

Selecting Assistive Tech Tools to Meet Your Child's Needs

A Worksheet for Parents

This worksheet is designed to guide you in identifying AT tools to help your child bypass or “work around” learning difficulties. Follow the steps below to work through the selection and experimentation process. You may want to make a copy of this worksheet for each AT tool you are considering.

Note: This worksheet is not intended to serve as a formal assessment for AT.

For more information, please read our article, “Matching Assistive Technology Tools to Individual Needs” at www.schwablearning.org/articles.asp?r=1093.

Step 1: Consider Your Child's Strengths and Limitations

The first step is to consider your child's strengths and limitations. This will prepare you to identify AT tools that may help your child bypass difficulties while playing to strengths. Place a check in the box that best describes your child's ability in each of the following areas. (You will fill in the “Possible AT Tools” column after you review Step 2.)

Skill Area	Weak	Average	Strong	Possible AT Tools
Listening				
Pays attention to speaker for appropriate time span				
Distinguishes between important and unimportant information				
Understands basic oral instructions				
Understands rapid speech				
Reading				
Reads words accurately				
Understands meaning of individual words				
Comprehends sentences, paragraphs, etc.				
Reads with speed/fluency				

Skill Area	Weak	Average	Strong	Possible AT Tools
Writing				
Expresses self clearly in writing				
Spells correctly				
Uses correct grammar				
Uses appropriate vocabulary				
Knows punctuation/capitalization rules				
Edits/proofreads well				
Writes neatly with little difficulty				
Math				
Understands basic math concepts (e.g., counting, number symbols)				
Calculates basic arithmetic problems				
Calculates quickly				
Can write down math problems in a neat, organized manner				
Memory				
Has long-term recall of information				
Has short-term recall of information				
Follows directions in order				
Organization				
Organizes personal and work time				
Organizes personal work space				
Makes plans to accomplish tasks				

Step 2: Review Possible Assistive Technology Tools

Review the AT database at www.schwablearning.org/ATtools for detailed descriptions of AT tools. In the list below, place a check mark next to any tools that seem appropriate for your child. Then add those tool types to the "Possible AT Tools" column in the chart above.

Reading

- ☐ OCR/Speech Synthesis
- ☐ Speech Synthesis
- ☐ Alternative format books (e.g., tape, CD)

Memory

- ☐ Personal Data Manager
- ☐ Tape Recorder
- ☐ Free-form Database

Writing

- ☐ Word Processor
- ☐ Word Prediction
- ☐ Speech Synthesis
- ☐ Speech Recognition
- ☐ Graphic Organizer
- ☐ Spell Checker
- ☐ Abbreviation Expansion
- ☐ Alternative Keyboard

Organization

- ☐ Personal Data Manager
- ☐ Tape Recorder
- ☐ Free-form Database

Listening

- ☐ Assistive Listening Device
- ☐ Tape Recorder

Math

- ☐ Talking Calculator
- ☐ Electronic Worksheets

Step 3: Observe Your Child Using the AT Tool

AT Tool Reviewed: _____

Observe your child experimenting with the AT tool to perform the task(s) that are difficult. **Compare this to the performance of the same task using no technology or using a different strategy.** Circle the number that best describes the apparent match between your child, the task, and the AT tool:

The technology:			
improved accuracy/quality	Not at all 1	Somewhat 2	A lot 3
increased speed/efficiency	Not at all 1	Somewhat 2	A lot 3
compensated for her difficulty	Not at all 1	Somewhat 2	A lot 3
tapped into her strengths	Not at all 1	Somewhat 2	A lot 3
was easy for her to learn	Very hard 1	Somewhat 2	Very easy 3
was easy for her to use	Very hard 1	Somewhat 2	Very easy 3

Step 4: Consider the Setting and Context for the AT Tool Usage

AT Tool Reviewed: _____

For each setting listed below, answer “yes” or “no” depending on where your child will need/want to use the AT tool.

Setting	Compatible with existing technology		Appropriate space available		Appropriate furniture available		On-site Support (e.g., adult familiar with AT)	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO
Classroom								
Home								
Other								

Step 5: Review Characteristics of the AT Tool

AT Tool Reviewed: _____

Circle the number that best describes each characteristic of the AT tool.

Reliability/Dependability	Poor 1	Okay 2	Very good 3
Compatibility with existing technologies (at home or school)	Not at all Compatible 1	Somewhat compatible 2	Very compatible 3
Ease of learning and operating	Very hard 1	Okay 2	Very easy 3
Quality of visual display	Low 1	Okay 2	Very High 3
Quality of auditory output	Low 1	Okay 2	Very High 3
Level of technical support (via phone, Web, in-person)	Low 1	Okay 2	Very High 3

This worksheet is based on the *Functional Evaluation for Assistive Technology* (Raskind & Bryant, 2002).