

Examples of Assistive Technology Equipment

The term assistive technology equipment refers to many different types of items such as: self-help devices, special toys and switches, assistive listening devices, augmentative communication devices, and mobility and positioning devices. The assistive technology available to young children is changing and expanding at a rapid pace. The lists on this handout provide examples but should not be considered to be comprehensive.

1. Self Help Devices – devices to assist with self-help skills and functional abilities related to bathing, eating, dressing and other daily routines. Items may include but are not limited to: adaptive feeding utensils, non-slip matting, bath chairs, and weighted vests and blankets.



Angled utensils with built up handles provide several grasping positions and promote greater success in eating.



Cut out cups allow a child to drink without head or neck hyperextension and stimulate the corners of the mouth to facilitate lip closure.

2. Toys and Switches – switches and interfaces that can allow a child to activate toys in order to support engagement in developmental learning through play. Items may include but are not limited to: switch adapted toys, single-use switches, or toys adapted with visual, tactile and auditory materials.



The child uses the yellow switch to activate or turn on the toy cat.ⁱ



The fire engine can be operated by 2 different switches or by the round remote control.

3. Assistive Listening Devices – devices to help with auditory processing. Examples include hearing aids and FM systems.



An FM system allows a teacher to talk into a microphone that transmits sounds directly to the child's hearing aid or headphones. The transmission occurs on a reserved radio spectrum.

4. Augmentative Communication – any device, system, or method that improves the ability of a child to communicate effectively. For young children, it is important to include a variety of different augmentative communication strategies such as devices, signing, gestures, and pictures. Equipment may include but are not limited to: picture or object communication boards, symbol systems, and voice output devices.



The child pushes a button on the device to say a pre-recorded word or message. The buttons are labeled with pictures or symbols to signify the recorded message.¹



Communication boards are often made using software (e.g., Boardmaker[®]) with a library of picture symbols to create boards of any shape or size to help a child access a wide range of vocabulary. Individual symbols or boards can be placed around a room for access during particular activities, or carried around in a binder to be available at all times.

5. Mobility and Positioning – devices to promote and enhance access to and functioning in a child’s natural environments. Items of equipment may include but are not limited to: ankle-foot orthotic braces and splints, adapted special needs car seats, floor mobility and positioning devices, feeder seats, walkers, and standers.



This scooter board allows the child to move in all directions with four switches or a special joystick. ⁱ



This walker allows children who struggle with balance and mobility to be more independent.

ⁱ Photos courtesy of: Enabling Devices/Toys for Special Children, 800-832-8697, www.enablingdevices.com

Note: This handout is adapted from part of the 2010 North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program Manual.