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10 Things Everyone Needs to Know about Assistive Technology

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Slide 2

What IS Assistive Technology?

What is it for?

How can I help make good decisions?

How can I be a good steward of public funds?

How do I know if I am doing it right?

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Slide 3

What is Assistive Technology?

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Slide 4

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Assistive Technology is a legal term.

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Slide 5

Assistive Technology in Federal Statute

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Tech Act (Assistive Technology Act)
- Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

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Slide 6

Assistive Technology Device

. . . any item, piece of equipment or product system… that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

Public Law 105-17, Section 602(1)

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Assistive Technology Service

... any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device.

Public Law 105-17, Section 602(2)

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Big Ideas about AT

- **Assistive Technology is essentially a legal term related to use and need, not to specific items**
- **Includes a broad range of possible devices and services**
- **Not always something to be acquired**

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The primary purpose of Assistive Technology is the enhancement of capabilities and the removal of barriers to achievement.

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The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Amendments of 1997

✓ **IDEA ensures FAPE**
✓ **FAPE is defined by the IEP**
✓ **AT required to implement the IEP must be provided at no cost to the family**

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Assistive Technology is related to function, rather than to a specific disability.

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Functional Skills

- **Reading**
- **Written Expression**
- **Math**
- **Problem-solving**
- **Communication**
- **Recreation**
- **Daily organization**

- **Seating/Positioning**
- **Hearing**
- **Seeing**
- **Self-Care**
- **Mobility**
- **Behavior**
- **Specific task-related skills**

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Assistive technology may be applicable to all disability groups and in all phases of education.

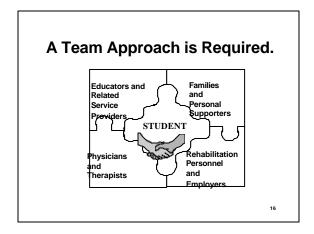13

How can I make good decisions...

and be a good steward of public funds?

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Assistive Technology service provision follows a student-centered process that requires a team approach.

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A Team Approach is Required.

Educators and Related Service Providers

Families and Personal Supporters

STUDENT

Physicians and Therapists

Rehabilitation Personnel and Employers

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Big Ideas about Teams

- The student is always the center of the team
- Focus is on the common interest in individual achievement and aligning thoughts on how to best foster it
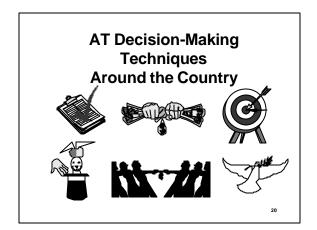
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Big Ideas about Teams

- Team membership is flexible and based on the needs of the individual
- Multiple perspectives are vital
- Team members bring different gifts - *knowledge, skill, observations, ideas, suggestions*

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* Assessment and intervention form a continuous, dynamic process.

* Systematic problem analysis and solving are essential.

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AT Decision-Making Techniques Around the Country

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The SETT Framework

- **S**tudent (**S**elf)
- **E**nvironments
- **T**asks
- **T**ools

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The Goal of SETT Framework

… to help collaborative teams create

Student-centered,

Environmentally-useful, and

Tasks-focused

Tool systems
that foster the educational achievement of students with disabilities

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Student (Self)

- **Areas of concern**
- **Strengths**
- **Current achievement**
- **Expectations**
- **Evaluation information**

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Environments

- **Conditions within customary environments**
  - **Barriers**
  - **Supports**

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Environments

- Arrangement
- Support
- Materials and Equipment
- Access Issues
- Attitudes and Expectations

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Tasks

- The <u>specific</u> things that the student needs to be able to do to reach expectations and make progress that are difficult or impossible at present

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Tasks

Tasks are a part of being actively involved in learning environments

- Communication
- Instruction
- Participation
- Productivity
- Environmental Control

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Tools

- Whatever is needed by the student and others for the student to do the tasks in the environments in order to meet expectations

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Tools

- Strategies
- Accommodations
- Devices
- Supports
- Services
- Modifications
- Etc.

