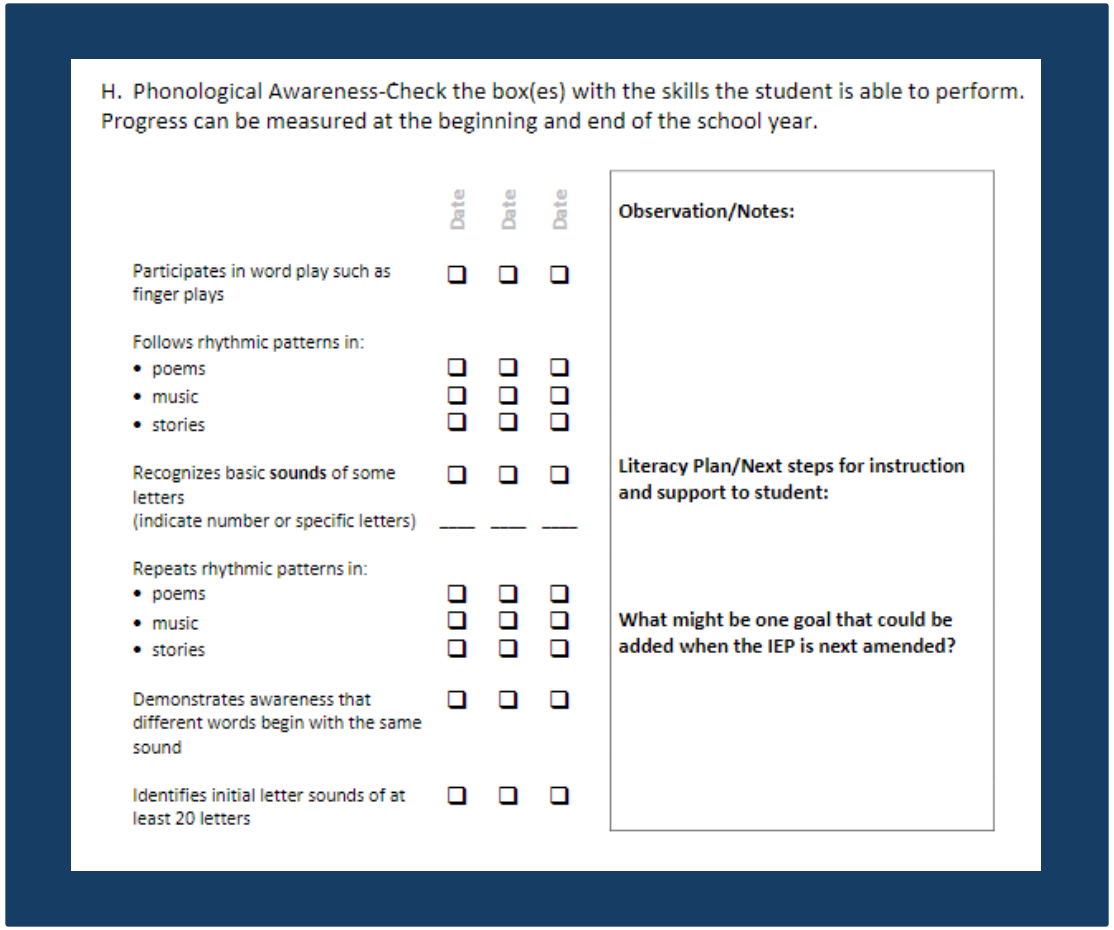
Idaho Literacy Legislation

All Means All

Assessment: Emerging Literacy Behavior Checklist

- Interactions with Books
- Engagement in the Act of Reading
- Interactions During Literacy Activities
- Engagement in Storytelling
- Interactions with Symbols/Print
- Drawing/Writing & Representing
- Alphabet Knowledge
- Phonological Awareness

Emerging Literacy Behaviors Checklist



H. Phonological Awareness-Check the box(es) with the skills the student is able to perform. Progress can be measured at the beginning and end of the school year.

