



NATIONAL CENTER ON

Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning



Disabilities Services Newsletter

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Using Assistive Technology to Support Children

Assistive technology encompasses a wide range of low- and high-tech items and special equipment used to support children's participation in everyday activities. These range from simple modifications of everyday items helpful for all children to specialized devices designed specifically for children with disabilities. Assistive technology increases children's access to chances for learning and social development. This is particularly important for children with disabilities or suspected delays. In this issue, learn more about using assistive technology for supporting children at home and in the classroom.

Read About It



Joe eagerly runs to the art center and looks at the paint, scissors, paper, and glue spread out across the table. Joe and his friends have just heard a story about buses and he wants to make a picture of a bus. Joe brings lots of energy and enthusiasm to whatever he does, and he has some delays around attending to activities and using fine motor skills. These factors can make art projects challenging for him. Joe's teacher, Ms. Kim, recently worked with her program's disabilities services coordinator to come up with modifications to art materials so Joe can manipulate them more

easily. They adapted some of the art equipment and ordered special scissors that would make cutting easier for Joe and for his friends! Ms. Kim showed Joe how to use the new scissors and he happily started cutting out pieces for a bus.

Explore resources Ms. Kim and the disabilities services coordinator can use to learn how assistive technology and special equipment supports children's learning and development.

Assistive Technology Supports for Early Learning

Explore a wide range of assistive technology supports and their functions in this handbook. Learn about supports for sitting and attending, writing, drawing and creating, playing and sharing, and more. Ms. Kim and her disabilities services coordinator could use this resource to learn more about using assistive technology and special equipment for supporting young children.

Take a Look

CONNECT Module 5: Assistive Technology

Explore the purpose, use, and potential benefits of assistive technology interventions in this module. Watch videos

of children using assistive technology at home and in the classroom. Also available in **Spanish (español)**.

- **Nolan at Bath Time:** A therapist shows a mother how to use and adapt household items to help her child who has physical delays
- **Using an Adapted Tricycle:** An adult adapts a tricycle with a belt and foot pedals to help a child take part in riding bikes with other children on the playground
- **Perl Using a Switch and Stander:** A child uses assistive technology to participate in a game with another classmate
- **Communicating at Breakfast:** An adult uses a child's communication board to show him how to ask for more cereal at breakfast

Try It Out

Special Equipment Learning Activity: View and Share

Practice deciding how assistive technology might support children's access and participation. The activity, which is part of the Special Equipment In-Service Suite, includes a slide deck with video, a planning matrix, and a facilitator guide. The disabilities services coordinator could use this activity with Ms. Kim to consider how even small modifications can support children in her class.

Improve Your Practice

Special Equipment

Discover more ways to use special equipment in this In-Service Suite. These strategies can help increase the participation of children who need more support. Explore examples that show what the strategies look like in the classroom and links to supporting materials. Also, find other resources on this topic for teachers, supervisors, and trainers.

Families, Too!

Supporting Your Child's Learning

Children with disabilities sometimes need more supports to fully participate. This one-page guide for families is filled with ideas for using assistive technology to help their child join in everyday activities and learning. Find low- and high-tech strategies, including tips for implementing them, how to know they are working, and a video example.

Ongoing Features

Free access to a specially selected article from Young Exceptional Children (YEC)

Read the YEC article, **Assistive and Instructional Technology: Understanding the Differences to Enhance Programming and Teaching**. It is available through this newsletter until June 31, 2018.

Head Start Disability/Inclusion Network

Engage with Head Start disabilities/inclusion peers around the country in an online community hosted on the MyPeers platform. Our community has more than 1,000 members who are sharing resources, engaging in conversations, and asking questions. **Register now** as a member of MyPeers. If you are already a member of MyPeers, find the Head Start Disability/Inclusion Network community under "All Communities" and select the blue "Join" button.

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We Want to Hear from You

The Disabilities Services Newsletter is produced monthly by the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning. Submit questions or suggestions for future newsletter topics to ecdtl@ecetta.info.

Select this link to view previous **Head Start Disabilities Services Newsletters** on the ECLKC.

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