

Differences Between AT & AAC

What is Assistive Technology?

Assistive Technology (AT) is used by individuals with disabilities in order to perform functions that might otherwise be difficult or impossible for them. IDEA defines an Assistive technology device as “any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability.” (Sec 300.5) Assistive Technology devices can include mobility devices such as walkers and wheelchairs, hardware that assist access to computers, computer software such as Phonetic Spelling software, variable speed recorders, etc.

What is Alternative/Augmentative Communication?

Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) techniques can be used with students who are not speaking or who are not proficient verbal speakers. AAC includes low-tech picture symbols such as PECS systems, PODD books, and visuals used to support verbal speech. Some AAC students use medium-tech such as GoTalk, CheapTalk, or Voice Output Switches. Alternatively, others may include high-tech systems such as dedicated Speech Generating Devices such as Tobii Dynavox, PRC, or Saltillo, eye-gaze communication systems, and/or iPad based communication systems such as Proloquo2go, TouchChat with WordPower, or LAMP Words for Life.

Most students will use a combination of systems. For example, they might have a high-tech device with low-tech backup and also sign to familiar communication partners.

Alternative/Augmentative Communication (AAC)

- High-tech language systems that support functional communication for activities of daily living/learning
- Low-tech language systems that support functional communication for activities of daily living/learning
- Medium-tech language systems that support functional communication for activities of daily living/learning
- Consult with OT and/or PT to access communication systems using switches
- Consult with OT and/or PT to increase access to communication systems in different mounted positions

Assistive Technology (AT)

- Computer systems to support writing for a student who successfully communicates verbally
- iPad systems to support writing for a student who successfully communicates verbally
- Amplification for a student with a quiet voice
- Computer access for a student who communicates successfully
- Reading support for a successful verbal communicator
- Learning and studying skills for a student with successful verbal communication
- Sign language skills as a primary mode of communication
- Visual supports for educational or behavioral purposes – not directly related to language

*Information adapted from: **Assistive Technology and Alternative and Augmentative Communication by Nassau County & Suffolk County – Long Island.** Retrieved from <http://www.alternatives4children.org/assistive-technology-and-alternative-augmentative-communication.html>*

Cascade Regional Inclusive Services

Main Overview

Alternative / Augmentative Communication Services

AAC Referral Guidance & Checklist

Differences Between AT & AAC

AAC Terms & Definitions

AAC Agenda Newsletter

Audiological Services

Autism Spectrum Disorder Consultation Services

Teacher & Parent Resources

Professional Development

Local Resources & Services

Autism Agenda Newsletter

Deafblindness Services

Deaf or Hard of Hearing Services

Orthopedic Impairment & Occupational-Physical Therapy Services

Traumatic Brain Injury Liaison Services

Visual Impairment Services

Refer a Child for an Evaluation

Cascade Regional Services are accessed through the local early intervention unit or educational agency where the child attends school.

[Refer a child](#)

Cascade Regional Inclusive Services – Contact

Director:

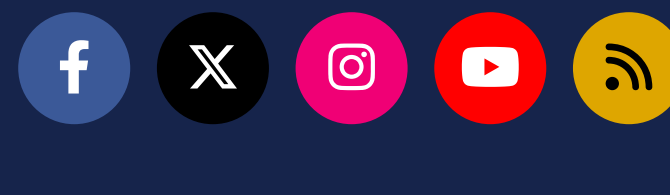
Angie Greenwood

541-812-2770

Admin. Assistant:

Kathy Williams

541-812-2771



[905 4th Avenue SE, Albany, Oregon 97321](#)

[541-812-2600](#)

[Webmaster](#)

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[Kate Marrone](#), Title IX Coordinator (Phone: 541-812-2628)

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