	Date	Date	Date
Participates in word play such as finger plays	❑	❑	❑
Follows rhythmic patterns in:			
• poems	❑	❑	❑
• music	❑	❑	❑
• stories	❑	❑	❑
Recognizes basic **sounds** of some letters (indicate number or specific letters)	❑ ___	❑ ___	❑ ___
Repeats rhythmic patterns in:			
• poems	❑	❑	❑
• music	❑	❑	❑
• stories	❑	❑	❑
Demonstrates awareness that different words begin with the same sound	❑	❑	❑
Identifies initial letter sounds of at least 20 letters	❑	❑	❑

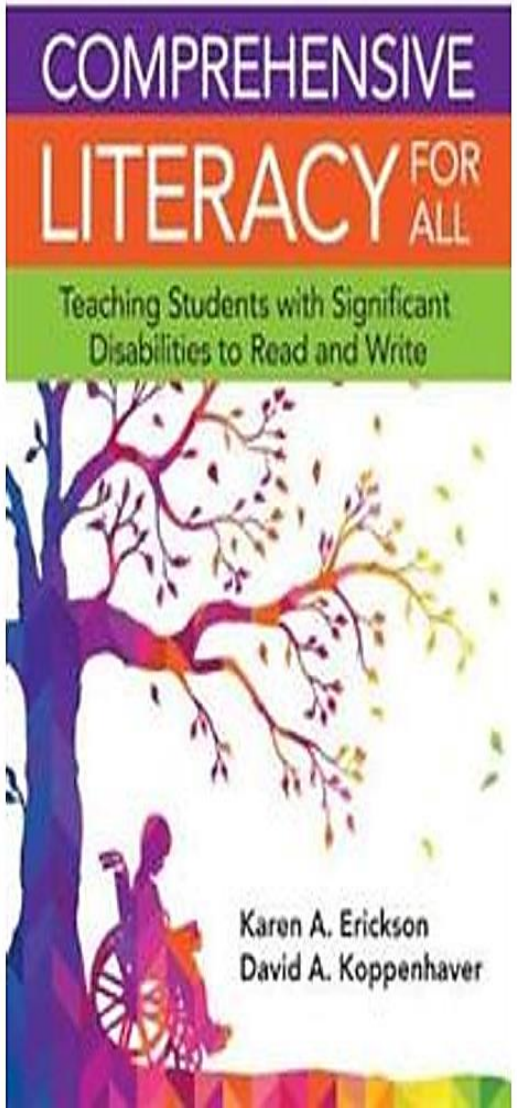
Observation/Notes:

Literacy Plan/Next steps for instruction and support to student:

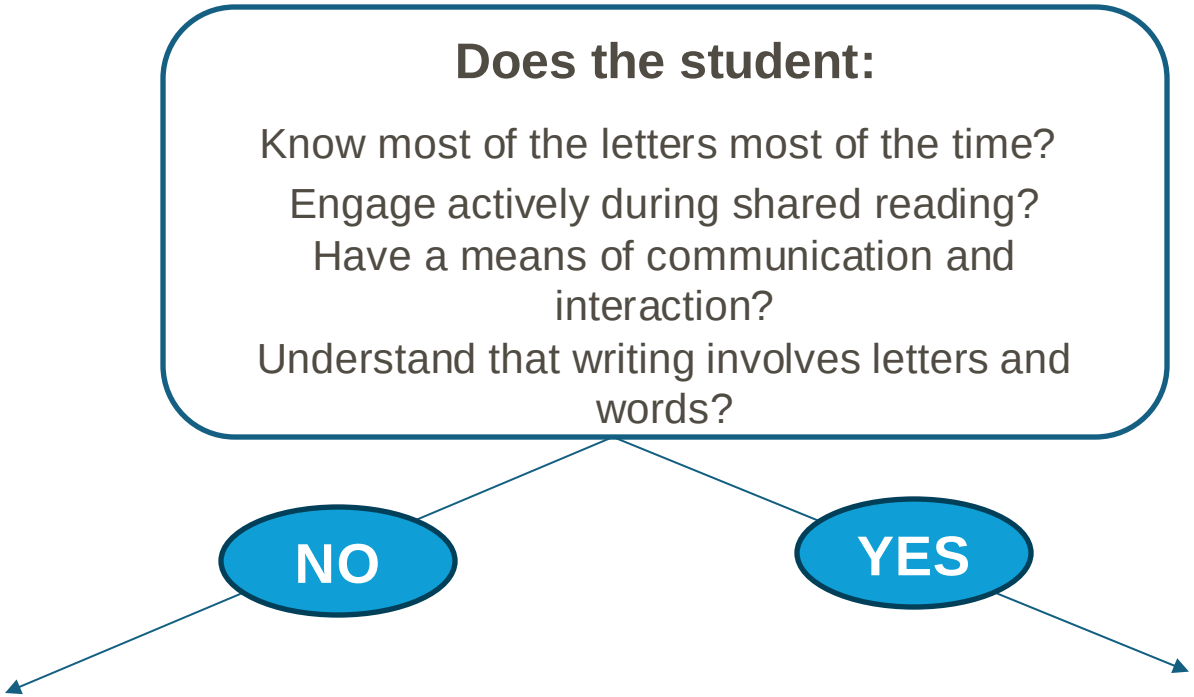
What might be one goal that could be added when the IEP is next amended?

