



**Family Center on
Technology
and Disability**

FCTD Conference Series: Transition-related AT Issues

April 3 – May 1, 2006

Transition-related Assistive Technology Issues

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EXPERT'S CORNER

Introduction

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, revised in late 2004, places greater emphasis than ever before on transition planning. The legislation emphasizes the need to systematically plan, by age 16, for a student's departure from high school, whether for college, work, or independent living. Many experts and educators recommend strongly that such planning begin by age 14. Yet others believe that parents can begin to work with their children at even younger ages.

One thing is certain - a student's passage from one environment to another is easier, more efficient and effective, if the youth's need for assistive technology has been expressly considered by all parties and included in appropriate IEPs. That is, however, but one of the many challenges families face during this critical period. There are new bureaucratic systems to negotiate and new vocabularies to master. Even those who have been effective advocates up to this point can find themselves on unknown ground.

Please join us throughout the month of April as transition experts, Dr. Mary Morningstar and Dr. Sean Smith, lead us through many of the transition-related AT issues that parents, children, and the organizations that serve them must tackle.

Experts' Perspectives

The term "transition" in its most basic context means change, or "a passing from one condition or place to another" (Webster's New World Dictionary, p. 635). Transitions from one life stage to another occur throughout one's life and are characterized as times of stress, conflict, redefinition, and sometimes dysfunction. In special education, the term is used to describe a systematic passage from school to adult life for students with disabilities. Transition, in this sense, is seen as a bridge between the security of school and home and the risks and opportunities of adult life (Morningstar, Kleinhammer-Tramill & Lattin, 1999).

One common denominator among adolescents with disabilities making the transition from school to adult life is that these students are considered to have complex support needs, especially when it comes to finding and sustaining employment, living independently, and attaining postsecondary

education and training. All adolescents experience the stresses and adjustments related to this transition, however those with disabilities often experience more significant difficulties (NLTS-2, 2005). Probably two of the biggest stressors include the significant changes in the roles and responsibilities facing young adults with disabilities, as well as the movement to different service delivery systems (i.e., moving from the entitlement programs under special education to the eligibility systems in adult services). Both of these issues impact the role that assistive technology can play, and unfortunately, illustrate critical barriers to effective transitions.

During transition, the research reports that parents rely on school professionals to provide them with accurate information regarding possible adult outcomes and services (Gallivan-Fenlon, 1994). Unfortunately, when it comes to assistive technology, secondary special education teachers do not feel competent to address these needs (Benitez, 2005). More anecdotally, teachers have indicated that they are unfamiliar with AT and are not using it as a part of their day-to-day routines with students. Therefore, issues related to the transition to adulthood and the use of assistive technology both during secondary school years, and into adulthood will be explored in this online discussion.

We hope to explore a range of issues related to transition and AT, however, some particular concerns that we would like to discuss with the field include:

1. The barriers to the transfer of AT from K-12 systems to adult systems. We would like to discuss with you what are the circumstances, barriers and strategies related to the transfer of AT from schools to adult systems. This certainly impacts the postsecondary success of students with disabilities using AT in school. We will offer examples of strategies for success related to collaborating during transition to ensure a smooth transfer of AT.
2. The importance of AT competence among secondary special education teachers. This issue appears to be particularly relevant to the field, given the positive impact of AT on student learning. We plan to discuss the broad range of assistive technology that can be used in secondary schools including more ?generic? methods of AT (e.g., software such as Inspiration, PDAs, cellphones, I-pods) as well as AT designed specifically for students with disabilities. Indeed our experience has been that AT is often already used in schools and may not be adapted to meet the unique learning needs of students with disabilities. Within this discussion, we plan to also talk about innovative uses of technology to better prepare teachers.
3. Using AT to meet critical skills for the transition to adulthood. For this discussion, we plan to highlight critical skills needed for successful postsecondary outcomes related to employment, postsecondary education, and living in the community. For example, organization, writing, reading, communication, memory, on task skills are critical across multiple domains of adult life. Yet, AT is often not considered as a solution to addressing these skills. We will discuss the importance of specific skills and share examples of innovative uses of existing technology as well as specific AT devices that can address and support these skills.

Experts' Bios

Mary Morningstar, PhD.

Dr. Mary E. Morningstar is an associate professor in the Department of Special Education at the University of Kansas and Director of the Transition Coalition, a research and training center for the transition to adulthood and secondary special education for youth with disabilities. The Transition Coalition is designed to maximize transition professional development at



national, state and local levels through online training and technical assistance.

For the past several years, Dr. Morningstar has co-directed the KU Secondary/Transition Masters Program, the Transition/Interprofessional Training Project, (a project designed to train related services personnel about transition), and the KU-Transition Leadership Personnel Program, a 4-year doctoral training program designed to promote leadership in secondary school reform and transition policy development. Most recently, Dr. Morningstar was awarded a 4-year federal grant to support professionals enrolled in online transition coursework offered at KU.

Mary teaches several classes related to secondary education and transition including vocational training and employment, interagency and community services, and a week-long transition summer institute. Her research interests have focused on teacher education, online instruction, and supporting young adults with disabilities and their families during the transition to adult life.

Dr. Morningstar has been involved in statewide inservice training and staff development regarding transition from school to adult life for over 20 years. She was the Training Coordinator for the "Kansas Systems Change in Transition Project" at the University of Kansas. She is actively involved with statewide training of professionals and family members regarding issues in transition including interagency collaboration, compliance with federal regulations regarding transition, school-business partnerships, and the role of families during transition planning.

Prior to her position at KU, Dr. Morningstar was Director of Full Citizenship, Inc., a nonprofit organization that helps persons with disabilities and their families to lead full, rich lives with many choices for living, working, contributing, and participating in their communities.

Prior to moving to Kansas, she worked as a teacher for students with moderate and severe disabilities. Through the active involvement of families, her programs have reflected functional, community-based practices with an emphasis on inclusion in the mainstream of school life. Mary has been an active advocate for all persons with disabilities based on her experiences as a sibling of a brother with disabilities.

Dr. Morningstar received her Ph.D. in Special Education through the Beach Center on Family Studies and Disability at the University of Kansas in 1995.

Sean Smith, PhD.



Sean Smith, PhD

Dr. Smith is an Associate Professor in the Department of Special Education (<http://www.soe.ku.edu/depts/sped>) and an Associate Researcher with the Center for Research (<http://www.crl-ku.edu>) on Learning at the University of Kansas. He is also a founding member of the E Learning Design Lab (<http://www.elearndesign.org>), a lab focused on the effectiveness of e learning on teacher education and professional development, specific to the area of those educators working with individuals with disabilities.

For the past several years, Sean has focused his attentions on several projects seeking to develop, implement, and evaluate the effectiveness of e-learning as a professional development tool to enhance information dissemination, learning, and subsequent intervention implementation. For example, in collaboration with Dr. Suzanne Robinson, Sean oversaw the development of a U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Project of National Significance titled Special Connections (<http://www.specialconnections.ku.edu>). Special Connections seeks to provide evidence-based practices in applicable manner to assist general and special education teachers enhance access to the general curriculum for all students. Likewise, Sean, along with Dr. Ed Meyen, oversaw the development and implementation of an

Office of Special Education Program Steppingstone's Phase I and II focused on assisting general education with addressing standards-based curriculum for all students.

Recently, Sean has also facilitated a state of Kansas project with partners nationwide – vendors of AT devices, education entities, government, and not-for-profits – focused on technology integration for all students, especially those with disabilities. The Kansas Infinitec Coalition involves nearly 75% of all preK-12 students served in public education and cooperates with another 415 school districts in the state of Illinois. Similarly, Sean is wrapping up a five-year collaboration with Dr. Michael Wehmeyer, focused on assistive technology for this with mental retardation. This project sought to understand the state of technology for individuals with mental retardation while expanding upon processes as well as technologies that can better serve this population.

Sean teaches undergraduate, masters, and doctoral level classes at the University of Kansas. While these classes range from an Introduction to Individuals with Exceptionalities to a doctoral seminar on online learning, every course is focused on enhancing student use technology with hopes they develop the capacity to further integrate technology-based tools in the subsequent teaching. His research interests have focused on teacher education, online instruction, and technology as a tool in supporting students with disabilities and their teachers enhance overall development.

Prior to his position at the University of Kansas, Sean worked two years at Bowling Green State University and also served as a middle/secondary general and special education teacher in both public and private school settings in Upstate New York and the Northern Virginia area. Sean has tried to serve from a perspective of what a teacher needs and most recently, from the perspective of a parent with a son with Down syndrome.

Dr. Smith received his Ph.D., in Special Education with a concentration in technology from the University of Virginia in 1997.

CONFERENCE

Transcript: Transition-Related Assistive Technology Issues

- **Good morning and welcome to the discussion by Sean Smith** on Apr 03, 2006
Hello all,

Feel very fortunate to be co-facilitating this discussion board this month on technology considerations and technology. The timing is perfect considering we have thousands of children and their families preparing to make significant transitions over the next several months. Whether it is from a home-based IFSP to a school-based IEP, a student beginning Kindergarten, an elementary student about to enter middle/junior high school, a junior high student preparing for high school, or a young adult preparing to engage in post-secondary school opportunities, technology hopefully is part of the conversation.

I must admit this topic hits close to home for me. As I mentioned in my bio, I am a parent of four children (7, 5, 3, and 10 months) with the five year old having Down syndrome. With Nolan being five, my wife and I are in the midst of working with Nolan's preschool setting (his home for the past three years), the neighborhood elementary school, and school district officials to sort out the best way to support his transition from a wonderful Montessori-based preschool program to a half-day Kindergarten program. Interestingly, we have been using technology with Nolan for the past three years but not in the Montessori-based preschool. The lack of technology use in the preschool setting is due to a number of factors. Regardless, to support his transition we are now engaging the Assistive Technology Coordinator from our local public school. She comes from a Speech Pathology background

and does a wonderful job supporting students with disabilities. However, like many of her peers, she is a one person staff asked to be many places at once as well as wearing many hats simultaneously.

It will be interesting to be part of this conversation while also working to prepare Nolan for his upcoming transition. If it helps, our school year ends in late May and so, April and early May are generally critical meeting times for subsequent school planning. So, while I hope to offer a perspective based on previous work, I also hope to learn from practices in place across the country seeking to enhance the transition process (across the life of the individual) for individuals with disabilities and their families.

- **Re:Good morning and welcome to the discussion by Tom Manthey** on Apr 03, 2006

Even families and students that have a strong grasp of the transition process find it difficult to acquire and coordinate the services they need. When we add the consideration of technology to the general discussion of transition, it brings with it concerns for staff development in the use and support of the technology. Overall, I seldom see technology used to the best advantage of the students. In short, I think more deliberate action needs to be taken to ensure that technology is successfully incorporated into the transition process and that it has specialized support. Could staff with technological expertise in various environments provide the needed assistance?

- **Re:Good morning and welcome to the discussion by Mary Morningstar** on Apr 03, 2006

Hi Tom, glad to have you online with us! I would absolutely agree with your concerns with the added dilemma of planning for assistive technology during the transition to adulthood. With all of the potential barriers and conflicts that might arise with the "transition of AT" from school settings into adult settings, it certainly would help to have effective professional development related to this topic. This is an often overlooked component of transition planning. Perhaps not for you AT folks out there, but in general, it is not often considered as part of the general training for transition.

I would also agree that technology (both general - meaning software and resources available to the general school setting; and specialized - meaning those AT devices, equipment, strategies and software that we use specifically to support students with disabilities) is not often used in schools. From a national study of transition competencies that we have recently finished, we have learned that secondary special education teachers feel somewhat unprepared to use AT in academic, work and community environments. And indeed, feel very unprepared to conduct AT assessments (Benitez, 2005).

So what are the solutions? Well, I would agree that more effective training is needed. There are some excellent resources from around the country (mostly from AT support sites at the SEA level) that we will be sharing with you over the course of this month.

I would also agree that school professionals with the specialized AT knowledge need to be collaborating with school professionals with specialized transition knowledge (e.g., transition coordinators) as well as those adult agencies and organizations who will be "receiving" these students (e.g., postsecondary ed., employment, living). Unfortunately, as we all well know, this is easier said than done.

What we do know is that there are strategies and capacities for collaboration

during transition that have recently been identified as highly effective among high performing school districts and states in the area of transition services (Noonan, 2004). Now, these strategies are not specific to AT and transition, but certainly the procedures used for effective interagency collaboration can be applied to the issues you raise regarding AT and Transition. I'm happy to talk more about these during this month, but think perhaps my message is getting too long.

- **Re:Good morning and welcome to the discussion by Cheri** on Apr 04, 2006

Hello. I work in Fairfax County Public Schools in Fairfax, Virginia. We are very fortunate to have an extensive support system for assistive technology. Because of this, general education teachers, special education teachers, and support service professionals (speech therapists, occupational therapists, etc.) can receive training to support students in a variety of environments, both at home and in school. Perhaps looking into the public school system's supports would help, regardless of the location your son will need services.

- **Re:Good morning and welcome to the discussion by Sean Smith** on Apr 05, 2006
Cheri, Tom, and Mary,

Sorry for the delay in responding to these wonderful postings. Family obligations prevented me from access. However, I would agree that training is a critical component and one that has challenged the effective integration of assistive technology for students since AT's inception into IDEA. Yet, there are examples, like Fairfax County Public Schools, where districts have offered a training model that meets the needs of both general and special education teachers. To me the GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHER is the key in this instruction. Currently, I'm facilitating a state wide program here in Kansas seeking to enhance AT use across the preK-12 environment. While we are looking to address special education and related service providers needs, the key for our success will be the general education teacher. I'll speak to this in greater detail and reflect on some research we know shortly.

Sean

- **RE: General Ed teacher by Dcorba** on Apr 05, 2006
I agree completely that the Gen Ed teacher is key. In my daughter's transition to middle school where she has a different teacher for each subject only a few classroom teachers were up to embracing this unfamiliar assistive tech device. In those classes she has excelled. In the others there have been behavior problems, not surprising.

I am building into her IEP pre-teaching the Gen Ed teachers some AT basics, to support her efforts to communicate in their classrooms.

- **Re:RE: General Ed teacher by Stevi B** on Apr 08, 2006
I totally agree with you. Classroom teachers need to

have more training with regards to AT. Training all teachers in AT can only be beneficial to our students. Teachers would be more likely to embrace the AT devices and software programs if they were introduced to them...maybe given a little bit of insight into what they're about and how they work. I'm currently seeking licensure in Virginia; and was shocked that there are no requirements for special ed or AT courses.

▪ **Re:Good morning and welcome to the discussion by Rebecca** on Apr 10, 2006

Hello! I am a special education teacher at the high school level in Fairfax County Public Schools. I do agree that the general education teacher plays a very important role in the integration of AT for our students. I teach self-contained classes, but I have several students who are mainstreamed into the general education setting for certain subjects. Being a special educator, I actively seek out training opportunities in regards to AT and have seen how successful my students can be with the integration of AT into their daily classroom activities and instruction. Unfortunately I have seen a breakdown occur for some of my students when they are in a general education class with a teacher who has a difficult time embracing AT and may not necessarily "promote" or encourage the use of software or certain devices. I am curious to hear more about your state wide program in Kansas that focuses on enhancing AT use with general education teachers.

○ **other special ed topics/Re:Good morning and welcome to the discussion by ash** on Apr 08, 2006

i noticed messages that have to do with special ed other than AT; we have nearly 3000 members here http://groups.yahoo.com/group/IEP_guide/ that can be of help with that.

• **Welcome and a bit of logistics by Jackie Hess [SI Faculty]** on Apr 03, 2006

Good morning all. The Family Center is very pleased to launch this month's online discussion. We hope you'll take full advantage of the opportunity to speak with Dr. Sean Smith and Dr. Mary Morningstar, well-respected professionals in the disabilities field, with specific expertise in the area of transition.

