

Finding the Right Professionals

Finding the Right Assistive Technology Professionals

Have You Ever Heard the Phrase, “It Takes a Village...”?



Assistive technology is a very broad and diverse definition for the many resources available to those with disabilities: The field of assistive technology (AT) and augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) involves many different disciplines: speech and language pathologists (SLP), occupational therapists (OT), board-certified behavior analysts (BCBA), physical therapists (PT), and others. It is important to find the right professionals who will work well with your family to ensure a successful outcome. An interdisciplinary team approach, with multiple perspectives,

works the best! Assessments can address communication, power mobility, computer access, phone access, and environmental controls, as well as Audiologists and hearing specialists. Each individual is different, and the evaluation can determine which form of technology will best suit their specific needs.

When an individual has a communication disorder, strategies can range from low-tech solutions that involve picture communication boards to high-tech systems that provide speech output with a range of access methods, such as use of access methods, such as use of switch-scanning, a head mouse, or eye-gaze technology. Computer and phone accesses often involve those with motor and motor impairments and need to improve their independence. Those with learning disabilities may need computer-based accommodations to help with their reading, writing, memory, and organization. Adaptive keyboards, mice, and touchscreens provide these accommodations, as well as those with voice commands, switch-scanning, computer apps, and text-to-speech programs. It is important to get a well-rounded evaluation for each individual's needs. If you need to find qualified professionals in your area, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association and The Behavior Analyst Certification Board both have search features on their websites to help locate board-certified therapists in each state. There are also assistive technology providers available to help you access those devices to best fit your needs and assist you in gaining state Medicaid funding to purchase the devices as well. Check out some of the websites below and start the journey to building independence for those with disabilities today!

Ability Unlimited is proud to be an assistive technology (AT) Provider in Virginia.

Resource Links

- The [American Speech-Language-Hearing Association](#) offers

- a way to search for Audiologists and SLPs in Virginia
- The [Behavior Analyst Certification Board](#) can help you find a BCBA in Virginia
 - Service Source has an [AT Assessment Program](#) – it may take some time to get an appointment, but they are very thorough in their evaluations
 - [CHKD](#) also provides assessments for adaptive equipment – you can contact them to schedule an appointment

Assistive Technology waiver service is making a difference in the lives of those with disabilities.

“Hearing Aids are not new to us. Our daughter used them before (early teenage years), however, with frequent ear drainage and infections, the ENT eventually didn’t clear her to wear the hearing aids. Of course, our daughter was not receptive in wearing the hearing aids either (sensory-based). She hid them at home, and at one occasion school didn’t know if she swallowed the mold or threw it away. My bet was she threw the mold in the trash, evidence did not suggest otherwise.

In her adult life, she was finally cleared for hearing aids again. Yes, years and year of ear drainage issues, and she isn’t a candidate for other hearing aid types. Our daughter has a moderate hearing loss, (give or take depending what goes on with her ears) conversations are a mumbled to her, it is important to her and for her to hear as best she can to participate in her community. We use sign language and pictures symbols (another Assistive Technology tool, IPAD). Sensory, the feeling of something in her ear, the noise level, the need to listen and connect the speech sounds is the upcoming challenge. However, we have an attendant that works wonders and has tons of experience with hearing aids and an SLP will work with her too. Assistive Technology (AT) makes a difference in our daughter’s life. It is important to her and

for her, to hear what is said and not guess, and not work so hard to retrieve other environmental cues to make sense out of a situation/communication. Being part of the Deaf/Blind community (combined vision and hearing impairment/loss) our daughter works hard to retrieve information. AT supports her to become more independent. We had support from our care coordinator, Ability Unlimited, and the medical profession to move along and get the paperwork and information that we needed. Together, we made it work.” – H.M.

Testimonials

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I cannot thank you all enough. It is so great to be able to feed our guy the same food we eat and to help him feel included in our meal times.

My son and I are currently learning and working with our new device and I hope it will help tremendously in furthering his ability to speak.

I just wanted to thank you again for your promptness and assistance with supporting this family. You’ve been great!

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