Instruction:

Comprehensive Literacy for All



WHO ARE EMERGENT READERS?



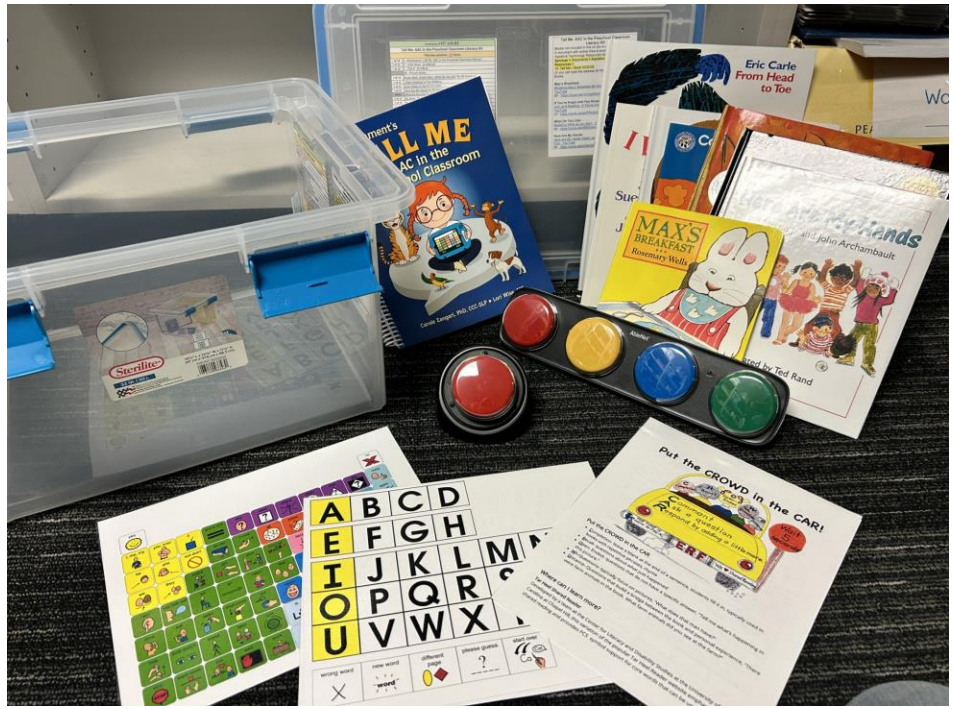
Daily Emergent Interventions

- Shared Reading
- Predictable Chart Writing
- Alphabet & Phonological Awareness
- Independent Writing with access to full alphabet
- Independent Reading
- Symbol-based Communication (with a few exceptions)

Daily Conventional Interventions

- Guided Reading
- Word Identification and Decoding
- Writing
- Independent Reading
- Communication with Symbols & Spelling

Curriculum -Tell Me: AAC in the Preschool Classroom



Curriculum:

Developmental Writing Scale

DWS Handout © Sturm, 2021

DWS
DEVELOPMENTAL WRITING SCALE

PURPOSE – The DWS is a writing quality measure (identifying linguistic and communicative change) for beginning writers of any age.

DIRECTIONS – Review the writing sample and use the leveled criteria and descriptions below to assign a writing level. If debating between two levels, choose the lower level.