For those of you who may be new to FCTD discussions, a bit of logistics. If you would like to read each post individually, with the ability to respond or to post a question or comment, please enter the discussion by clicking on "Join the Discussion." If you would like to read all of the posts in a single document, please click on "Review the Discussion as Transcript." That document may take a little longer to load, particularly as the month goes on. It saves you from having to click in and out of each post, but you cannot respond or post a question in that mode. If you have any questions about technical issues, please send an email to fctd@aed.org.

Please remember that there is no such thing as a stupid question (well, hardly, at any rate) and you are among caring, tolerant disability professionals, parents, educators and others who can benefit greatly by your observations, queries, and experiences. We hope you'll visit the discussion often throughout April. When it is over, the discussion transcript will become

part of our online discussion archive and will be included in our upcoming AT Resources CD-ROM.

- **spanish classes by margie** on Apr 03, 2006
my son is a sophomore in high school . he has aspergers syndrome. this year he is required to take spanish classes. two years actually so he can go to college. he has a very high iq and is planning on attending college. i would like input on how to handle this change he is not adjusting well. Maybe you would have suggestions for the IEP.
thanks
 - **Re:spanish classes by Jackie** on Apr 03, 2006
Margie, I may not be qualified to offer any help, but my son also has Asperger's Syndrome and has been doing very well in Spanish class. Perhaps you could say a little more about the nature of the problem. As you know, many children with AS have auditory processing issues. They do not do well with information that is received only through their ears. It's usually a good idea with AS students to make sure that information is given visually as well. In my experience, it's also a good idea for them to sit at the very front of the class, so that they're not distracted by ambient classroom chatter and other noises. With respect to AT, I would suggest a CD-ROM based Spanish language program that offers visual cues for all vocabulary and for setting context. The program would also allow him to replay lessons as many times as necessary. The teacher might even be open to allowing him to take alternate tests, based on the CD-ROM program, as long as the same basic vocabulary was being mastered. I don't know if this helps at all. Others might offer more professional advice.
 - **Re:spanish classes by mary Morningstar** on Apr 04, 2006
Margie, I might follow up with finding out more about the requirements for a 2nd language at the college your son is interested in attending. Sometimes, for students with disabilities, the college or university will waive this requirements OR they will accept sign language as the 2nd language. You might want to talk with the Admissions officer of the university your son is interested (thinking he should apply a few places, so he has a "safety school" or two). But probably the person to talk to at the postsecondary level is the coordinator for disability services. I might add that on our website (www.transitioncoalition.org) we have a document in our Tools and Resources section entitled "Transition and your Adolescent with Learning Disabilities: Moving from High School to Postsecondary Education, Training and Employment" While written for students with LD (by a mom with a son with LD), it has some very helpful information (a checklist of accommodations to ask about when looking at colleges) that is useful for anyone going on to postsecondary settings. Now, I will qualify this resource by saying it was written several years ago and I bet it's a tad outdated!). Let me know what you think... MM
 - **Re:spanish classes by Sean Smith** on Apr 05, 2006
Margie,

On the AT front, I have found a variety of spanish-based resources online that offer supports for those that need support with the organization, structure, and the memory components often required in learning a foreign language. A few examples of some useful sites include:

<http://www.wordreference.com/> - I like this one in that it offers visual images associated with the word to offer context and provide memory application.

<http://www.allwords.com/> - this site offers a variety of languages and offers a definition but also the audio version of the word for pronunciation purposes

<http://www.pdictionary.com/spanish/> - this is on the simpler end but again offers visuals to connect the word to a visual meaning.

Just a few ideas.

Sean

- o **Re:spanish classes** by **Cheri** on Apr 04, 2006
Many language instruction texts now come with online or CD supports. You might ask the teacher or the foreign language department chair if these are available. It's a start...
Cheri

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- **AT & skills for the transition to adulthood** by **Mary Morningstar** on Apr 03, 2006
As we mentioned in our "expert perspective" Sean and I would like to especially talk about critical skills for adulthood and the variety of general and specialized technology (i.e., devices, software, etc.) that can be used to support students during the transition to adulthood. We are particularly anxious to talk to you all about the innovative use of general technologies (e.g., PDAs, cell phones) for supporting students with disabilities.

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- **Barriers to the transfer of AT** by **Mary Morningstar** on Apr 03, 2006
Sean and I have identified this issue as critical for effective transition planning. We would define the "Transfer of AT" as between those critical transition points (e.g., Sean has already addressed this issue from a personal perspective for his son and the transition from preschool to kindergarten), including the transition between critical educational environments (e.g., preschool, elementary, middle, high school) and to adult settings. We would like to hear from you regarding the BARRIERS and SOLUTIONS to the transfer of AT.
 - o **Re:Barriers to the transfer of AT** by **Cheri** on Apr 04, 2006
As a special education teacher who has taught all grades between kindergarten and eighth grade, I must say that the attitudes of the professionals (teachers, administrators, and support service professionals) can be either a barrier or a solution. With open minds and supportive attitudes, school personnel can help make (at least the AT portion) of a student's transition seamless. However, when professionals are inadequately trained, don't collaborate concerning the use of AT, or refuse particular devices, the student is the one who suffers.
I encourage parents to be positive advocates in ensuring that their children receive appropriate AT services, especially during transitions. If their school system has an assistive technology department, help should be available there, too.
 - **Re:Barriers to the transfer of AT** by **Madeline McDougal** on Apr 08, 2006
Cheri,
I agree with you. I am both a special educator and a parent of a special needs adult. I wish that the school personnel had been more versed about transition services and technology when my son was 14. He is struggling now with a job

coach, trying to be independent. But he has many difficulties with personnel who do not understand his disabilities and who are not willing to find appropriate ways to help.

I, also, should have been more of an advocate. There are many resources that could have been tapped into, that I was not aware of. For this reason, I encourage parents to be proactive and to seek appropriate AT services to help with transitions.

- **Re:Barriers to the transfer of AT by Cheri** on Apr 09, 2006

Madeline,

I hope there comes a day when you - and possibly your son, as well - feel that you have the time and energy to speak at school board, parent resource center, special education advisory board, or other public meetings. Parents, teachers, administrators, and others associated with school systems need to hear and learn from your experiences.

Cheri

- **Re:Barriers to the transfer of AT by MC** on Apr 04, 2006

How about including the transition from Infant-Toddler Program into preschool. In my state, there are AT funds available (funding of last resort) that can purchase low to high tech equipment for children. However, the request must be made prior to the child's 3rd birthday. If AT needs are identified, then there is a mad dash to evaluate and order something that the child demonstrates some competence in using. It can't be something they will "grow into". If obtained, the child goes off into preschool with minimal collaboration between IF-T program and preschool. We then wonder if the family/preschool utilizes the equipment obtained.

- **Re:Barriers to the transfer of AT by Sean Smith** on Apr 05, 2006

MC,

Yes, I agree that this is a critical stage and an area where AT can and should be a tool for consideration. I know on the communication end of things, we often do a decent job at least working with families via IFSP supports to consider ways to augment the toddler's communication.

Now, the example you offer with your state is an interesting one. The "mad dash" component is one that presents several challenges. I understand the purpose is probably tied to where the money is coming from and where it can be spent, however; at that age, we know that the needs for a technology tool and the growth of the individual will most likely require modifications and reconsiderations as the child grows. Similarly, the environmental and task needs of the child will alter as they go from a home-based to preschool-based environment. Next, add in to the IFSP family-based model that is replaced by the 3-5 school-based model and you have further challenges.

Personally, what I would advocate for would be better interaction between the IFSP and the IEP teams. Often, we do not have these teams meet to plan and really assist the student and family during this transition. However, it is critical that we get these professionals, community-based supports, the family members, and related individuals to plan for what is necessary for the next steps. If the state is offering the AT support at the birth to three level, then I would argue we need to have the IFSP team, who has assisted in making the technology decision, connecting with the 3-5 support team to ensure the AT device is used in a manner effective for that individual. Likewise, if an AT device is being used as a child enters 3-5 services, it would be critical to have the 3-5 AT person as a member (an active member) of the child's IEP team to

assist in the transition of this device or devices to ensure proper use, support, and training in the 3-5 environment.

o **Re:Barriers to the transfer of AT by Colleen** on Apr 14, 2006

My son is now 16, we have been able to make fairly smooth transitions from grade to grade and building to building by doing lots of preplanning and pretraining. I don't expect every teacher or every staff member who comes in contact with him to know how to program his communication device, but I do expect them to have a general idea of it's capabilities are and to know how to facilitate his use of his technology and how to interact with him and how to provide necessary feedback to improve his use of the AT. What has been most beneficial for our team is having a roles and responsibilities sheet listing every person that may interact with him and their title, contact info and what responsibilities they have. That way if his device breaks down, if someone needs him to be able to use new vocabulary, or whatever situation arises everyone knows who to go to, how to reach them and who should be doing what.

Not knowing for sure what will be in place when he is 18 makes planning (let alone after 21) difficult. There's not a smooth overlap between systems, the adult systems don't jump into until the schools are done. My son will be eligible for school supports to 21, but it's all a great mystery as to what they will support. It makes it hard to plan vocabulary or skills he may need.

▪ **Re:Barriers to the transfer of AT by Mary Morningstar** on Apr 21, 2006

Given the uncertainties of life after school, it is important to begin planning sooner than later. While it is certainly true that there are not smooth overlaps between systems, you can begin to plan for things like employment and living vocabulary needs sooner. In fact, your son should be involved with more community-based experiences if he will be in school until 21. Many districts offer what is called an 18-21 community based transition program (we have a database of over 100 programs on our website, www.transitioncoalition.org then click on 18-21 database in the resources section). These programs provide transition-oriented skills and experiences in a community based setting such as a house, apartment or postsecondary setting. During these years, you can be working with school and adult services staff to develop the vocabulary and other communication supports your son will need. I might also mention that it is not absolutely true that adult agencies won't work with students while still in school. It requires more specific advocacy, but if your son has access to medicaid funds, those can begin before he leaves school to support his living and employment outcomes; vocational rehabilitation can become involved when the student turns 18 (in some states).

• **The importance of AT competence among special education teachers by Mary Morningstar** on Apr 03, 2006

This issue has already been raised by our first participant, who is concerned about the lack of information and skills among special education teachers related to AT, its use, and strategies for the transfer of AT during critical transition points. He suggests the critical role of AT specialists during transition planning. We would like to discuss the issues related to innovative strategies and approaches to training special education teachers related to AT and transition.

- **Re:The importance of AT competence among special education teachers by Marianna Bond, M.Ed., ATP** on Apr 03, 2006
 In the part of the country where I reside, we have "AT Professionals" who really have very little practical training. Our state has adopted a "do as little as possible" attitude, and most students never even receive a true assistive technology assessment. Then, another significant issue in our state is transition planning, and the fact that it is also not considered as an important part of the education process. I currently am part "owner" of an educational consulting business that has as part of it's focus both AT/AAC and Transition planning. However, we see little in the way of training going on here, and we see even less interest in pursuing training.

My question/dilemma is this: Even though it is a federal requirement through IDEA and is made even stronger in the new language of IDEA 2004, how do we get our districts to pursue training and take seriously these issues when there is no one holding them accountable to do so?

- **Re:The importance of AT competence among special education teachers by G.B.** on Apr 03, 2006
 Ditto to that!! And I salute your bravery including your full name:-) In my state, we're in the same boat, especially outside of the main cities. So often I read about "legal requirements" and "best practices" but for the life of me I can't find school officials interested in talking about assistive technology. When I even mention the term, I can see their eyes roll. Even if I were able to get AT on the IEP agenda, how would I find someone who could talk about it? And, given the number of different disabilities and the amount of different technologies, how would I find either someone who's knowledgeable about all of them or multiple people, each knowing about a few areas? My guess is that national experts don't travel and there aren't enough experts in the large cities to share with the rest of the state. So, to echo Dr. Bond, how do we get anyone to hold the districts accountable? Maybe only then would the money be made available for training.
- **Re:The importance of AT competence among special education teachers by DLR** on Apr 03, 2006
 I work for a large suburban school district and compliance is certainly an issue. We do a lot of training, but you can't make people come to training either. You have to hook them in.. Sometimes that is by seeing the difference between what the student does with technology and what they do without. You also need the parents to push. We do have an AT specialist assigned to every school and every student who has dedicated (purchased just for them or assigned to them) technology has careful planning at the transition points. sometimes you just can't win and the teaching of ____ 101 over and over is frustrating. We tried to implement a Basic Technology Competence training but we couldn't get access to the teachers enough. High-stakes testing won out!
- **Re:The importance of AT competence among special education teachers by Mary Morningstar** on Apr 04, 2006
 Marianna, in response to your very difficult dilemma, if a district is ONLY concerned with compliance (and barely that) then it is going to take real pressure to get them to change. My experience is that there are 2 major pressure points - well maybe 3
 - the federal govt. (when they come to the state for a compliance review and find the state out of compliance due to the activities in the field). Of course

this option takes years to happen, so not the most expedient. however, using this as your leverage (e.g., the Dept. of Ed. is going to find us out of compliance....) might help

- state level pressures - meaning getting your SEA-level staff involved (those responsible for AT and/or Transition). They should be discussing compliance issues with the local districts

- Finally, Parents - oftentimes it takes parents to change the way things get done at the local level. So getting parents to connect with organizations such as FCTD is critical.

o **Re:The importance of AT competence among special education teachers by Cheri on Apr 04, 2006**

Having read all the replies to this posting so far, I suppose I am in the privileged minority. I work for Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia, and we have an AWESOME assistive technology department!

Any student referred for evaluation receives initial assessment, an extensive trial period(several months)with any appropriate devices/software, and a formal report listing all appropriate AT which becomes a part of the student's special education record. Every year, an AT case manager works with the student's teacher(s) to reassess the effectiveness of the AT and make any necessary changes. If the teacher is unfamiliar with any devices she/he will receive the training (often one-on-one). Training for all staff members is also available several times per year on a wide variety of topics and addressing a span of ages and disabilities. For five years, our Integrated Technology Services (ITS) department has also held a RATE (Real Assistive Technology for Everyone) conference, which is well-attended.

I believe students here receive the support they need for schooling and transitions.
Cheri Sandford

Technoloigy Outreach Program Support Teacher
Fairfax County Public Schools

▪ **Re:The importance of AT competence among special education teachers by Marianna Bond, M.Ed., ATP on Apr 05, 2006**

It is so refreshing to know that somewhere out there someone is trying to do the right thing; trying to implement best practices and follow not just the letter of the law but also the intent!

I have worked with special education directors who didn't even know what the term "Assistive Technology" meant...and unfortunately, that appears to be the rule rather than the exception in our state. The federal government has cited our state on both Assistive Technology and Transition non-compliance repeatedly over the last number of years when they monitor, but all that we as a state are required to do is submit an improvement plan, which then is generally not implemented. So, there is really no consequence for noncompliance. Our state is one of the originators of "high stakes testing", so everything revolves around that, which leaves special education students and particularly those that require Assistive Technology or AAC out in the cold. (Even the high stakes testing will not allow for modifications and only extremely minor accommodations, of which AT is not one!)

▪ **Re:The importance of AT competence among special education teachers by Mary on Apr 05, 2006**

I head the AT team in our district. We have some excellent special educators and some excellent regular ed teachers but we also have the other extreme. We also offer many sessions to train on equipment that is being used in the classrooms but often the teachers, both

special and regular, do not come or pay attention if they are forced to attend.

Whenever possible I include the teachers in the AT evaluation. Listening to their input and their perceived needs are critical in getting them to assist in use of the equipment.

