

Quality Indicators for Assessment of Assistive Technology Needs

Quality Indicators for Assessment of Assistive Technology Needs is a process conducted by a team, used to identify tools and strategies to address a student's specific need(s). The issues that lead to an AT assessment may be very simple and quickly answered or more complex and challenging. Assessment takes place when these issues are beyond the scope of the problem solving that occurs as a part of normal service delivery.

1. Procedures for all aspects of assistive technology assessment are clearly defined and consistently applied.

Intent: Throughout the educational agency, personnel are well-informed and trained about assessment procedures and how to initiate them. There is consistency throughout the agency in the conducting of assistive technology assessments. Procedures may include—but are not limited to—initiating an assessment, planning and conducting an assessment, conducting trials, reporting results, and resolving conflicts.

2. Assistive technology assessments are conducted by a team with the collective knowledge and skills needed to determine possible assistive technology solutions that address the needs and abilities of the student, demands of the customary environments, educational goals, and related activities.

Intent: Team membership is flexible and varies according to the knowledge and skills needed to address student needs. The student and family are active team members. Various team members bring different information and strengths to the assessment process.

3. All assistive technology assessments include a functional assessment in the student's customary environments, such as the classroom, lunchroom, playground, home, community setting, or work place.

Intent: The assessment process includes activities that occur in the student's current or anticipated environments because characteristics and demands in each may vary. Team members work together to gather specific data and relevant information in identified environments to contribute to assessment decisions.

4. Assistive technology assessments, including needed trials, are completed within reasonable time lines.

Intent: Assessments are initiated in a timely fashion and proceed according to a timeline that the IEP team determines to be reasonable based on the complexity of student needs and assessment questions. Timelines comply with applicable state and agency requirements.

5. Recommendations from assistive technology assessments are based on data about the student, environments and tasks.

Intent: The assessment includes information about the student's needs and abilities, demands of various environments, educational tasks, and objectives. Data may be gathered from sources such as student performance records, results of experimental trials, direct observation, interviews with students or significant others, and anecdotal records.

6. The assessment provides the IEP team with clearly documented recommendations that guide decisions about the selection, acquisition, and use of assistive technology devices and services.

Intent: A written rationale is provided for any recommendations that are made. Recommendations may include assessment activities and results, suggested devices and alternative ways of addressing needs, services required by the student and others, and suggested strategies for implementation and use.

7. Assistive technology needs are reassessed any time changes in the student, the environments and/or the tasks result in the student's needs not being met with current devices and/or services.

Intent: An assistive technology assessment is available any time it is needed due to changes that have affected the student. The assessment can be requested by the parent or any other member of the IEP team.

COMMON ERRORS

1. Procedures for conducting AT assessment are not defined, or are not customized to meet the student's needs.
2. A team approach to assessment is not utilized.
3. Individuals participating in an assessment do not have the skills necessary to conduct the assessment, and do not seek additional help.
4. Team members do not have adequate time to conduct assessment processes, including necessary trials with AT.
5. Communication between team members is not clear.
6. The student is not involved in the assessment process.
7. When the assessment is conducted by any team other than the student's IEP team, the needs of the student or expectations for the assessment are not communicated.