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Critical Elements of the SETT Framework

- Collaboration
- Communication
- Multiple Perspectives
- Pertinent information
- Shared Knowledge
- Flexibility
- On-going Processes

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When a team can describe the student, the environments and the tasks, they can <u>describe</u> the tools that are needed to support success!

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The least complex solution that will remove barriers to achievement should be a first consideration.

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AT does not eliminate the need for instruction in skills pertinent to the tasks.
(social, academic, vocational, recreational, or other)

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Big Ideas – Decisions and Stewardship

- **View technology is part of a SYSTEM of tools!**
- **Recognize that assistive technology can BE a barrier**
- **Try to determine tool systems that remove more barriers than they create**

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Big Ideas – Decisions and Stewardship

- **Avoid device abandonment and underutilization**
- **Try before you buy**
- **Plan for implementation**
- **Identify expected change**
- **Evaluate effectiveness**
- **Think Return on Investment (ROI)**

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There are many ways to do it right!

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Big Ideas – Doing it Right!

Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology Services in Schools

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QIAT for Eight Areas

- Administrative Support
- Consideration
- Assessment
- IEP Development
- Implementation
- Evaluation of Effectiveness
- Transition
- Professional Development

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Purpose of QIAT

- NOT competencies for service providers, but require the preparation and availability of competent service providers.
- Tool to guide in the improvement of AT services in order to improve student results.

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Assumptions for ALL QIAT Areas

- Are legally correct according to the mandates and expectations of federal and state laws and are aligned to district policies
- Involve on-going collaborative work by teams which include families and caregivers, school personnel, and other needed individuals and service agencies

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Assumptions for ALL QIAT Areas

- Require team members to be responsible for following the code of ethics for their specific profession
- Are applicable regardless of the model of service delivery
- Most are applicable to other service plans

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Beneficiaries of QIAT

- school districts - quality AT services
- service providers - continuous improvement
- consumers - integrated AT services
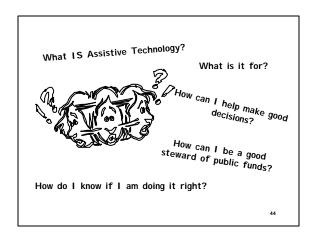- universities - competent service providers
- policy-makers - judicious policy

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Collegial Conversation...

QIAT Web Site
http://www.qiat.org

QIAT Listserv
- collegial conversations
- new information and updates
- handouts and feedback

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What IS Assistive Technology?

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How do I know if I am doing it right?

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What were those stars? *

Study Group on the Provision of Assistive Technology Services in Rehabilitation (1990). The provision of assistive technology services in rehabilitation. Hot Springs, AR: Arkansas Research and Training Center in Vocational Rehabilitation, University of Arkansas.

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Freda Adler

"We measure progress not only by the questions we have answered, but also, by the questions we are still asking ...or have just begun to ask… for knowledge alters what we seek as well as what we find."

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In summary…

A CALL TO ACTION!

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Make Connections!
Make It Happen!
Spread the Word!

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Make Connections!

Understand what AT is for!
– **A support for overcoming barriers to achievement**

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Make Connections!

- **Understand what AT is not!**
  – **Not replacements for instruction in academic, social, vocational or other skills**
  – **Not just a device**

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Make Connections!

- **Understand what AT is**
  – **Legal term related to use and need, not specific items**
  – **Any item that enhances capabilities and removes barriers to performance**

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Work Together to Make It Happen!

- **Think first about what a student needs to do and where it needs to be done, THEN seek useful tools**
- **Develop tool systems that remove more barriers than they create.**
- **Use what you have, but go beyond when you need to!**

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Work Together to Make It Happen!

- **Don't forget the services!**
- **Plan for change!**
- **Evaluate Effectiveness!**

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Spread the Word!

- **Participate in the conversation**
- **Influence policy**
  - **Ask questions**
  - **Contribute evidence of change**
  - **Contribute evidence of continuing need**
- **QIAT List at http://www.qiat.org**

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Jerome Bruner

...Where there was once an observer, let there now be a participant...

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