I have the most problems when a child is transitioning from elementary to middle, middle to high, etc. because the new teachers have not had any input and have a larger learning curve on the equipment. One way we are trying to combat this is making transition decisions early and allowing new teachers to visit in classrooms and see the AT in action successfully.

Most teachers that resist AT use usually do so because they think it takes "too much time away from the others". Most are willing to work with that issue if they can see the equipment as really being of benefit to the student.

Earlier someone wrote that their early interventionists were rushing to buy equipment before the child turned 3. We also have some of that going on. That often poses a very big problem when the child transitions into preschool programs and school. Usually the equipment is not appropriate for the task, the parents are sold on the idea that this is "THE" equipment that will make the difference and the teachers are just as sure it won't.

We have started meeting with the early interventionists 4 times a year. They share information on children that are nearing 3. We get permissions from parents for our staff to start observing them in sessions at home and in clinical settings. When AT comes up at about 2 1/2 I am there with some concrete observations and suggestions. We are completing our 2nd year with this process and it is really working pretty well.

One good point is that there really isn't tons of difference in communication devices. If you know a child is going to a certain location and that teacher can program one device, all things being equal (Size, capabilities, etc), purchase that one rather than an unknown. You are much more likely to get assistance from the teacher.

- **Re:The importance of AT competence among special education teachers** by **Jackie Hess [SI Faculty]** on Apr 07, 2006

Yes, Fairfax County has a robust special education system in place, that includes a great deal of AT training for both teachers and parents. You and others might want to read the Family Center's December newsletter, which features an interview with Patricia Addison, Director of Special Education for Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS); Carmen Sanchez, a parent who co-chairs the FCPS Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities; and Bill Reeder, Coordinator of FCPS Integrated Technology Services. I'm sure they would be happy to respond to questions.

- **Re:The importance of AT competence among special education teachers** by **Rebecca** on Apr 14, 2006

I also am part of the privileged minority. I am a special education teacher at a

high school in FCPS. Our AT department is tremendous as Cheri explained. I wanted to add one more thing that our AT department does that helps support training for special education teachers. In FCPS we have the Technology Outreach Program Support (TOPS) group. This program includes special education teachers throughout the county that serve as the AT supporter at their own school. A TOPS teacher attends AT trainings throughout the year that provides them with the tools and knowledge to share with other teachers at their school. I am a TOPS teacher along with one other special education teacher at my school and have found this system to work extremely well for the rest of the professionals I work with on a daily basis. I am no expert in AT, but I have found that I have been able to introduce AT solutions and ideas to many of my co-workers. I think by having designated teachers with AT training in schools throughout the county, FCPS continues to keep their educators up to speed in AT.

- **Re:The importance of AT competence among special education teachers** by **Mary Morningstar** on Apr 20, 2006
Wow you are lucky to have that system in place!

-
- **Transition to Middle School** by **Eleanor Giriappa** on Apr 03, 2006
I am a parent of a child with disabilities who works with a school district to educate other parents. I am now working on setting up a meeting of parents of children in special education who will be going through this transition and the teachers their children will be working with. The hope is to make the transition easier for the parents. I, unfortunately, can not do much about what the teachers do. (I am only a parent, you know. I am saying that in sarcasm!!)

One of the ways I would think would help the teachers is if the parent wrote about the technology needs of the child in a letter to the teacher. However, I am not sure on how to ask the right questions to the parent so that the teacher could get the right answers. Any ideas?

Does anyone have any other ideas on how to help parents in transitions?

Eleanor

- **Re:Transition to Middle School** by **Joan** on Apr 03, 2006
Hello, all. I am a participant on the wonderful QIAT listserve, where a teacher consultant from (I think) New Jersey posted a document the other week that supported students in transition. The form is an assistive technology transfer log that helps learn what a student has had in place, who owns it, and who has been responsible for it. I would probably add a line on the form to include what the AT was used for. Jeannette Van Houten provided this document to the list and it seems to be a good model to help prepare a team in the next setting. I am not sure how to post a link to a document in these discussions, so I can send a copy to FCTD if they are interested in adding it to the resources.
This is such an important topic- I am really looking forward to the discussion!

- **Re:Transition to Middle School** by **Ana-Maria Gutierrez** on Apr 03, 2006
Hi Joan,

This is Ana-Maria with the Family Center. We can do this two ways, you can send me either the link or the document itself and I can add it to the resources section of this discussion, or you can write the link yourself (in a

post) and I will go back through and make it a "hot" link. If you have any questions or problems, please send me an e-mail to fctd@aed.org.

- **Re:Transition to Middle School** by **mary Morningstar** on Apr 04, 2006
Joan, I would like to reiterate the value of some of the QIAT website. I downloaded several excellent planning tools for the transition of AT to adulthood. I will find out from Ana-Marie and Jackie who to upload pdfs to the threaded discussion... I also found a nice resource out of Wisconsin that is a very detailed planning document for AT and transition to adulthood... I'll look for the URLs where I downloaded these and post them to the discussion board.
- **Re:Transition to Middle School** by **Colleen** on Apr 03, 2006
I ask the district to start planning for grade transitions in February/March for the upcoming year, and for building to building transitions to start 2 years ahead of time. We have a vision statement about what my son and family want (and don't want) for his future in adult life. The upcoming teachers observe him in his current placements to get to know him. We have meetings prior to the end of the school year, and then prior to the start of the new year have one large meeting with everyone who may interact with him in the upcoming year, teachers, secretary, nurse, cafeteria staff, librarian, maintenance, supports coordinator, guidance counselor, the school's general technology staff and the Intermediate Unit's assistive technology person etc. and some of the key staff from the previous year. At this meeting we go over roles and responsibilities. We give everyone an opportunity to learn some about his technology, so even if they are not operating his laptop software, or programming his device they are at least aware of the possibilities and know who to ask for more info or to help them integrate or provide feedback on its use. I invite everyone to visit our home in the summer to have an opportunity to get to know more about our son and how he communicates etc. We have an inclusion specialist who ensures that the technology is used consistently and effectively. She works about two half days specifically with my son's team, gathering and then adapting lesson plans or preplanning his participation. There is also an aide that supports him. The inclusion specialist, aide, and speech language therapist and myself attend trainings for his device and software.

I don't think you can over preplan transitions, I would err on the side of doing too much. We also start the year off with weekly meetings fading out to monthly and bi-monthly as needed for key IEP members. Some of the old staff come for meeting to assist the new staff. Out of all we have done, I would say that having roles and responsibilities written out clearly stating who does what, when and how to contact them, has made the greatest difference.

We started planning for adult transition at 14, but he will be eligible for services to 21. However we want him to attend the graduation ceremony and move onto a college setting and job coaching/training. We had an ecological vocational assessment completed which we integrated into his IEP goals. And he has started to put together an electronic portfolio which he will narrate with his communication device. He did last year's summer extended school year by doing volunteer work at a nursing home, and he's learning office task's during study hall at school he works in the main office. He's also joined yearbook.

My son now uses a Dynavox DV4 and uses one or two words for greater meaning,

and some sentences and preprogrammed phrases. He uses the WYNN software for reading and for answering questions by highlighting the part he wants to speak, and he has used other software like inspiration. We have connected his device to the computer and have set him up with email, but are still working out some of that. To get around the school building he uses a walker with a seat, and has an adapted locker etc. He has been fully included since kindergarten.

- **Re:Transition to Middle School by DLR** on Apr 03, 2006
I would love to meet you and your son...sounds like you have worked hard to be sure he is as successful as possible. The most important thing you said was that you had goals and expectations for him and that you make a point of communicating those. So often we see parents who don't and teachers who see only this year. Then you get a very disjointed program. One year the student uses this technology and the next year the focus is on something different. That is the road to nowhere.
- **Re:Transition to Middle School by Jamie Sofer** on Apr 18, 2006
Can I ask you what an "ecological vocational assessment is"? What type of professional conducts it?

Thanks,
JS

- **Re:Transition to Middle School by Mary Morningstar** on Apr 21, 2006
I'm not exactly sure in what context this phrase was used, thus it makes it difficult to accurately answer the question. But here goes...
An ecological inventory of an employment or vocational site is a type of vocational assessment in which the "professional" (usually a work/study coordinator, job coach, etc. while students are in school OR a job developer, job coach for adult systems) go out and evaluate job sites to determine the types of jobs that a student might be able to complete at the job site and/or to identify the accommodations and natural supports that are needed for a student to be successful on the job. Oftentimes, this involves something called "job carving" in which the job developer goes out and carves some job tasks from an existing job for a student with disabilities. For example, some office assistant jobs (e.g., photocopying, scanning). This is a specific way individuals with significant disabilities often "find" jobs.. they are created for them based on the evaluation of a workplace and knowing their specific strengths and contributions.

Now the other form of an assessment that I am most familiar with is a "functional vocational assessment" and this is where a student has the opportunity to "try-out" several different jobs to identify the one he or she likes best, and is good at (or mostly likely to learn how to do). This often involves the work-study/vocational coordinator at the school identifying several different types of jobs and then having a student rotate through them and the coordinator collects data on the student's performance, preferences, interests and strengths for each job.

- **Re:Transition to Middle School by Paula** on Apr 20, 2006
I particularly related to this posting by Colleen about the ongoing process to ensure successful transitioning for her son. I work with students and school staff in the area of assistive technology. I have attended many meetings

focusing on transition issues but never have all the school staff you mentioned here been included...that's great! And as a former teacher, I really see how interest and input from all of these support people can only increase the student's success. Either you or someone else mentioned the use of a list of responsibilities, contact name and numbers, etc. being available (I'm assuming in the backpack, on the wheelchair, attached to the devices). That will help with quick solution to problems or at least get things started. I am currently involved with a young student who will be using a communication device in school next year. From the beginning there has been concern about the device programming and use...who needs to learn it, program it, etc. I plan to share your comments with the others. Thanks Colleen for your insight.

- o **Re:Transition to Middle School by Cheri** on Apr 04, 2006

Eleanor-

As a special education teacher in middle school and an AT support teacher, here are some questions I can think of:

(If the answer to any question is yes, please provide as detailed an explanation as possible.)

Does your child have difficulty communicating with peers and adults in terms of speech output, expressive vocabulary, or fluency? Do others seem to have difficulty understanding your child's verbal or non-verbal messages?

In reading, does your child have difficulty in phonemic awareness, decoding, or comprehension?

In writing, does your child have difficulty with planning and organization, spelling, or written expression?

In math, does your child have difficulty planning/organizing problems or does she/he have a weakness in basic math skills?

What accommodations on your child's IEP does your child routinely receive in class? Examples: having material read aloud, highlighting of material, graphic organizers, manipulatives for math, etc.

Good luck with your child's transition.
Cheri

- o **Re:Transition to Middle School by Mary Morningstar** on Apr 04, 2006

Eleanor, I tracked down the website where I found an excellent resource for transition planning and AT it's www.wati.org (Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative). There is a document in their "products" section, called: Assistive Technology and Transition. It's in their free materials link. It is a very detailed planning process for determining AT needs based on postschool outcomes. In addition, I saw that they have several other materials and resources that might be helpful to you. There was one called: Assistive Technology Pointers for Parents - it's a work book for parents. It looks like they only sell this one to parents in Wisconsin, but perhaps you can persuade them to sell you a copy. Good luck.

- **Re:Transition to Middle School by Sean Smith** on Apr 06, 2006
Hello all,

Some great ideas and Mary, thanks for the link to WATI. Folks that are

unfamiliar with Wati, please visit the Wisconsin site. The WATI group actually exists, so to speak, in each and every state. Every state receives federal dollars to use towards assistive technology. Here in Kansas the group is known as ATK (Assistive Technology for Kansans). Now, the focus of the AT State Group varies from state to state but a great place to begin to understand what your state offers would be at:

<http://www.resna.org/taproject/at/statecontacts.html>

This resource lists every state's contact information and offers the URL for their related information. Now, WATI has decided to develop a series of forms that are wonderful, as Mary mentioned in an earlier posting. The forms are meant to be used by the entire team and they allow for us to properly assess and identify specific challenges, strengths, and connects these to possible technology solutions. Now, I'd urge that whether it be considering transition needs, like this thread related to Middle School, or simply considering technology outside of the transition, that the team review and use the SETT Framework. Joy Zabala has developed a wonderful framework where a team can consider the Student, his/her environment, the tasks related to the students environment, and the Tools that can assist this students and his/her educational program. A great place to be introduced to the SETT framework would be at:

<http://sweb.uky.edu/~jszaba0/JoyZabala.html>

These are just a few thoughts but they attempt to focus on using tools and a framework to assist the team in understanding a student's needs and providing the team a tool from which to best determine a technology solution. This way we are not left advocating for a technology and when offered a tool (possibly the most economical or what a district has) simply accepting what is already available but instead, what is best for the educational and transitional needs of the student.

Sean

- **Thank You!** by **ello** on Apr 05, 2006

This is such excellent timing for this discussion in my life. It has been and continues to be a real struggle with my son's school district to make them understand the need and value of my son using AT. We make little bitty steps every year and sometimes get pushed back, but finally this past fall, they agreed to comply with the AT assessment. Now we are struggling with "has access to AT", when I want it to say "will learn to use AT". This discussion encourages me to keep up my efforts and know that even though I may be alone with this concept in my little rural town, there is a whole world out there that agrees AT is the way to go for people with disabilities. AT makes a difference in his quality of life and will make a difference in his quality of employment. Thank you.

- **Re:Thank You!** by **ash** on Apr 05, 2006
put AT into the body of the iep goals,
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/IEP_guide/links
at folder

- **help! denied At and an AT reeval by ash** on Apr 05, 2006

This is my son's AT eval:

Date: 3/5/2004

Assistive Technology Evaluation Report

Student Name: Vincent D

Vincent is a student in Mrs. M's Learning Support Class. He was referred for an Assistive Technology Evaluation due to difficulties with written communication.

Vince was evaluated in both handwriting and keyboarding skills. Vince's handwriting skills are poor. He is able to write in both manuscript and cursive. However, his manuscript is difficult to read and cursive is very slow with several errors noted. Vince is very proficient in the use of a keyboard. He has excellent keyboarding and word processing skills. He is able to functionally use the spell and grammar checker and has no difficulty expressing himself when using a keyboarding.

Vince is not in need of any adaptations or special software to assist him with keyboarding and word processing. Therefore, it has been determined that Vincent D is not in need of Assistive Technology services.

Gail B SLP/ AT

He is now a 10th grader with specific learning disabilities in written expression and spelling. His wiatII re-evaluation has him at the 7th grade level last December. He also has difficulties due to ADHD. He can type 120 wpm but is not even allowed to use a word processor.

We challenged the above AT eval at a due process hearing in Jan. and in March the appeals panel decided that the above AT eval was sufficient, denying our request of an IEE. We even had our own AT evaluator testify that the above is not sufficient, that he should be granted the IEE.

They know we do not have the money to get a private eval.

Any ideas are appreciated.

- **Re:help! denied At and an AT reeval by Sean Smith** on Apr 06, 2006

Hello,

Thanks for the post and offering Vincent's situation as a challenge. A couple of questions. Have you and the team considered Vincent's need for technology within the SETT framework? Information about this process can be found at: <http://sweb.uky.edu/~jszaba0/JoyZabala.html>. The SETT would allow for you to go beyond a simple assessment and look at Vincent as a whole person within the context of his setting, his abilities, the demands his environment places upon him, and the tools necessary for him to address these needs. It is not always the answer but instead, it offers a planning process and specific data from which a team can make an appropriate decision.