LEVELS	DESCRIPTION
1 – Drawing	Lines and curves that appear to represent objects
2 – Scribbling	Continuous vertical, circular, or wavy lines arranged linearly across the page which may include letter-like forms but with the majority of shapes not recognizable as letters.
3 – Letter Strings (no groups)	Handwritten or typed strings of letters but not grouped into words.
4 – Letter Strings grouped in words	Strings of letters grouped into "words" (i.e., with spaces between at least two groups of letters) but with no intelligible words.
5 – One Intelligible Word	Strings of letters grouped into "words," with only one possible real word (i.e., two or more letters in length) set apart, written repeatedly (e.g., dog, dog, dog), or embedded in a string of letters.
6 – Two to three intelligible words	Two or three different intelligible words embedded in strings, separated by spaces, or in a list format. Single letter words such as "I" and "a" must be separated by spaces to count as an intelligible word.
7 – Three or more different intelligible words in a list	Three or more related words.
8 – Partial sentence of more than 3 words	More than three different intelligible words, with at least two of them in a partially formed sentence (i.e., grammatically related parts of a phrase, clause or sentence).
9 – One to two complete sentences	Sentences have a subject phrase and a verb phrase. End punctuation is not necessary.
10 – Three or more unrelated sentences	Sentences have no coherent topic (i.e., sentences are not related)
11 – Three or more related sentences	Organized writing with three or more sentences on a coherent topic but with limited cohesion between sentences (i.e., sentences can be reordered without changing meaning).
12 – Three or more related sentences that cannot be reordered	Organized writing with a coherent topic (i.e., on a consistent theme) and use of cohesive devices (e.g., pronoun or synonym replacement, logical connectors, subordinating conjunctions, conclusions that refer to prior content) across three or more sentences, so that sentences cannot be reordered without changing meaning
13 – Two or more related paragraphs of at least three sentences each	Organized writing with a coherent main topic and 2 cohesive subsections (sub-topics or story parts) with at least two sentences elaborating the meaning of each
14 – Three or more related paragraphs of at least three sentences each	Organized writing with a coherent main topic and at least 3 cohesive subsections (sub-topics or story parts) with at least two sentences elaborating the meaning of each

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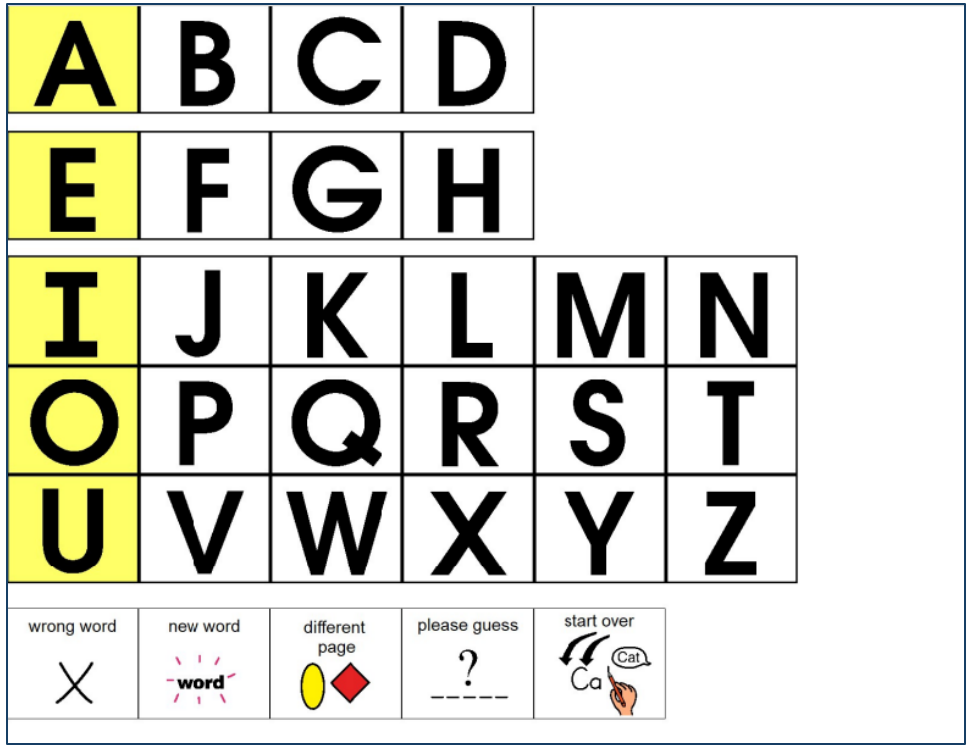
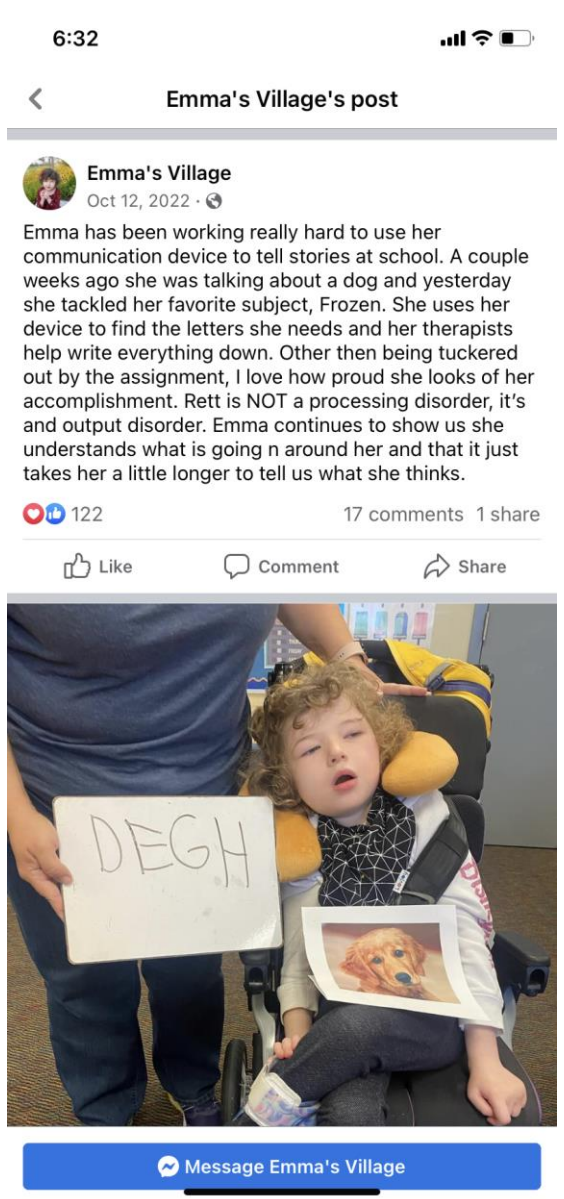
What if students can't hold a pencil?