Next question...have you worked with your state AT group? The contact information for your state can be found at: <http://www.resna.org/taproject/at/statecontacts.html>. These groups are tasked by the federal government to provide supports towards the use and integration of technology into the lives of those with disabilities. All of the state groups that I am familiar with will offer assessments for your child, offer loan opportunities from which to try devices, and also assist in the interaction with district. In Kansas, our group

(ATK) will also facilitate with the state Family group to assist families, like yours, better interact with the district team to advocate for the necessary services. For example, the federally funded families of individuals with disabilities group here in the state of KS is Families Together. Families Together is not funded primarily as a state AT resource but instead, as a resource for parents. Every state has at least one of these groups with some of the larger states being broken into several geographical areas to serve families. I'd look to your Families group as well to see what they can offer in terms of support, advocacy, and possibly different directions/solutions for the technology access you are seeking.

One last thought. I believe for many learners with learning challenges, districts are not equipped, or many times thinking about, AT solutions for those with high incidence disabilities (the majority of the disabilities served under IDEA). Instead, districts are focused on those students with the most significant needs and look to technology as a solution for their needs. I am not being critical of this approach, it is just that this offers challenges for those of us that know technology can be a wonderful tool, and possibly the critical solution, for those students needing access to the general education setting. So, where does that leave us? I'd say that we are in a time where the technology will continue to be our friend in that more and more districts are realizing that technology can be a wonderful tool for all students. With this said, this may not mean we see these instructional tools being immediately added to the IEP. Instead, what I am seeing, and possibly this is another strategy, is the connection with general and special education teachers who see the value of a technology tool as a solution for a number of his/her students. A possible technique then would be to interact with Vincent's teacher to advocate for the use of the technology currently available in a manner most effective for Vincent's needs. This may not be specifically reflected in the IEP at this point in time (I'd still look to the SETT and to your state AT for assistance) but, it may mean he gets the assistance of a tool in the general education classroom. Likewise, if the teacher sees the value of the technology for a variety of students, he/she is more likely to support the use of the technology and look to integrate in his/her instruction on a regular basis.

I'm going to stop for the moment but hope we discuss this further in relation to transition, especially those with instructional needs.

Sean

- **Re:help! denied At and an AT reeval by Deborah Buck** on Apr 06, 2006
I wanted to clarify the role of the state Assistive Technology Programs so that individuals seeking assistance from their state AT Program will have an accurate understanding of what services can be provided. The AT Programs are required by the Assistive Technology Act to provide core services including, device demonstration, device loan, device reutilization or recycling and state financing. They are also obligated to provide information and referral, training and technical assistance and coordination activities that will improve access. The state AT Programs do not do assessments, nor are they required to provide assessment services under the AT Act. The AT programs can tell you where to find a qualified professional to do an assessment that will meet the requirements (licensure, skill or educational requirements, etc.) of the funding source. They can also tell you what to expect in terms of an assessment and how to choose who will conduct the assessment so that you can be an informed consumer in your decision-making. In many cases, therapists may borrow equipment from the state AT Program loan program to conduct an evaluation/assessment and the individual may use the loaner device for a period of time to determine its appropriateness in the setting

intended for its use. Other federally funded programs and services such as the local educational agency, vocational rehabilitation, medicaid, etc. are required to fund assessments. The AT Act is very clear that the AT funds cannot be used to purchase a device for an individual, nor can they be used to absolve other federally funded programs of their programmatic and fiscal requirements (providing and paying for assessments). While some of the AT Programs may be housed in entities or agencies that do offer evaluation and assessment services, these services are not provided under the rubric of the Assistive Technology Act. The funding of these services come from sources other than the AT Act. The AT Programs offer invaluable services that are an integral part of the process of learning about and getting assistive technology. If you have questions about the AT Programs please feel free to contact me- Deborah Buck, Executive Director Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs

- **Re:help! denied At and an AT reeval by ash on Apr 06, 2006**
If you get a referral, have no \$ but somehow are able to get an AT eval for school, the iep team does not have to accept but just consider it, so if they are for the results of their own eval which has that the child does not need it, it is unlikely a private at eval will be accepted, is how I see it. The child will have to wait until grown, try over, but may be so discouraged that they will not even attempt to go to college.
It could have been so different if child had proper at eval while in high school.

- **Re:help! denied At and an AT reeval by ash on Apr 06, 2006**
hi, i quickly heard back from that state place and not good, "Pennsylvania's Initiative on Assistive Technology does NOT provide assessments".
- **Re:help! denied At and an AT reeval by ash on Apr 06, 2006**
hi and thanks, have to reply like this because of my own disabilities;

This message was posted by Sean Smith on Apr 06, 2006.
Hello,

Thanks for the post and offering Vincent's situation as a challenge. A couple of questions. Have you and the team considered Vincent's need for technology within the SETT framework?

a/ The district stands by their AT evaluator and that evaluation report is posted and AT is off the table.

Information about this process can be found at:
<http://sweb.uky.edu/~jszaba0/JoyZabala.html>. The SETT would allow for you to go beyond a simple assessment and look at Vincent as a whole person within the context of his setting, his abilities, the demands his environment places upon him, and the tools necessary for him to address these needs. It is not always the answer but instead, it offers a planning process and specific data from which a team can make an appropriate decision.

a/Thanks, the AT evaluator testified that the scope of their AT eval was too limited and spoke on what you have written above and how she does her evals, like above, the 'judges' still decided that the school's AT eval was

appropriate.

Next question...have you worked with your state AT group? The contact information for your state can be found at: <http://www.resna.org/taproject/at/statecontacts.html>. These groups are tasked by the federal government to provide supports towards the use and integration of technology into the lives of those with disabilities. All of the state groups that I am familiar with will offer assessments for your child, offer loan opportunities from which to try devices, and also assist in the interaction with district.

a/They referred us to our local, which does not do assessments, I had given the lending library info. to the special ed dir, however the district is going by their AT eval report. I will check again though, thanks.

In Kansas, our group (ATK) will also facilitate with the state Family group to assist families, like yours, better interact with the district team to advocate for the necessary services. For example, the federally funded families of individuals with disabilities group here in the state of KS is Families Together. Families Together is not funded primarily as a state AT resource but instead, as a resource for parents. Every state has at least one of these groups with some of the larger states being broken into several geographical areas to serve families. I'd look to your Families group as well to see what they can offer in terms of support, advocacy, and possibly different directions/solutions for the technology access you are seeking.

a/All i know of is pen, parent ed. network, located in York, PA and they do not attend IEP team meetings.

One last thought. I believe for many learners with learning challenges, districts are not equipped, or many times thinking about, AT solutions for those with high incidence disabilities (the majority of the disabilities served under IDEA). Instead, districts are focused on those students with the most significant needs and look to technology as a solution for their needs. I am not being critical of this approach, it is just that this offers challenges for those of us that know technology can be a wonderful tool, and possibly the critical solution, for those students needing access to the general education setting. So, where does that leave us? I'd say that we are in a time where the technology will continue to be our friend in that more and more districts are realizing that technology can be a wonderful tool for all students. With this said, this may not mean we see these instructional tools being immediately added to the IEP. Instead, what I am seeing, and possibly this is another strategy, is the connection with general and special education teachers who see the value of a technology tool as a solution for a number of his/her students. A possible technique then would be to interact with Vincent's teacher to advocate for the use of the technology currently available in a manner most effective for Vincent's needs. This may not be specifically reflected in the IEP at this point in time (I'd still look to the SETT and to your state AT for assistance) but, it may mean he gets the assistance of a tool in the general education classroom. Likewise, if the teacher sees the value of the technology for a variety of students, he/she is more likely to support the use of the technology and look to integrate in his/her instruction on a regular basis.

a/It does not appear that anyone from the school would be willing to step

outside the circle and have a different position than the school team.

I'm going to stop for the moment but hope we discuss this further in relation to transition, especially those with instructional needs.

a/I do not write well and this is related to transition;
2 years ago he had hoped and believed he could go to college to become a computer programmer, he no longer believes this so he did not even take the PSAT this year, I think having a proper AT eval, and getting to use a word processor in the meantime, would help restore some confidence, but the school seems not to care what he does once he leaves their door.
He sees that they do not care about him.

Because of my national involvement with the special ed online community, this is not just happening to him, but to many kids, so I do not write about this, look for solutions just for him, I did let nearly 3,000 people know yesterday about your 'chat' here, and thanks for doing this!

-
- **Transition to college** by **Ann** on Apr 07, 2006
How would you say transitioning to a local college differs from making the move to a college in another state? I'm sure there are more issues involved in living away from home. Are there legal issues involved if the school is in another state? I mean, do you have to be aware of your rights under a different state's laws? If so, what's the best way to find out what they are? If you think your child may choose that option, what things should you be doing when they're 14, say? Thanks for whatever information you can provide. (And sorry if you already addressed this somewhere. I haven't read all the resources yet.)
 - **Re:Transition to college** by **Mary Morningstar** on Apr 09, 2006
Ann, typically, colleges are responsible for providing supports to students with disabilities from the mandates under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. This is based on an "access" to postsecondary education perspective only, which of course is very different from the SPED model of services and supports. In general, most college disability supports services offer a similar array of access services as described under IDEA. This includes things such as sign language interpreters, notetakers, books on tape, etc. However, each college may offer a different array of services (e.g., some might offer specialized tutoring, others won't) and this really depends upon the college. So in this sense, each college is different. Some resources you might consider include a "Parents guide to postsecondary education" that was developed several years ago and is posted on our Website: <http://www.transitioncoalition.org> under tools and resources then publications. This document offers a nice checklist of a range of accommodations that students might need. The family and student can check the ones they use the most and are critical for success. THEN as the talk to disability support services at different colleges, they can find out if the college offers services to meet these accommodation needs.

Unfortunately, everything offered to kids under IDEA is NOT mandated under 504, therefore, for some specialized services, you might have to pay out of pocket. Another excellent resource is the AHEAD website: <http://www.ahead.org/> This is the organization for disability services at the college level. Finally, you might also check

out the HEATH resource center. They offer a variety of resources related to postsecondary education <http://www.heath.gwu.edu/>

- **Re:Transition to college** by **Sean Smith** on Apr 10, 2006
Ann and Mary,

On the technology front, I have found it critical that any AT device noted during the preK-12 experience, be identified and clarified on use in preparation for the post-secondary environment. Having this updated information will assist university/college staff seek similar technology tools that will help the individual succeed at this next level. With the right documentation and need stated, technology is a tool that colleges/universities are required to support and can do so in a variety of ways. For example, some institutions will provide laptops where others might look to outfit the student with an Alpha Smart or a PDA. Knowing what works best for the students and having the documentation to illustrate this fact, will go along way in this next process.

Sean

- **Re:Transition to college** by **Rina McKay** on Apr 11, 2006
Thanks for the great links. As my daughter has transitioned from one grade or school to another, I've found it very helpful to request a meeting with the new teacher(s) as soon as possible (preferably before the school year starts, although not all teachers will do that). Then I stay in close contact with them throughout the year. As you can imagine, it's gotten much more time consuming as she moved from a single teacher (or two) at the elementary school level to the multiple teacher mode in middle and high school. Now, as we're smack in the middle of planning for college, I'm worried that this "model" won't work. I can't imagine college professors being willing to meet with a student's mom to discuss her needs. There are AT issues as well as non-tech issues, such as the possibility that if the classroom gets too warm, she'll start to get agitated. Do you have any suggestions? I really appreciate this discussion, by the way, and have passed on the information to our parent support group.
 - **Re:Transition to college** by **Cheri** on Apr 13, 2006
Many college professors have email addresses posted on the institution's website. Perhaps you could prepare something in writing about your daughter, including all important issues and contact information for you and her high school IEP team members. If you feel comfortable doing so, you might include pictures of your daughter and her necessary adaptations (AT and non-AT). In this way, the professors would begin with at least minimal understanding of your daughter's needs, and they would have the ability to contact knowledgeable people should they have questions or need additional information.
Best of luck at this exciting - but maybe a little scary - time!
 - **Re:Transition to college** by **Mary Morningstar** on Apr 13, 2006
You are right about the differences when a student is in college. In fact, most universities have policies related to communicating with parents (they don't and won't if parents call). The most critical thing you can do is teach self-advocacy skills to your daughter so she can advocate for what she needs. Having a written plan would also help,

this way, it can be distributed to her professors each semester. Working directly with the disabled students services center would be crucial.

- **scholarship aid by R. W.** on Apr 07, 2006
If parents need to apply for a scholarship, should they let the university know that the applicant has disabilities? I'm specifically referring to learning disabilities and other "invisible" conditions, such as OCD.
 - **Re:scholarship aid by Mary Morningstar** on Apr 09, 2006
You ask a very interesting question in terms of self-disclosing a disability. Of course, according to ADA, you do not need to self-disclose a disability. However, under some circumstance (e.g., if the scholarship is for minority recruitment, which could include students with disabilities) then certainly, identifying yourself as a person with disabilities might be important. In addition, at some postsecondary settings (not a lot, but some) there is a differential admissions policy for students with disabilities, meaning admissions officers review the application to include additional information other than the typical SAT scores, GPA, etc. In this circumstance, it would also make sense to self-disclose.
 - **Re:scholarship aid by RC** on Apr 10, 2006
How would you know if you're denied the scholarship, or even entrance into the college or university, based on your disability? How much information does a college usually provide? The only answer I'm familiar with is the standard "Sorry, we're not able to offer you admission." That would make it impossible to know if your disability was a factor in the rejection and should not be "reported" in future applications.
 - **Re:scholarship aid by Mary Morningstar** on Apr 13, 2006
RC, it would be illegal under the ADA for a college to deny a scholarship if you had a disability. My point was not that admission offices have denial policies for student applicants who are disabled, but that they sometimes take into consideration additional information if a student does have a disability. For example, if your SAT scores are low and it is due to your disability, they may ask for and review a portfolio of your work. This is oftentimes on a case by case basis, and not at every college or university, so you really have to know what to ask the admission officer.

- **To stay in transition after high school or not?** by T.C. on Apr 07, 2006
My 17 yr old daughter has Pervasive Developmental Disorder, a form of autism. She does not want to stay in the transition program at our school. She has a case worker with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, who is willing to work with her regardless of whether or not she stays in transition. I know that she would benefit highly if she stayed in the high schools transition program. Do we force her to stay or look "outside the box" at other options? Has anyone out there ever been faced with this decision? What did you do and how has it worked out?
 - **Re:To stay in transition after high school or not?** by **Mary Morningstar** on Apr 09, 2006
I probably need a bit more information in order to answer your questions. Does the

school's transition program that you refer to mean a program that takes place outside of the HS setting? Most transition programs are based either in the community (e.g., a house or apt) or at a postsecondary setting (e.g., community college, votech, etc.). IF this is the case, then having her visit this program would be critical, since you are right, it is often very individualized and can offer a range of additional services and supports related to transition. However, sometimes these programs are very "programmatic" in their approach, meaning everyone in the program gets the same sort of community-based approach to services. This arrangement might not meet the needs of your daughter. Other transition programs are much more individualized in their approach, in that they meet the transition needs of each student in the environment where this needs to happen (e.g., on the job, at college, in the student's home). Our website, www.transitioncoalition.org has a database of over 100 18-21 programs (another name for community-based transition programs) that you can search to learn more about this individualized-type approach. Please let me know if this is what you meant. If not, I can try to answer it again!!

- **Realistic transition goals** by **RC** on Apr 10, 2006

In the student's transition plan, how optimistic should you be? If you think there's about a 30% chance that your child will actually be able to succeed at college, should you still plan for it? Can you develop a realistic plan that includes the possibility of both going to college and finding a job right after high school? Would the specific action items in such a document be mutually exclusive?

Thank you very much for your long and informative answers to previous questions.

- **Re:Realistic transition goals** by **Vern** on Apr 10, 2006

I have a related question. What if the parents' expectations differ widely from the schools' and/or other members of the IEP team? I've seen this go both ways - sometimes it is the parents who under- or overestimate their child's academic potential, sometimes it is the other members of the IEP team. I keep meaning to buy the ultimate, accurate crystal ball, but alas, the store is always out of them.

- **Re:Realistic transition goals** by **Mary Morningstar** on Apr 13, 2006

These are both excellent questions. I'll try to answer them both. My personal values are that we should not deny students and families the opportunities to have high expectations just because the services and supports are not available. The research certainly indicates that what is most critical is the desire and motivation and persistence of individuals to achieve their dreams. In other words, it is the DREAM itself that drives them to succeed. NOW, this does not deny the realities that we face when our dreams don't meet what is currently available in the real world. So for example, students with intellectual disabilities have for a long time not been considered appropriate for college. But over the past several years, mainly because of the desires of families and students themselves, there are programs across the country supporting students with mental retardation and intellectual disabilities in college settings. HEATH resource center has online resources related to this. www.heath.gwu.edu

Now the issue of differences in expectations between families, students and schools is a very critical issue. The most recent national longitudinal transition research study (NLTS-2, <http://www.nlts2.org/gindex.html>) has reported that there are often large differences between what families' expectations are and what teachers' expectations are. We also know from this research that

transition plans in IEPs are most often developed by schools. Therefore, the plans that are in IEPs may not be what the family and student's plans for the future are. I'm not sure how to resolve this issue, except to say that BOTH families and teachers need good information about transition, what current best practices are and how to think about future expectations and working toward meeting these dreams for the future in a collaborative way. Our website, www.transitioncoalition.org has several online training modules federally funded for teachers (but absolutely appropriate for families to take) that probably don't solve this problem, but give information about how to work with families, how to utilize best practices in transition planning, etc.

- **New Resources posted!** by **Ana-Maria (FCTD Staff)** on Apr 10, 2006

Thanks to our wonderful moderators, there are a number of new transition resources including websites, transition matrices, newsletters and more. Click here to view the [Transition Resources](#)

- **Re:New Resources posted!** by **lisap** on Apr 13, 2006

I am looking for an instructional video or interactive DVD that would teach transition-age students with disabilities how to effectively advocate for assistive technology and other accommodations after they finish high school.

Does anyone know of a resource like this? I welcome any suggestions along these lines.

- **Re:New Resources posted!** by **Mary Morningstar** on Apr 13, 2006

Wow, I'd love to see this as well. I don't know of any, but do know of some excellent videotapes/DVDS designed to assist students to be good self-advocates. I'm at home tonight but will try to post some resources tomorrow!

- **Re:New Resources posted!** by **Sean Smith** on Apr 14, 2006

I agree WOW. I'd suggest looking to your state AT Center. I know states like Georgia and Wisconsin have developed a number of resources specific to different areas of AT and student needs. I know Georgia created such a video as part of one of their Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology Projects in the late 1990s.

The URL for the state projects is:

<http://www.resna.org/taproject/at/statecontacts.html>

I'd also suggest asking your local district. I know several in the immediate area that have developed videos to assist in illustrating the power of AT and thus, you might have something like this in your area. Unfortunately, none of the videos that I am aware of involve AT and transition.

Sean

- **Re:New Resources posted!** by **lisa** on Apr 14, 2006

Thanks for the suggestions - I will check with my local district and check the Wisconsin and Georgia resources you suggested.

Lisa

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- **Job Shadowing/Coaching** by **S. Kitchens** on Apr 11, 2006
I'm the Advocacy Coordinator at Walton Options, Center for Independent Living. I am also a T6 Paro. Briefly, in the transfer from college student to employee, I participated in a job shadowing project. I observed an employee for several days working in the field that I wished to work. It also allowed the employer to familiarize himself with how to accommodate a person with disabilities. It allowed me to see how despite my new disability I could function very well in the "working world". In communicating we also broke a lot of barriers concerning the stereotype of a person with disabilities. In return I was offered a job. Can we have such a program at the high school level? Not all students go to college. [Such a program would] allow students at the high school level to consider a variety of options.
 - **Re:Job Shadowing/Coaching** by **guest** on Apr 12, 2006
While "Take Your Child to Work" is only a one-day program, I always encourage parents to bring their children with disabilities to their workplace. Some offices have very well-organized programs. It's good for the kids to see a variety of jobs and to get a sense of how people act in an office (or wherever). It's also good for the people in the workplace to see someone with disabilities getting around and functioning in their environment. Some offices even learn from the experience - where they need to install accessible facilities, what the barriers to employing someone with disabilities might be, etc. I also encourage families to arrange internships for their children. Often a caring friend or colleague will agree to provide an internship for a youth with disabilities. Glad your experience worked out so well.
Rosemary
 - **Re:Job Shadowing/Coaching** by **Mary Morningstar** on Apr 14, 2006
Job shadowing is part of comprehensive vocational training and employment programs used by schools for students with disabilities while in school. Most districts have programs for students with disabilities that focus on career planning, career assessment, career awareness and career exploration. These broad career development areas are often implemented with a variety of hands-on training and community work activities, including job shadowing. There is also the National Job Shadow day <http://www.jobshadow.org/>. It is designed for student w/o disabilities, but Our local CIL (center for independent living, Independence Inc. in Lawrence KS) coordinates the program we have developed for students with disabilities to Job Shadow on this day. We do it in collaboration with the public schools. Finally, and while not specific to job shadowing, most states have a Youth Leadership Forum Program specifically to develop leadership skills for students with disabilities. The national website is <http://nyln.org/> A critical element of the YLF program in KS is that every youth who attends is partnered with an adult with disabilities who serves as the mentor for that youth. A very powerful way to model success and leadership for youth with disabilities.
 - **Re:Job Shadowing/Coaching** by **SteviB** on Apr 16, 2006
The school where I did my field experience had a sort of job shadow/community outreach program that seemed to work pretty well. Part of the program took the students into places they were interested in learning about. They got to follow the workers around, ask questions, see how everything worked. Then later, they had a contact at that business that they wrote emails to each week. (I was one of the community volunteers. I was the college guru/email buddy during my freshman year

of college. I heard from the kids almost every day, They really got into the letter writing.)I really liked the system because it allowed teh kids to make contacts in the business world and get answers to their questions about life beyond the classroom.

- o **Re:Job Shadowing/Coaching by Sue Fager** on Apr 17, 2006

In my work as a parent and youth advocate we talk alot about the importance of work-based learning for transition-aged youth. Job shadowing and other work-based learning experiences are an excellent way for youth to begin exploring the world of work. Work-based learning opportunities can include job shadowing, informational interviews, internships, work place tours, mentorships or apprenticeships. As your personal experience illustrates, getting out into the community and exploring employment allows a young person to gather information about different types of jobs available, to develop their "soft skills", to build their resumes, practice disclosing their disabilities and requesting reasonable job accommodations, and to find a job. It is important for youth to advocate with their IEP teams to get work experience goals included on their IEPs. The opportunities available through high school work experience programs can vary--if a district's programs are too limiting, youth and their family should consider work experience opportunities available through their family network. Here are three helpful resources to check out:

From the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth information on work-based learning: http://www.ncwd-youth.info/resources_&Publications/hot_Topics/work_Based_Learning/youth.shtml

For information on workplace and postsecondary accommodations helpful for specific disabilities, check out the Job Accommodation Network at <http://www.jan.wvu.edu/> Finally, for information on using networks to achieve goals after high school, check out

"Making Dreams a Reality: Using Personal Networks to Achieve Goals as You Prepare to Leave High School" from the folks at ICI, U of MA Boston
http://communityinclusion.org/article.php?article_id=80

- **Transition to the work force by JS** on Apr 12, 2006

I serve as a Disability Program Navigator for the WorkSource in Washington State. My job is to make sure that the services for the one-stop job hunting process is accessible. We provide AT software and some AT devices to assist customers while they are involved in job hunting activities but more importantly, we are concerned that the Transition courses are not preparing students with special needs for employment. I know, the skills are taught but the students are not able to make that transition as easily as we would like. For instance, a student may come in and tell us they have the skills to be a Barista, but what they really have are two of a set of skills to be a Barista. Since the tools are available, we would like to work with the schools and the transtion teams to introduce the idea of Work Source services starting around the age of 14 or 15. (Youth can work in WA at age 16) I would encourage all of you to look at what the community supports are as well, since our goal is to have all youth grow up and be meaningful members of society. If youth in WA are not being assessed at the schools for AT devices and best software for optimum achievement, the Washington Assistive Technology Alliance would be a good resource. I don't know if they perform assessments for youth but they would know where to obtain that support. For job search activities, youth will need to know what AT works best for them. <http://wata.org/>

- o **Re:Transition to the work force by Sean Smith** on Apr 14, 2006

Thanks for the posting and the information. Just a few thoughts to the post. First, yes, WATA by law must provide supports for the assessment/identification for AT

devices/services and/or provide an alternative resource that could get this information for the individual and his/her family. Now, I don't know how WATA has structured its services, but most states have supports across the state so that families are not having to travel long distances in order to get access to sites and services.

Next, I would argue that in terms of AT use in the post-secondary world, we have a fair amount of work to do in communication and collaboration between the school and rehab or state services for the adult with a disability. For example, here in the state of Kansas, there appears to be a great disconnect between the schools and what they do for AT and the adult services and what they provide for AT. Not necessarily different devices but instead, the interaction between the two groups related to AT is limited. Thus, families are left with scrambling to learn the financial process to support an AT device after school, identifying what device would be most appropriate, working with the new system to ensure the right device and related support, and the like. Now, I would argue that this is complicated by the fact that AT use at the HS level is not where it should or needs to be. Instead, we have limited AT use or have developed systems to support individuals at the HS level but not necessarily empower them. For example, I just posted a few thoughts on PDAs and their application to the school environment. PDAs, in my opinion, foster independence and thus, empower the individual allowing them to develop the strategies necessary to organize themselves and give them supports to complete related requirements in the school-based environment. These requirements can be generalized to the work environment as well as thus; the PDA is applicable to this environment. Unfortunately, instead of the use of a PDA, I've witnessed schools develop programs and supports for individuals with disabilities that are human in nature. That is, using a paraeducator to assist the student with organization or overly relying on a job coach to support the individual in the work environment. This human resource might be great in the school setting but may not be what we need or what we have available in the community/work environment. So, why not look to the AT solution at the school stage and thus, prepare the individual with a tool applicable to the work environment as well?

Jumbled thoughts for a Friday morning.

- o **Re:Transition to the work force by Mary Morningstar** on Apr 14, 2006
First, I want to say that Washington state is certainly forward thinking in terms of their approach to providing one-stop workforce services to include individuals with disabilities. I have never heard of such a pro-active approach to One-stops and the support for individuals with disabilities. From your website, it appears that WATA is a federally funded grant through RSA, and therefore, can provide this additional layer of access and support to individuals with disabilities.

I would also agree with you that the coursework and work-related experiences that students with disabilities experience while in school can be less than stellar. First, very few districts can fully support what I would consider to be a comprehensive school-to-work program. In addition, even the best programs that I know of don't serve all students with disabilities (since so many are fully included in the general academic curriculum - a whole other story that begs the question, why aren't we providing school-to-work for ALL kids?)

Probably the best thing you can do is initiate some planning to be done with your local districts - an interagency collaborative council focusing on work-related issues - Getting together with the school personnel as well as agencies such as VR, MRDD agencies, and independent employment providers would help to develop a more

comprehensive approach to services. Oftentimes these types of interagency councils start the process by "community mapping" more about this approach to identifying gaps in services and developing a plan to address barriers and problems can be found at: <http://www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=2128>

- **AT Solutions - Transition from School to Post-secondary considerations by Sean Smith** on Apr 14, 2006
Hello all,

I apologize for the delay in actively engaging you folks over the past week. Was in Salt Lake City for the Annual Council for Exceptional Children's Meeting and then returned to computer challenges with my Mac. Fortunately, a new one was on order and just received it yesterday. I've been reading the posts and had wanted to chime in with several thoughts related to AT and Transition. I thought I'd begin with this post focused on what the recent conversations have been. That is, focused on transition beyond the high school years and AT applicable to those needs. Subsequent postings will have me backtracking to other critical transitions and how AT can assist with that process.

So, let's think a bit about AT applications that would be useful in the secondary environment as well as the post-secondary, be that work or school. I'd like to begin with a hardware solution. As many of you are probably aware, more and more High Schools are investing in school-wide initiatives in PDA technology. This might be the Palm (<http://www.palm.com/>) or Dell's handheld (www.dell.com). I know there are several other companies in the mix but these are the two that come to mind when I reflect on what school districts are using here in the Midwest. Now, the neat thing about this technology is that it is not being purchased under the AT budget. Instead, this is an Instructional Technology budgetary item and thus, supported by the school's IT department in terms of cost, training, and ongoing support. So, for those districts that have only one full time AT person (if that), this is dependent upon their time and related constraints in order for it to be integrated into the classroom. The other consideration here is that teachers are looking at this as a device for all students and not simply an AT device. Thus, this significantly enhances technology integration, use, and like components that often challenge AT use in the high school environment.

Before I go further, let me provide a link to a district using PDAs across their high schools. This is the Olathe School District, a suburban community here in the Kansas City Metro area. The URL is:

<http://www.olatheschools.com/media/releases/120602.php>

Back to a few thoughts about PDAs. Why are they helpful to our students? Where to begin? Well, let's start with organization. As we all know, many of our students are challenged with organization. This impacts their ability to get homework, complete homework, and get it back to the classroom in a timely manner. Now, color coded notebooks, a communication system between the teacher and the parent, or like systems can assist in these organization/homework challenges. Then again, so can the PDA. In Olathe for example, teachers have the homework assignment on a PDA and then simply "beam" this information to the student when they walk in the classroom. Similarly, certain students are allowed to "beam" their assignments back to the teacher upon entering the classroom. For a student with a disability, this allows for them to have the assignment on their PDA, the chance to complete it via the PDA or a computer (which the information would download to from the PDA), and an avenue from which to get the homework back to the classroom teacher. I don't know about you, but getting the homework home, then from home to the locker, and then the locker to the classroom was a constant struggle. The PDA is a simple solution.

A few more thoughts on Organization. Of course, the PDA offers a calendar function, a reminder (both visual and audio output if we wish), and a structure to allow for the development of To Do lists, simple note taking and the like. These are built in features that many of us in the "real world" use to make certain we remember meeting, appointments, and similar issues. For the student with a disability, they can use these as well in a manner specific to their needs to remember assignments, where they need to be, taking meds, and the list goes on.

Now, Palms and other PDA also come with Applets and related software that can be added to the PDA to make it work similar to a portable computer. With an external keyboard:

<http://www.palm.com/us/products/accessories/peripherals/>

the PDA can work as if the student has a portable laptop but for a fraction of the costs. The software that is available with the PDAs include a variety of applications like Word, PowerPoint, and the Internet. Palm's resource on software can be found at:

<http://www.palm.com/us/software/>

There are also companies that have designed applications to work with the PDA to offer flexibility and "power" to these hand held devices:

http://www.ddhsoftware.com/palm_software.html?UID=

For individuals with Intellectual Disabilities, Able Link Technologies have developed a host of software applications that can run on PDAs:

<http://www.ablelinktech.com/handhelds/productview.asp?ID=23>

As their website describes:

AbleLink's Pocket Discovery Desktop is an ideal tool for people who struggle with the inherent complexity of PDAs. It sits "on top" of the traditional Windows Pocket PC desktop and provides a simplified interface for accessing programs. On screen buttons can be created for any application on the PDA, complete with pictures and audio messages to help users identify different programs.

They have several different applications including the following (I grabbed the descriptors off their website):

Pocket Coach

This solution is perfect for individuals who need only verbal prompting; with Pocket Coach, you can record a series of personalized step-by-step audio instructions for virtually any educational, vocational or independent living task.