Emma's Story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Emma's Village's post
Emma's Village
Oct 12, 2022 ·
Emma has been working really hard to use her communication device to tell stories at school. A couple weeks ago she was talking about a dog and yesterday she tackled her favorite subject, Frozen. She uses her device to find the letters she needs and her therapists help write everything down. Other then being tuckered out by the assignment, I love how proud she looks of her accomplishment. Rett is NOT a processing disorder, it's and output disorder. Emma continues to show us she understands what is going n around her and that it just takes her a little longer to tell us what she thinks.
122
17 comments 1 share
Like
Comment
Share
DEGH
Message Emma's Village

2 of 2
FROZEN
EFAN
Emma's Village
Oct 12, 2022 ·
Message Emma's Village
5
1 comment
Like
Comment
Share

Work is Hard but Worth It!

Full Video Link

Curriculum Alignment with AT

AT & OTs

Executive Functioning

Special Education Curriculum

Consideration of AT

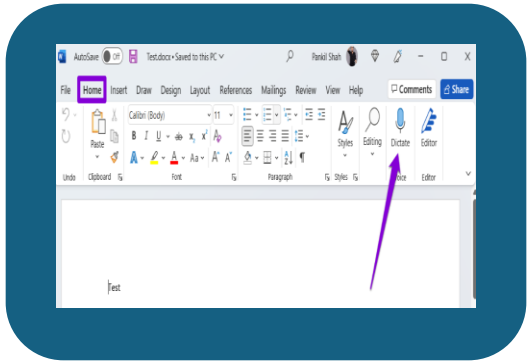
Math, OTs, & AT

Math Supports

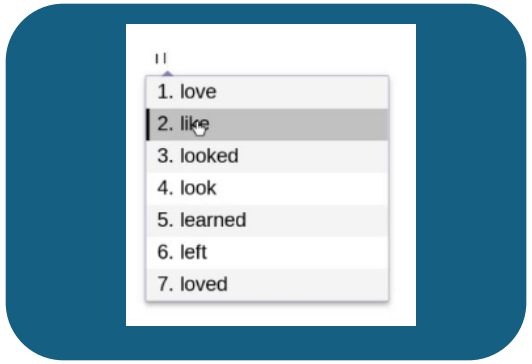
Occupational Therapy and Special Services Collaboration