Visual Assistant

Visual Assistant provides powerful task prompting support by including digital pictures along with custom recorded audio messages to provide step-by-step instructional support. This allows caregivers to set up instructional tasks by recording instructions and incorporating pictures of each step - preferably of the user performing the step in the real-world environment - to provide multi-modal cues for task completion. Visual Assistant is ideal for more complex or detailed tasks where the addition of a picture can increase accuracy.

Pocket Compass

Pocket Compass is our most powerful handheld prompting system yet; offering personalized

instructional media prompting with an exclusive decision support system. Pocket Compass offers a high degree of portability with powerful new capabilities for automatically advancing through each step-by-step instruction using mainstream hardware.

Schedule Assistant

Schedule Assistant is a multimedia scheduling application for individuals with significant literacy challenges that prohibit the effective use of mainstream text-based scheduling systems. Any number of appointments or events can be entered into the system by recording an audio message and designating the day(s) and time for the message to activate. A relevant digital picture or icon can also be displayed when the message displays. The combination of time-based audio messages and picture cues are ideal for meeting bus schedules, medication reminders, taking work breaks, maintaining classroom schedules or morning routines, and more!

I'm going to stop for the moment and hope this gets us thinking about technologies that are being used by all, but very applicable (critical in my department) to the needs of students with disabilities.

- **Re:AT Solutions - Transition from School to Post-secondary considerations** by **WHP** on Apr 14, 2006
My wife and I agree with you completely about the usefulness of PDAs. Unfortunately, our son is on his third this school year. First we had to fight the school to get permission, as PDAs are banned for the general school population (he's mainstreamed). We finally got permission and it took less than a week for his first one to get stolen. The next one lasted longer - about 10 weeks. So far, the third time's the charm. But we don't want to have to go through 3 a year. He's in a large, suburban school with a significant theft problem. Lots of calculators disappear as well. In fact, there was a ring of kids found selling stolen calculators on eBay. Given that the kids who most need PDAs for organization are the ones most likely to leave them on a desk or in the cafeteria, what can parents do? (I know there's not an answer, but I thought I'd weigh in anyway.)
 - **Re:AT Solutions - Transition from School to Post-secondary considerations** by **Theresa S.** on Apr 14, 2006
Another options might be a combination cell phone/PDA - not too add to the cost, but your son might be more motivated to keep it with him, perhaps attached to his belt, etc. Of course, the school may not allow cell phones either. It is something to consider if he has a cell phone already or is planning to get one in the near future.
 - **Re:AT Solutions - Transition from School to Post-secondary considerations** by **sean smith** on Apr 17, 2006
I like the idea of the cell phone and truly believe this is where we are going in the community-based environment. Unfortunately, too often our schools do not allow these devices (and I understand why) and so it is difficult for us to advocate for them.
 - **Re:AT Solutions - Transition from School to Post-secondary considerations** by **sean smith** on Apr 17, 2006
Thanks for the post and theft is and should be a concern. I am not sure I have an answer for theft provision of PDAs in an environment where theft of other small devices is prevalent. However, it does have me thinking about another device that might be a bit larger, address the school issue of no PDAs

and be less attractive and a smaller market for the thieves. That is an AlphaSmart Dana or Neo (see <http://www.alphasmart.com/products/dana-w.html>). The Dana comes with the Palm software so it offers the functions of a PDA. It also includes software related to writing so it is similar on that front as well. Now, from the picture you can see on the website, it is about the size of a large keyboard. So, harder to lose or quickly steal. It is also something that would have to be placed in a package allowing for visibility in the cafeteria and the like.

The AlphaSmart product is something a good number of schools have invested in because it is a cheap way to address the needs of those with writing and organization deficits. The device is durable for a youngster not sure of how to care for equipment, and yet powerful enough to offer a variety of features. Since schools have made the investment, they are generally allowed in the school and in many instances, supported in training and use by teachers, para, and of course, the student. Thus, this is something that should appear in the student's IEP and thus, be paid for by the district. I have found that a significant majority of districts across the country have invested in these devices. Just a thought.

- **Different college options** by **Martha** on Apr 14, 2006

This isn't an AT-specific question, but it may have AT implications. I know there's not a "one size fits all answer," but for students with learning disabilities, do you have any opinions about whether it's better to:

- a. try a standard college or university, using whatever AT you can
- b. enroll in one of the increasing number of colleges that seem to cater to students with learning disabilities
- c. enroll in a community college, then transfer to a 4-year institution

I would assume that option B would be the most flexible with respect to using AT accommodations. Do you have any sense about how flexible the other two options might be?

Thanks,
Martha C.

- **Re:Different college options** by **JD** on Apr 17, 2006

Hi Martha,

I have no statistics, but as a high school teacher, I've seen students with learning differences select each of these options. One of the criteria that seems important is the size of the school. I've often seen students with learning disabilities do better in a smaller school environment. Not necessarily a school with a specific disabilities program, but one without huge auditorium-style "intro" courses, in which they're essentially invisible to the professor. Those courses may be particularly challenging to students with auditory processing issues.

Of course, there are so many different types of learning disabilities, that it's hard to offer specific advice. The label "gifted with learning disabilities" has become more popular in recent years. I've had several students with that diagnosis and I think all of them would have been bored in a community college (unless it was an unusually

good school, which some are). For some students, change is extremely difficult. For them, switching colleges might be more stressful than staying in the same small 4-year college for the duration.

I guess I'm rambling. Sorry. Concerning AT, I think the things that worked well in senior year will work well as a college freshman. The issue seems to be how to pay for AT that the school system paid for while the student was in K-12. There's so much wonderful AT out there - voice- activated programs, new mobility aids, computer programs with "smart" tutors, etc. What a shame that our national priorities don't include getting this stuff to every kid who needs it.

- o **Re:Different college options** by **sean smith** on Apr 17, 2006
Martha,

I'll look to Mary and others from the transition perspective. However, I will comment on the AT side. Regardless of the school, please know that would proper documentation for need, a school/college/university would need to work with your child to decide what AT device would offer reasonable accommodation for him/her in this post-secondary environment. This would fall under Section 504 support via the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act. So, while there are other considerations to keep in mind in terms of support and the like, please know that if AT has been an effective accommodation...it would be something he/she would and should continue to use and get support for its use at the post-secondary level.

- o **Re:Different college options** by **Cheri** on Apr 17, 2006
Martha-

Your question is one I have heard a lot from parents of transitioning students. The answer seems to be: it depends on your child's needs. If your student is good at self-advocating, probably any of the choices would work. If your student needs more support, going with a college that has an organized disabilities program or a community college (presumably near your home, where you can help your child self-advocate) may be better. In any case, whatever accommodations your child needs should be respected under disability laws, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act or section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Cheri

- o **Re:Different college options** by **Mary Morningstar** on Apr 20, 2006
Martha, I think that rather than ask what type of college should you think about, you should consider the specific needs and desires of the student, and then find out what the best environment is that meets the student's needs and plans. There is a very nice document that assists students and families to think about different postschool options that you can find on <http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/pdf/tranopndrs.pdf>. Also, on our website, www.transitioncoalition.org there is a publication called: Transition and Your Adolescent with Learning Disabilities: Moving from High School to Postsecondary Education, Training, and Employment. Within this document, there is a checklist of accommodations and supports that families and students can complete and then ask different postsecondary settings whether they provide these supports. That way, you can figure out what is the best fit for each student.

- **Disability Laws and American Indians & Culture** by **Brigita Leader** on Apr 18, 2006
Good Morning, Just wondering how well our Indian Communities are responding to understanding the Transition Information. I know that the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Indian Education are working strongly toward improving the quality of life for our children with disabilities. In research (I found on ERIC) they serve only about 10% of our Indian children population. My concern would be public schools. As an advocate for American Indians with disabilities and children, I hope the contacts our being made to get to the grassroots people with this information. Grassroots meaning our first language traditional people, they are the ones most underserved, unserved, and how well is all this being disseminated to Indian Country. The Rehabilitation act encourages accessibility and improve outreach to minorities. I know the WIA of 1998 also encouraged that. And even the workforce now has Disability Navigators. Is there any feedback anywhere on how outreach has improved?

Many of our grandparents are raising our grandchildren, due to legal, or substance abuse situations, or other reasons. That group of people are not aware of resources, and of course working with families and children, there is so much information when dealing with disabilities, then trying to just manage life, on limited income, transportation and accessing services.

I am interested in Transition, that is a concern, I am Vocational Rehab. consultant, currently project director working on a Indian health Services (Systems of Care: Children with severe emotional disorders) grant in Oklahoma city, Oklahoma. In Oklahoma we have 38 diverse, distinct tribes and nations. I hope to encourage our Indian families to seek information, promote advocacy (self-advocacy) and not be left behind.

So any information specific to American Indians with disabilities, children will be greatly appreciated. Or any information I can get to handout in my outreach booths will be appreciated. I am sure you are familiar with National Indian Education Association, Consortia of Native Americans in Rehabilitation (CANAR) or American Indian Disability Technical Assistance Center, Rural Institute on Disabilities, Montana University, they have groups of leaders that can help in Indian Country if needed. Sorry to be so inquisitive, but as an advocate, I want to stay on top of changes and challenges. I am a servant to bridging gaps, and an educator to improving service delivery.

MVTO!

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- **Re:Disability Laws and American Indians & Culture** by **Mary Morningstar** on Apr 20, 2006
Brigita, an excellent question. First of all, I believe that transition (as is typically described and promoted w/in special education) is not often a cultural "fit" with American Indian cultures (as well as others). So even the concepts behind transition might not easily translate for families and students. I don't have a wealth of materials and information specific to Indian families and students, but I am familiar with at least one really nice curriculum called Expanding the Circle: Respecting the Past and Preparing the Future. It is a transition/self-determination curriculum specifically for Native American students (both with and w/o disabilities). It was developed through the Institute on Community Integration at the Univ. of Minnesota <http://ici.umn.edu/>

Also, we have a new online training module for professionals to better understand cultural and linguistically diverse families and transition that can be found on our

website, www.transitioncoalition.org under the online modules. Please get in touch with me directly if you'd like to talk further. MM

- **"Transition from Elementary to High School" by "guest" on Apr 19, 2006**
I have a daughter who will be entering High School in the fall. She will be transferring from a private school to the public high school. I am presently collecting all necessary documentation so that she gets the AT she needs. Does anyone have a child who is a "non-verbal " learner? If so, which AT programs have been beneficial and how? Also, she will have many more teachers than in the private school and I was wondering how I can inform these teachers of my daughter's needs without getting the teachers to be very defensive. Also how much should the child advocate for themselves and when should the parents step in?

- **Re: by Susan Maclean on Apr 19, 2006**

I was very interested in your post. My daughter has a nonverbal learning disability, which describes someone who is not able to pick up nonverbal cues and learns primarily by verbal cues.

Does this describe your daughter, or is it just the opposite, where she learns better through non-verbal means?

- **Re: by guest on Apr 22, 2006**

The description you mentioned does describe my daughter. Is your daughter in the elementary or high school system? If so does she use assistive technology and what other support does she get?

- **Re: by Mary Morningstar on Apr 20, 2006**

Clarifying the issue of "non-verbal" probably would help us to help you! I took it to mean a student with significant disabilities who was non-verbal (meaning does not talk), and you were looking specifically for AT communication devices, I guess it really does depend upon your perspective!

In terms of the issue of advocacy, it is essential that students learn the skills they need to advocate w/in their school environment, whether that's elementary, middle, high school or postsecondary ed. In fact, by the time students get to postsecondary settings (those w/ and w/o disabilities, that is) it is expected that they advocate for themselves and indeed most university systems won't talk to parents of students over 18! So providing your daughter with the skills and training and support she needs to be an advocate is very important. There are a variety of curricula that have been developed over the past several years that teachers are using to help students gain these skills. I've included some resources about curricula from our website:

1. Steps to Self-Determination: A Curriculum to Help Adolescents Learn to Achieve Their Goals. Steps to Self-Determination is focused on helping students gain knowledge and skills that will allow them to increase their ability to achieve their goals in a variety of environments. This Instructor's Guide for the Steps to Self-Determination curriculum includes an introductory section and detailed lesson plans with transparency and handout masters for the orientation, workshop, and 16 class sessions. Through piloting and field-testing, we found two key factors that affected the success of the curriculum: (a) the degree to which teachers understood the overall curriculum scope and sequence, and (b) the type of classroom climate that was established during curriculum implementation. The introduction includes information that will help teachers understand the overall goals and organization of the curriculum, as well as factors that will help them to establish the classroom climate most conducive to curriculum success. Field, S., & Hoffman, A. (1996). Steps

to Self-Determination: A curriculum to help adolescents learn to achieve their goals. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed. Order online at ProEd Online Store

2. NEXT S.T.E.P.: Student Transition and Educational Planning

Based on feedback from several hundred teachers, this curriculum has been revised. The core purpose of the curriculum is to assist students in making the transition from school to adult life. With a constant focus on self-determination, the NEXT S.T.E.P. curriculum helps students learn how to take charge of their own transition planning process. Students identify a variety of goals that relate to jobs, education and training, personal life, and living on their own. The ultimate goal of the curriculum is to assist students in assuming responsibility for important life decisions. The complete curriculum consists of a teacher manual, student workbooks, brochures, and a videotape. Halpern, A., Herr, C., Doren, B., & Wolf, N. (2000). NEXT S.T.E.P.: Student transition and educational planning. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed. Order online at ProEd Online Store.

3. The ChoiceMaker Set: Tools for School-to-Work Transition (2000)

This series addresses student empowerment and self-determination as keys to successful post-school transition. Designed for students in grades 6-12, the concepts covered in the ChoiceMaker Series include:

Self-Awareness

Self-Advocacy

Self-Efficacy

Decision-Making

Independent Performance

Self-Evaluation

Self-directed IEP

Choosing Employment Goals is a multimedia program designed to foster self-determination and help students make decisions about the kind of work they wish to pursue beyond high school. Students learn how to identify their employment interests, skills, limitations, and goals through school and community experiences. The curriculum is designed for use by middle and high school students in general and special education programs.

Martin, J.E., Marshall, L.H., Maxson, L., Jerman, P., Hughes, W., Miller, T. & McGill, T. (2000). The Choicemaker Set, Longmont, CO, Sopris West. Order online at Sopris West Online Store.

▪ **Re: by guest** on Apr 22, 2006

Thank you for your wealth of information. My daughter is a non-verbal learner since when she reads, she only decodes she can not comprehend what she reads unless it is read outloud. Even then, she needs information broken down into very fine steps so she understands it. She also does not read social cues like facial expressions and has difficulty with reading "between the lines". As a result, making inferences, predictions and or deductions is very difficult. I have heard that Kurzweil and Inspiration and Dragon Naturally Speaking are excellent programs that will help her. What feedback have you received on these programs?

○ **Re: by sean smith** on Apr 20, 2006

Hello,

Thanks for the post and sorry for the delay in my response. A couple of thoughts with the non-verbal LD. I'll focus on social for the moment and if I could get clarity on what some of the challenges are, I could connect a few AT ideas. But for the social, I imagine social stories have been considered or possibly are being used to assist social interaction, adjustments to transition, and the like. Well, social stories via Video (developed with iMovie or Microsoft's Movie maker) are simple to develop and pretty powerful for learning purposes. PDAs can also offer the story so the learner can make the connections.

In regard to the teachers, I'd suggest considering the SETT Framework to be used to best determine AT needs. A nice overview can be found at:

http://www.ldonline.org/Ld_indepth/technology/zabalaSETT1.html

This would give a structured process to determining needs and identifying the right application.

In terms of advocacy. As a parent of a child with a disability, I am finding it very important to ensure that I communicate clearly and thoroughly. I have found that I need work on this and would strongly urge that your daughter be involved at this age and setting. We don't want to develop learned helplessness attributes, however; it is important to advocate for the needs that would help your daughter excel.

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- **Moving from one planet to another** by **Renee** on Apr 19, 2006
A number of people have commented on how unfamiliar they are with the whole rehabilitation/vocational education world, into which they move from years in the world of the school system. Count me in their ranks. Many of the resources counsel "get familiar with the 'voc/rehab' agencies." My question is: How do you do that? Assuming there's little problem getting their phone numbers, what questions do I ask? Do the agencies vary greatly from state to state and city to city? What assumptions, if any, can I make about their ongoing relationship with the school system and the sharing of documents (transcripts, IEP's, etc.) What about the relationship between the agencies and private doctors and therapists? How do I get them talking to each other? I hope this isn't too many questions. Thanks in advance for your help.
 - **Re:Moving from one planet to another** by **Mary Morningstar** on Apr 20, 2006
You are right in that it is hard to keep up to speed with the range of adult services provided at the state and local levels! I am teaching an online class right now where the students in the class (mostly secondary practitioners) have to contact a bunch of different agencies and ask them questions about their services. They use an existing online resource we've created <http://old.transitioncoalition.org/ics/index.html> that provides an overview of the different federal agencies that impact transition. We also included links to state-level resources for each federal agency. THEN, because we know that users want to identify local services, we've included a "taking it to the state level" online form. If you go to this site and click on one of the agencies (e.g., health and human services), you will see at the top, "taking it to the state level." Here you can find out about state and then local systems. THEN, my students have to contact their local services and ask these questions:

Collect information about the disability-specific services available in your community. When you contact the service agency, find out the following information:

- a. Name, address, phone number, website/email contact information.
- b. List of services they provide for youth with disabilities (you may ask about the specific disability of the student you plan to use for your community service coordination project; or about the specific disability most appropriate for that particular service [e.g., mental health services, mental retardation]).
- c. List of services they provide for adults with disabilities.
- d. How are services funded? What types of funding sources pay for services?
- e. Are there services the agency is planning on offering in the near future for youth with disabilities?
- f. Are there critical elements missing from what you have found out about this service agency related to what you have read/know about the support needs of youth with disabilities?
- g. Does the agency know of other agencies or organizations in the community that provide services to similar populations of individuals with disabilities (e.g., other employment services, mental health services, housing services, case management services).

These are possible questions to ask. You might come up with others that will help you collect the right information about services in your community.

- **Re:Moving from one planet to another** by **Renee** on Apr 24, 2006
Sorry to have been away for the past week. Thanks for your answer. Good information. Good questions. I had thought of some of them, but not all. It's a pretty overwhelming bureaucracy. Sometimes it's hard to believe that they're trying to help. But there's no alternative I guess. I hadn't realized how many transition resources there are online. Of course, a lot are good in theory, but the system breaks down when there's no budget (or insufficient budget) for the agencies to provide first-rate devices and services. You can talk til you're blue in the face about your rights under the law, but you can't get blood from a stone. I guess you just persevere and do what time and energy allow. Thanks again.
Renee

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- **importance of competence of the family** by **guest** on Apr 20, 2006
I've read the comments on competence of teachers. This is clearly important. It is also important that families are competent and, certainly by transition time, feel comfortable managing their son or daughter's AT equipment. While many students may be able to manage their own equipment, and probably know more about AT than their families do, for students with cognitive disabilities it is the family who will be managing all equipment. They must know how to do this, who to call when they need assistance, where to go for repairs and upgrades, and generally how to manage this tool for their son or daughter.

I think that this training needs to happen probably when the equipment is first brought in, but certainly it must be part of the transition plan.

- **Re:importance of competence of the family by sean smith** on Apr 20, 2006
Yes, some great thoughts and I agree. The only caution I have is that parents feel that they need to be the expert and thus, train the school staff to use the device. Now, the law is clear and best practice is clear that we need to look to the professional to provide the training and support to the student and family to ensure effective integration., Then again, parents and/or family members cannot ignore learning about the device and should rely on the district for everything. This will not be helpful upon graduation and/or during the school experience.

Sean

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- **AT for a 2nd grader with SP/L by guest** on Apr 20, 2006
Hello - Can you please let me know what AT would be helpful for my second grade son who has Sp/L disability - main difficulty is comprehension - he struggles with this orally and in the written word - his school district does not give any real support unless they are forced to, therefore does not look for what will help him. Thank you.

- **Re:AT for a 2nd grader with SP/L by sean smith** on Apr 21, 2006
Hello,

Thanks for the posting and the question. I'm going to ask a few questions and then offer a couple of suggestions. On the speech side, does he communicate verbally? Is it intelligible to those outside his immediate circle? Has the district considered an augmentative communication device for your son/daughter? On comprehension, it is that he/she does not comprehend what others say or do other not comprehend what he/she says?

Now, I will offer a few ideas for software solutions for the writing. The first is one that is generally available in all general education classrooms and that is Kidspiration (<http://www.kidspiration.com>). Kidspiration states that students build graphic organizers by combining pictures, text and spoken words to represent thoughts and information. Younger learners develop early literacy skills, and more advanced students improve comprehension skills and better organize ideas for writing. (I would agree). One of the reasons i have listed this first is due to the fact that it is a general education product and offers a reasonable price. This is easier to persuade a district to buy and support.

Now, another thought with the writing at this early age would be to look to develop keyboarding skills. This will be important in interacting with a number of writing applications that will increasingly have useful application as he/she gets older. A few applications that assist with writing are CoWriter and WriteOutloud (<http://www.donjohnston.com/>).

Some software companies to consider for early writing software as well would be Sunburst (<http://store.sunburst.com/>) and RiverDeep (<http://www.riverdeep.net>).

- **Re:AT for a 2nd grader with SP/L by sean smith** on Apr 21, 2006
Oh,

More more idea to consider towards the Speech and Language challenges for your son/daughter. Check out the FCTD Monthly newsletter at: <http://www.fctd.info/resources/newsletters/index.php>. Hope this helps. It seems timely to your questions.

Sean

- **I want a do-over** by **Josie** on Apr 21, 2006

Hi everyone,

Well, I just finished reading several of the many linked resources, which talk about parents asking themselves if their youth with disabilities has a variety of skills, including:
the ability to judge where and how things fit together
the ability to concentrate and stay on-task
the ability to work independently
the ability to communicate effectively about one's disability and any accommodations needed
the list goes on.

Okay, so here's the problem. You've got a 16 year old, one year away from graduating high school and he or she isn't anywhere close to being strong, or even adequate, in those areas. Maybe we as parents over-protected him, maybe we were a little distracted by the needs of full-time jobs and having 2 other children; maybe we hoped for the best and the best didn't exactly happen.

So, what do we do now??? Some of the attributes we're supposed to have instilled by age 16 (or so) will take years to develop. I know we're not going to get a do-over, so what's the next best course of action? (If there's any AT that would help, we're lucky in that we can afford to buy it.) I can't believe we're the only educated, well-meaning parents to find ourselves in this situation. I'd be happy to hear from both experts and non-experts alike. Thanks!

- **Re:I want a do-over** by **Mary Morningstar** on Apr 21, 2006

Josie, if you have a child with disabilities, you do have the right to receive special education services until the child is 21 (or older in some states). Therefore, if your 16-yr old is meeting the requirements for graduation, but still has transition goals and needs that are unmet (such as the list you provided) then you can continue to receive special education services to work on these transition goals. Most often, this is done in a community setting, rather than having the students remain in HS. I've talked earlier in this discussion board about 18-21 programs. These are programs that have traditionally been offered to students with significant disabilities who have remained in special education until 21. However, more and more, districts are beginning to provide specialized transition services to kids with more mild disabilities who have met the requirements for graduation but who still have transition needs. Then the student goes through the graduation ceremonies (they got through commencement but not graduation) with their same-aged peers, does NOT receive their diploma (can't get a diploma or sped services end as a change in placement) and remain on the school's rolls with an administrative placement. THEN the student's services are determined and the student can receive these transition services (e.g., employment skills, postsecondary ed. skills, etc.) in the setting where these skills are needed... Now, you may need to advocate for this type of a plan, but it is do-able. Certainly checking out our database of existing 18-21 programs across the country might help you to understand these programs. YOU can search by type

of disability and the ones for students with more mild disabilities will pop up.
www.transitioncoalition.org

- **Too many people have had to wait too long for AT we need it now!!!** by **Les Paul** on Apr 23, 2006

Hello. I am a Peer supporter and Advocate for Walton Options for Independent Living and I also am a founding member of the CSRA Dream Catchers dis/ABILITY Support group founded in 1999.

Our support Group is for people with Brain Spinal Cord Stroke and related injuries and I have witnessed first hand how long the wait is for AT and the proper AT because my first device didn't work and it took me 3 years to get a proper replacement.

I have known a lot of people who could be doing a lot better if only they had the proper AT in a timely manner!

I have also known many people who have simply given up because they didn't get any help with AT that would be of any service for them.

My question is: How long will it take to get a really meaningful AT program that gives the proper AT in a timely fashion???

I say hey this is 2006 and the time is right now!!!

I feel that the offices of Walton Options would be the perfect setting for such a program to really do a lot of good for a lot of people right now!

Please visit our support group web site for more information at www.csradreamcatchers.com and you can also register and become a member too!

- **Re:Too many people have had to wait too long for AT we need it now!!!** by **sean smith** on Apr 26, 2006

I agree that this is 2006 and we have had nearly 10 years with federal legislation where we need to consider AT for every student with an IEP and yet, we still struggle with the basic access to and use of AT for students with disabilities. While I see this as a glass half empty issue, I do see some positive things in place that hopefully will prove positive for all individuals with disabilities in the preK-12 environment as well as within the work/community world.

So, where do the positives exist. A few thoughts:

1. I think the concept of Universal Design and the fact this has become a focal point of recent legislation (IDEA 2004) as well as a concept embraced by many in and outside of the disability community is a good thing. That is, we have hardware and software producers looking to design features that are universal for all individuals. For example, the cell phone, while becoming complicated with all its features, is increasingly adding components that will be helpful for those with vision, hearing, cognitive, and physical challenges. These universal features appear to only be the beginning of modifications that will increasingly become available off the shelf and thus, applicable to a much wider audience.
2. Yes, cell phones are not allowed in many school buildings, however: they are a staple to the community and work environment. Thus, if the features exist that would allow someone to complete a task with the support and aide of a cell phone; employment and community services would and could certainly use it.

3. Now, the universal feature component also applies to software within our schools. Increasingly, the software being invested in by school districts appear to have a number of critical features for our learners. For example, Inspiration and Kidspiration are one if not the most widely available educational software applications available in our preK-12 classrooms. While these applications are useful to the general education population, they also have components critical for students with learning challenges. For example, Inspiration is based on the idea of visual webs or concept maps. There is a good deal of literature that shows webbing and concept maps can be critical to the learning of those with learning disabilities. Add in the interactivity of the application, how it offers a visual anchor; how it offer audio output and related features, and we have an application that has universal appeal.

4. Another area that has me thinking good thoughts about our future AT application has to do with technology integration efforts across our schools. I have increasingly witnessed investments by districts in instructional technology applications for all students. For example, a district close to Lawrence, KS has invested in Premier. This is an application that offers an audio output function for those with visual impairments. However, the district has seen that the audio output feature would be helpful to all students and thus, purchased licenses for all computers. As a result, this has meant that students in need of this application have not needed to advocate for access via the IEP. Instead, it is automatically available and in turn, used by students beyond those with IEPs and thus, benefiting a larger group of learners. If this trend continues, I see some great positives to all learners, especially those with disabilities in need of technology-based solutions.

5. Teacher use. While I continue to be challenged by the limited use of technology by all teachers. I am pleased with the fact that as districts further equip buildings with technology-based tools, teachers are increasingly realizing they cannot ignore technology as one of their potential tools. Similarly, the impact of new teachers who are comfortable with technology applications are increasingly looking to technology as a solution and thus, modeling for other teachers who might be a bit resistant.

These are just a few thoughts or maybe dreams that technology is on an upswing for all learners and thus, a potential positive impact for students with disabilities as well. I would argue we have a great deal to learn and do in the preK-12 environment and even more work to do in the adult world. However, if we continue to piggyback on universal applications available down at the Office Max, we will have reduced the steps necessary to realize technology use.

Sean

- **SAT accommodations** by **Sandy Hyatt** on Apr 25, 2006

Sorry if someone asked this already. If so, just point me to the posted answer.

My question concerns the SAT and ACT tests that most colleges require. My daughter doesn't have an IEP, but I understand that she has the right to apply for SAT accommodations (more time) under "504" (or was it "508"?) Anyway, someone told me that she might qualify, even without the IEP. I went to the her guidance counselor and he, luckily, understood the reference right away and gave me a form to complete. He said that the school had a committee, similar to an IEP committee, that would consider the request. Based on the information I gave him at that meeting, he thought she would be approved for additional time.

So here's my question. How do colleges look at SAT scores when the child received extra

time? Would it be better to have her get a somewhat lower score without accommodations or a higher one with? I suspect she'll do well enough to get into the local college we have in mind. But I know she'd do well with the extra time. Any advice?

Thanks!

- o **Re:SAT accommodations** by **sean smith** on Apr 26, 2006
Hello,

Thanks for the post and I will look to others to chime in on the part about how colleges perceive an ACT or SAT that has accommodations.

What I wanted to share was about the 504 Plan. You are right, a student with a disability that does not qualify for special education services under IDEA (and thus receive an IEP) often qualifies for a Section 504 Plan. While a 504 Plan is not an IEP, it does provide for reasonable accommodations needed by those students to perform appropriately in the general education classroom. A good reference for more information on Section 504 Plans can be found at:

http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/legal_legislative/section_504_for_teachers.html

http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/legal_legislative/update_504_2001.html

http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/legal_legislative/college_students_and_dis_law.html

I would strongly urge you to understand what your child is eligible for in preparation for the college entrance exams. Likewise, this knowledge and plan will offer your child a structure and support that he/she may very well need to use in the college environment. The last link above shares a bit about how 504 and ADA can and should support college students that need that support in the college environment.

Again, I'll look to others on their thoughts about how colleges perceive scores based on extended time.

- **Re:SAT accommodations** by **Mary Morningstar** on Apr 26, 2006
My understanding of ACT and SAT tests and accommodations is that it is getting harder and harder to get approval for the needed accommodations. I was talking with the teachers in my class last week, and they were all saying that ACT is now denying standard accommodations that have been in students IEPs and have been approved in the past. So one note of caution, you may need to advocate if the request is denied the first time. This means you really need to have good documentation as to the accommodations needed and supporting evidence that they have been used in the past.

- o **Re:SAT accommodations** by **Mary Morningstar** on Apr 26, 2006
In terms of the 2nd part of your question re: how do colleges look at the scores... I can't exactly remember if there is even anything on the results that indicates accommodations were used. I have a speaker from the Association of Higher Education and Disability (www.ahead.org) speaking in my online class next week (May 1-6th) who might be able to answer your question. I'll check with him and see what he knows!

- **Re: SAT accommodations** by **Mary Morningstar** on Apr 26, 2006
here is what a staff member from AHEAD responded to your question:

Regarding your SAT question. I believe that ACT ended its practice of flagging those SAT scores that represent some kind of specialized testing situation (most often accommodations), so the college won't know either way.

If a person with a disability really needs an accommodation in order to access a program, activity or facility of a school, then he or she should use it. If she chooses not to use the accommodation (e.g. extra time) it might backfire on her later on. If she requests extra time for a class exam, someone could come back and say, "Wait a minute, you didn't use it for that other test, why do you need for this one?"