Areas of Need	Low Tech Supports	High Tech Supports
C (Cognitive/Concepts)	• Manipulatives: cubes, blocks, stamps, etc. • Number line • Hundreds chart/Multiplication chart • Ten frame • Ruler • Preferential seating • Near point copy instead of far point copy • Math graphic organizers (https://www.understood.org/articles/en/download-graphic-organizers-to-help-kids-with-math)	• Equatio • TTS (Text-to-Speech) • Math software: online tutorials (i.e. Kahn Academy), games (HKL, etc.) • One Note Math tools • Virtual Manipulatives (mathlearningcenter.org) • Calculators: handheld, Desmos
A (Accessibility)	• Adaptive Math paper: contrast paper, graph paper, stop/go paper, landscaped lined paper • Visual adaptations: draw boxes, highlight, vertical lines, etc. • Math graphic organizer • Ruler • Preferential seating • Near point copy instead of far point copy • Modify the writing utensil: pencil grip, weighted pencil, erasable pen, etc. • Slantboard • Enlarged print	• Equatio • STT (Speech-to-Text) • SnapType: iOS App • Mod Math: iOS App • One Note Math tools • OrbitNote • Virtual Manipulatives (mathlearningcenter.org) • Adapted Calculators: talking, big keys, etc. • Big Mac
R (Readability)	• Adaptive Math paper: contrast paper, graph paper, stop/go paper, landscaped lined paper • Visual adaptations: draw boxes, highlight, vertical lines, etc. • Ruler • Near point copy instead of far point copy • Modify the writing utensil: pencil grip, weighted pencil, erasable pen, etc. • Slantboard	• Equatio • STT (Speech-to-Text) • SnapType: iOS App • Mod Math: iOS App • One Note Math tools • OrbitNote

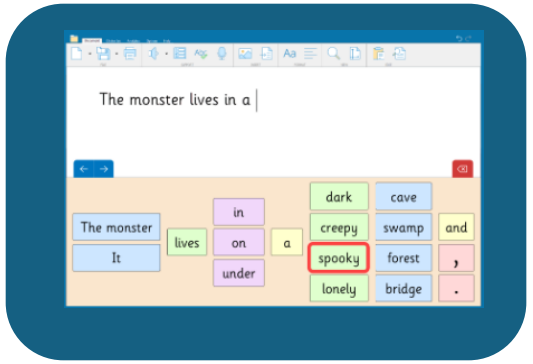
Writing, OTs, & AT



Speech to Text



Word Prediction



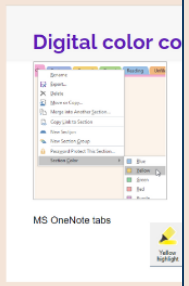
Digital Word Banks

Alternative Pencils

Executive Functioning & AT

TOOLS FOR ORGANIZATION, PLANNING AND TIME MANAGEMENT

- ORGANIZATION PROBLEM INVENTORY
- COLOR CODING (MANUAL OR DIGITAL)/FOLDER SYSTEMS
- DIGITAL HIGHLIGH
- LABELS



ATTENTION & FOCUS

WHAT IS IT?

"INFORMATION THAT IS NOT
TO, THAT DOES NOT ENGAGE
COGNITION, IS IN FACT
INACCESSIBLE."
@CAST

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY (AT) TO SUPPORT EMOTION REGULATION

VISUALS

- SCHEDULES
- TIME MANAGEMENT AIDS
- FIRST/THEN
- REACTION CHARTS
- EMOTION BOARDS
- SOCIAL STORIES
- POWER CARDS
- CONTINGENCY MAPS

COMMUNICATION

- COMMUNICATION BOARDS
- AAC DEVICES
- SENTENCE STRIPS
- PHRASE STRIPS
- EMOTION CARDS
- CHOICE BOARDS

FIDGETS

- KEYRINGS
- PENCIL GRIPS
- PAPERCLIPS
- VELCRO UNDER DESK
- BEAD BRACELETS
- MANY MARKETED OPTIONS!