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- **Winding down thoughts** by **sean smith** on Apr 29, 2006

As we come to an end to this month's discussion, I thought I add some additional thoughts related to our topic. Yes, on reflection of the month's activity, there is a great deal of ground we did not cover. I hope that those that had an opportunity to visit and read the postings, and possibly add their own, continue to think about ways we can and should use technology to assist those with disabilities during the challenging transitions that take place over an individual's life. On a personal note, we are in the process of one of these transitions with our own son. He is about to begin Kindergarten and we have had a series of meetings about where and when he will receive services, what these will look like, and similar issues. While I'd like to have technology as part of these conversations, I have come to realize that the others issues on the table and the challenges that a transition like this presents limits our ability to advocate for something new. However, as I reflect on his needs and what we hope he accomplishes in this upcoming year, I realize that AT should be part of the toolbox that his team considers. With that said, we hope to address this need with his new team very early in the academic year. Is this best practice? I honestly don't know. Are the challenges of the transition process limiting our options in pursuing AT solutions? I'd argue most definitely, yes.

Separate from my personal experience, I do believe that as we face later transitions as the student grows, that particular technologies should be considered based on need, access, use and similar issues.

For example, as we come into the elementary years there are particular skills that our students will be required to acquire that often present challenges. Now, I'm going to offer a few global skills with related challenges to offer an illustration. I'm also going to try to connect these challenges with technology solutions that are prevalent within our schools today and thus, may not be required to separately note as part of a child's IEP.

First, as we develop the need to write, some of our students will experience challenges in this very act of handwriting. Whether it be dysgraphia or a physical limitation, options to supplement handwriting is critical. In many instances this leads to the use of a keyboard. While I hunt and peck away, I wish I had begun typing development earlier in life. Regardless of age, we know that one's ability to type impacts their ability to convey their thoughts in both quantity and quality. With this in mind, there are a number of excellent typing programs out there to use for students, with or without a disability. One that I am partial to is Sunburst's Type to Learn software (<http://store.sunburst.com/>). This application allows for a student to develop typing skills, in an interactive drill and practice as well as game format. It also allows for teachers/parents to alter to typing experience to best fits the instructional/practice needs of the individual. Thus, if a child needs additional practice, this

can be programmed for their specific needs. It also offers teachers/parents/students immediate feedback on how one is doing. Let me add, this is an application that is generally available within a district and not seen as an AT application. Instead, it is seen as something to help all students but again, something our folks can definitely benefit from.

As the writing process requires idea generation, structure and organization, an ability to categorize and group ideas, a way to express and organize thoughts, and comprehend and communicate...well applications like Kidspiration (K-5) and Inspiration (5 – 12) can be used. These are widely available products that are used in and marketed to the general education classroom. The beauty of the applications is that they are grounded in educational approaches that are effective for all learners, especially those with disabilities. The visual webbing and concept diagramming that is the basis for the application, is quite applicable to the needs of all. The fact that it is on most computers and that teachers are interested in using it for the general education class is another plus. As a result of the access, all students get a chance to use and thus, our students can greatly benefit from use.

I'm going to need to go but will follow up later!!!

Sean

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- **Thank you Mary and Sean by Jackie Hess [SI Faculty]** on May 01, 2006
Thank you, Mary and Sean, and all of you who posted interesting and informative questions, comments and resources. The discussion will now be archived for future reference.

In September 2006 the Family Center will publish "The Family Information Guide to AT and Transition." Our "Family Information Guide" series uses family-friendly language and includes an illustrated glossary and links to current, relevant resources. Like our "Family Information Guide to Assistive Technology," it will be available in Spanish as well. Please keep an eye out for it on our homepage.

Resources

Person-Centered Planning: A Tool for Transition

<http://www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=1431>

This article, published by the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, discusses the importance of focusing transition planning around the individual who is actually going through the transition process. The authors discuss how the plan should reflect the student's interests and preferences, current accomplishments and skills, what they still need to learn, as well as what they want to do in life. Through this type of planning, the student's individual goals should be developed so that the planning team has an idea of what they need to incorporate into the transition process. This article pulls the language about transition from the IDEA legislation. The article provides in depth information about the four steps in the person-centered transition process, which include: Choosing a Facilitator, Designing the Planning Process, Holding the Meeting: Implementing the Person-Centered Planning Process, and Planning and Strategizing at the Follow-up Meetings. After identifying the steps, the article discusses each person's role in the process. Finally, there is a list of resources where people can go for more information on person-centered transition planning.

Age of Majority- Preparing Your Child for Making Good Choices

<http://www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=318>

This article discusses how to prepare your child for making good decisions once they reach the age of majority. The age of majority is the legal age established under state law at which an individual is no longer a minor and, as a young adult has the right and responsibility to make certain legal choices that adults make. A parents role is to help children to become comfortable making their own decisions and capable of making good choices. This article outlines fourteen strategies for teaching your child with disabilities to make good decisions.

Transition Requirements: Beginning at Age 16

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/download/pdf/FF-TransitionB16.pdf>

This brief fact sheet, published by the Colorado Department of Education, discusses the importance of starting early when planning for a transition. Early and long-range planning are critical in order for the student to receive many post-school programs or services whether they include support services in college or residential services from an adult provider. Once a student reaches age 16, or earlier, planning should begin to focus on transition services. The fact sheet goes into the education system's roles and responsibilities and also gives a brief description about how parents should participate in the process. The most useful part of this fact sheet is the checklists at the end which help guide parents through the steps that should be taken two to three years before leaving school and in the last year before leaving school.

Transition Planning: What-Why-How?

<http://www.cde.state.co.us//cdesped/download/pdf/FF-TransPlan.pdf>

This fact sheet, published by the Colorado Department of Education, gives a brief overview of every aspect of the Transition Process. It begins by emphasizing the importance of starting the process early. They say that the concept of transition is simple and generally has three major components: 1) Coach every student, along with his or her family, to think about goals after high school and to develop a long-range plan that will get them there, 2) Design high school experiences to ensure that the student gains the skills needed to reach his or her desired post-school goals, and 3) Identify and link students and families to any needed post-school services, supports or programs, before the student exits the school system. After this fact sheet outlines the different aspects to the transition process, it discusses what parents should be doing during the years in high school and how the process should be included in the IEP. There are various checklists to help guide parents through important times during their child's high school career.

Transferring Assistive Technology from School to Work

http://www.ucp.org/ucp_channel.doc.cfm/1/17/107/107-107/736

This article, published in 2005 by United Cerebral Palsy, describes the barriers that individuals with disabilities face when they try to take the AT they were using in high school with them into their place of employment or into vocational rehabilitation. Some of these barriers include: lack of involvement of rehabilitation counselors, lack of information by rehabilitation counselors about AT, burdensome rules imposed on school districts regarding disposition of equipment, no established buy-out method to enable the vocational rehabilitation agency to purchase AT from school districts, and lack of communication/planning between agencies during transition planning. According to this article, the federal regulations do not prohibit the transfer of equipment from school to work and work-related activities. With this being said, they list a variety of strategies for making equipment transfer a reality.

Transition-Related Planning, Instruction, and Service Responsibilities for Secondary Special Educators

http://www.dcdt.org/pdf/transit_plan.pdf

This fact sheet, published by the Division on Career Development and Transition, summarizes the practices that have emerged through research for which secondary special educators should be responsible. The practices are organized into five categories and are from the foundation for transition-related skill development for secondary special educators. The fact sheet lists the various

tasks that each of the five practice categories should be doing. The five categories are: Student-Focused Planning, Student Development, Interagency Collaboration, Family Involvement, and Program Structures.

It's More than Just a Law: People Make it Happen

<http://www.transitioncoalition.org/~tcacs/new/files/peoplemakeithappen.pdf>

This article, published by Transition Coalition, defines the roles of the various people involved in a young adult's transition process from high school into their post-secondary education or into the workforce. Before they go into the roles, they give a brief overview of the major transition requirements according to IDEA. According to Transition Coalition, there are nine main roles defined in the transition process, and they go into detail about what each group is supposed to be doing to make sure that the transition goes as smoothly as possible. The nine groups are: community members, peers and friends, advocates, school support staff, administrators, postsecondary education personnel, community service providers, family members, and the students themselves. If each of the people within these groups do their part, the student will most likely experience a successful transition out of the public education system.

Enhancing Academic Achievement and Transition Outcomes Using Technology

<http://ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=2472>

This article, published by the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, discusses how educators can align transition goals with the current system of standards-based education. Before the article goes into strategies to intersect the standards, careers, and technology; the authors discuss a standards-driven, computer-based curriculum for students with disabilities in grades 8 through 10 that was designed by the Nisonger Center at Ohio State University. Its curriculum emphasizes three essential skills, which include: reading competencies needed to pass standardized assessments, information literacy skills needed to conduct research using the Internet, and career planning needed to gain successful post-school education. Next the article discusses the three main strategies/practices for helping students with disabilities meet academic standards and attain the skills needed for positive in-school and post-school outcomes are discussed. They are: 1) Integrate technology into the classroom to increase standards-based achievement and developing marketing skills; 2) Integrate learning supports into computer-based and traditional instruction to enhance outcomes; and 3) Integrate critical-thinking, career decision-making, and transition planning skills into a technologically enhanced general curricula.

Cooperative Services Handbook for Youth in Transition

http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/download/pdf/CoopSvcsHndbk_YouthTrans.pdf

This handbook, developed by the Colorado Department of Education and the Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, was designed to assist DVR staff, educators, students and their families in the delivery of transition services. The handbook is broken up into the following sections: what transition is, who may receive transition services, what the roles and responsibilities are for each system in the process, how to plan for transition services, where can the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and the schools collaborate in service provision, what policies and practices may affect transition, and a list of local offices for the people of Colorado. Throughout the handbook, there are different stories about people who have gone through the transition process and what worked and what didn't work for them.

Transition Planning: A Team Effort

<http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/transum/ts10.pdf>

This guide was put together by the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY). It discusses what the law says concerning transition services, transition teams, how to create a transition plan, how to find resources in your community, and community level transition. They provide some great tables throughout this guide. There is a table listing the common community agencies that provide transition services and along with each agency they give the examples of the employment services offered, examples of the postsecondary education services offered, and examples of adult and independent living services that are offered. Another table they

have provides a list of potential consultants to the transition team and how they can help with the transition services. Planning is essential for a successful transition. NICHCY does a great job highlighting the different aspects of planning by providing charts for: Planning for Employment, Planning for Education after High School, and Planning for Living Independently. Finally, they list additional resources and organizations that may help you in the planning for transition process.

Answers to Commonly Asked Questions about Transition Services and the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

This easy to understand booklet answers important questions about Transition Services, and is provided for parents, teachers, adolescents with disabilities, and all stakeholders involved in the transition to a high quality adult life. Learn about IEP requirements, Interagency Linkages, and Graduation for young adults with disabilities and find answers to the questions you want answered. <http://www.transitioncoalition.org/~tcacs/new/files/98commonlyaskedquestions.pdf>

Respuestas a las Preguntas mas Comunes sobre los Servicios de Transición y el Programa de Educación Especializada (IEP).

http://www.transitioncoalition.org/~tcacs/new/files/98commonquestions_spanish.pdf
Este libreto de preguntas importantes sobre servicios de la transición es fácil de entender. Se proporciona para los padres, los profesores, los adolescentes de inhabilidades, y todos implicados en la transición a una vida adulta de la alta calidad. Aprenda sobre requisitos de IEP, acoplamiento de la Inter agencia, y la graduación para los adultos jóvenes con discapacidades.

Transition and Your Adolescent with Learning Disabilities: Moving from High School to Postsecondary Education, Training, and Employment.

http://www.transitioncoalition.org/~tcacs/new/files/adol_convert.pdf

This helpful document provides families with information about how to plan for the transition from school to postsecondary settings and information about different postsecondary options for adolescents with disabilities.

Planning for the Future

http://www.transitioncoalition.org/~tcacs/new/files/planning_future.pdf

A workbook to help students, their families, and professionals to plan for life after high school. This workbook uses a person-centered approach to identify student strengths and facilitates a problem-solving approach to develop a plan of action and a vision for the future.

People Make It Happen

<http://www.transitioncoalition.org/~tcacs/new/files/peoplemakeithappen.pdf>

Laws don't make things happen, people do. This booklet includes information about the various roles in transition. Descriptions of several specific roles as well as suggestions for how different members of transition teams may participate in the transition process are provided.

QIAT 2005 Self-Evaluation Transition Matrix

www.fctd.info/resources/newsletters/upload/8_QIAT_2005_TRANSITION_MATRIX.pdf

Quality Indicators for AT Transition

www.fctd.info/resources/newsletters/upload/9_QIAT_Transition_Matrix_Saunders_2005.pdf

WATI AT Transition Packet

www.fctd.info/resources/newsletters/upload/attransitionpacket.pdf

NCSET InfoBrief - September 2005

[www.fctd.info/resources/newsletters/upload/NCSETInfoBrief_4\[1\].5.pdf](http://www.fctd.info/resources/newsletters/upload/NCSETInfoBrief_4[1].5.pdf)

Transition Matrix

www.fctd.info/resources/newsletters/upload/SPTransTemp022306.pdf

WEBSITES

The following websites belong to organizations that focus on the Transition Process. These websites include additional resources and information. Many of them also provide local places where you can go for assistance.

Transition Coalition

<http://www.transitioncoalition.org/cgiwrap/tcacs/new/index.php>

The Transition Coalition provides online information, support, and professional development on topics focusing on the transition from school to adult life for youth. They provide FREE research-based online training for professionals and others involved in transition planning. These modules are developed using up-to-date research in transition, effective practices in professional development, and are tested by practitioners across the country. One of their online modules is called Best Practices in Planning for Transition and can be found at

<http://www.transitioncoalition.org/cgiwrap/tcacs/new/training/onlinemodules/index.php?page=main>. Through this website you can also find a number of transition resources and publications.

National Early Childhood Transition Center

<http://www.ihdi.uky.edu/nectc/>

National Center on Secondary Education and Transition

<http://www.ncset.org>

Technical Assistance on Transition and the Rehabilitation Act (TATRA)

<http://www.pacer.org/tatra/tatra.htm>

TransAccess

<http://www.transaccess.org/>

AT and Transition

<http://www.sc.edu/scatp/transition.htm>

ATA-Family Place in CyberSpace-Transition Plan

<http://www.ataccess.org/resources/fpic/transition.html>

FUNDING OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

<http://www.nls.org/atart.htm>

Illinois Assistive Technology Program Rights of Passage

http://www.iltech.org/rights_passage.asp

Issue Transition

http://www.mtadv.org/isu_transition.htm

Learning Disabilities OnLine LD In-Depth Assistive Technology for Postsecondary Students with LD

http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/technology/postsecondary_tech.html

Learning Disabilities OnLine LD In-Depth Get SETT for Successful Inclusion and Transition

http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/technology/zabalaSETT1.html

SchwabLearning.org - IDEA 2004 Close Up Transition Planning

<http://www.schwablearning.org/articles.asp?r=998>

Technology for Transition Exploring Assistive Technology Resources

<http://cat.buffalo.edu/transition/at.php>

**The Public School's Special Education System as an Assistive Technology Funding Source
The Cutting Edge**

<http://www.nls.org/specedat.htm>

Transition Advisory Board - TAB

<http://www.aea9.k12.ia.us/05/tabassistive.php>

**Transition Planning and Programming Empowerment Through Partnership--an
Occasional Paper from the Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center**

<http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/products/Sharing-Ideas/transition/index.html>

**UCP Funding for Assistive Technology Devices and Services in the Individuals With
Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997**

http://www.ucp.org/ucp_channel.doc.cfm/1/12/74/74-74/732

The Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency has available on their website a variety of basic checklists and forms that can be used to ensure successful assistive technology transfers/transitions. Forms include: Student Worksheet, AT Listing, AT Summaries, Missing or Broken Equipment and many more forms for individual types and brands of AT.

<http://www.aea9.k12.ia.us/05/assistivedwlds.php>