Curriculum Alignment

Goal Area	Curriculum / Instructional Strategies (Email DSCSped@westada.org to request curriculum)	Progress Monitoring	Assistive Technology	Additional Resources
Enrich IEP Goal Bank Statements	**Curriculum Sharepoint Link to Gen Ed pacing**	**Most of these are in the ELA MTSS Notebook**		To understand how adopted resources align to Idaho Content Standards & Extended Content Standards, Click this Link
Emergent Literacy-Reading	*Tell Me *Let's Play Learn *Aligned Star/Links ELA Resources *Instructional Strategies from *Comprehensive Literacy For All* (Chapter 4)	Emerging Literacy Behaviors Checklist	*AAC (Symbols, Core Boards, Speech-Generating Devices) *Voice Output Buttons *Switches/Switch Interface *Manipulatives	*Large Print *Board Books *Digital books www.tarheelreader.org www.getepic.com
Phonological Awareness	*Heggerty (choose aligned level) *Bridge the Gap *Let's Play Learn *Sonday Science of Reading Supplemental Guide	Phonological Awareness Screening Test	Letter Board Speech-Generating Devices Letter/Sound Pages Letter Manipulatives: (magnets or letter cards)	*Use strategies from Chapter 3 of *Comprehensive Literacy for All* to guide accommodations for students who are nonverbal *Additional Resources for Students who are Nonverbal: *Accessible Literacy Learning iOS app *Sound blending & Phoneme Segementation: https://aacliteracy.psu.edu/
Letter naming	*Let's Play Learn *Magnetic Reading: Tools for Instruction *Explict Alphabet Knowledge Instructional Routine	Core Phonics Survey (Parts A & B)	Letter Board Speech-Generating Devices Letter/Sound Pages Letter Manipulatives	*Use strategies from Chapter 3 of Comprehensive Literacy for All to guide accommodations for students who are nonverbal *Additional Resources for Students who are Nonverbal:*Accessible Literacy Learning iOS app *Letter Sound Correspondence:

Curriculum Alignment: Use Consistent, Foundational Tools Districtwide

Read&Write

HelpKidzLearn

Documenting AT on IEPs

Documenting Assistive Technology Supports (AT) in the West Ada School District

What Teachers Need to Know About AT

Every student with an IEP needs to be considered for AT annually as part of the IEP process. When exploring the use of AT, only document AT in the IEP that has been successfully implemented (no untried AT—just what student needs).

Where to Document AT in the IEP

- Under Consideration of Special Factors, check that the student needs AT devices and/or services, and write the needed AT supports in the adjoined text box (required if needed)
- In Classroom Accommodations, list the AT supports needed (required if needed) *AT must be listed here, so that gen ed teachers have access to this information through PowerSchool.
- In Testing Accommodations, list the AT supports needed (required if needed) *AT must be listed here so Testing Department has access to turn on needed AT for testing.
- On the goal page, mark that AT is currently in use to achieve the goal and list specific supports needed (required if needed for goal)
- Write a goal to learn how to use AT or to use AT to achieve a task (optional)

How to Document AT in the IEP

Use clear language to document AT supports needed in the IEP. Remember to list the AT features needed, not the brand names. Here are a few examples:

Don't Write…	Instead, Write…
Microsoft Dictation	Speech to Text
Bookshare	Text to Speech for Grade Level Passages and Novels
Snap Type App	Digital Worksheets
PRC Accent 100	Parent Provided Speech-Generating Device
Big Mack	Voice-Output Button for Communication
Read & Write	Text to Speech, Word Prediction, Digital Highlighter, Line Focus
iPad	Portable Word Processor
First Author	Digital Word Banks

What are some Sample IEP Goals for AT?

Writing

Using Speech to Text, Student will write a paragraph on a given topic using correct grammar and usage with fewer than 3 errors on 3 out of 4 trials by _____2024.

Given a topic, Student will access word prediction to type 3 sentences with no more than 3 spelling/usage errors by _____2024.

State AT Projects

- Support
- Guidance
- Lending Library – try before you buy
- Collaborate to develop what training is needed in your state
- Partner with your community!

Idaho Assistive Technology Project (idahoat.org)

References

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  - Erickson, K. A., & Koppenhaver, D. (2020). *Comprehensive literacy for all : teaching students with significant disabilities to read and write*. Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.
- Developmental Writing Scale
  - Sturm, J., Cali, K., Nelson, N., & Staskowski, M. (2012). *TLD Special Issue: Access to Writing for Students with Diverse Disabilities The Developmental Writing Scale: A New Progress Monitoring Tool for Beginning Writers*. *32*, 297–318. https://doi.org/10.1097/TLD.0b013e318272159e
- Emerging Literacy Behaviors Checklist
  - *Home - Literacy for All*. (2016). Literacy for All. https://literacyforallab.ca/
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  - *Project Core – A Stepping-Up Technology Implementation Grant Directed by the Center for Literacy and Disability Studies*. (n.d.). Www.project-Core.com. https://www.project-core.com/