Assistive Technology (AT) Forward April

Greetings Assistive Technology (AT) Forward Community of Practice Members! The AT Forward Update is a monthly publication, which provides information about the AT Forward Project, highlights the upcoming AT Forward Community of Practice (CoP) meetings, and includes additional AT resources and tips. **We are now over 725 Members and growing!**

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Micro-Credentials for Assistive Technology!

The Micro Credential system works off of another site called ATIM. At the present time, it is going through a new facelift. Please be patient with us as we update our forms.

The Assistive Technology (AT) Forward is excited to provide free supported micro-credentials and macro-credentials assistive technology learning opportunities for the

2021-22 school year. Micro-credentialing is an opportunity for educators to learn on their own time, pace, and place. Through this process, you can earn a total of twelve badges for each completed micro-credentials. If you earn seven badges, you will qualify for a macro-credential.   The courses are self-paced and coaching support sessions are available to provide guidance and to answer questions. There are many topics from which you can choose and customize your own learning, including assessment, AAC, vision, transition, etc.   If you would like to register for a micro-credential learning opportunity and join an AT learning community from across the state, please visit the AT Forward Micro-Credentials Home Page. Thank you to the 200 plus people who have started their journey towards earning their Micro- Credentials, and to date, 70 badges have been awarded,

Congratulations to the following individuals for earning their AT Badges!

Shay Lindsey La Crosse School District
Kimberly Lewis McFarland School District: 3 badges
Nichole Nichols School District of Janesville: 7 badges
Claire Habeck Oshkosh Area School District: 6 badges
Jennifer Aney Middleton-Cross Plains School District: 3 badges
Anna Vierck Mount Horeb Area School District
Katherine Prestegard Elmbrook Schools
Kathleen Kasberg Stoughton Area School District: 2 badges

April AT Forward CoP Meeting

April 26th 4:00pm-5:00pm Finding Tools to Meet the Needs of Today's Students. This one hour session will focus on assistive technology tools that are small enough to be portable. Assistive technology that can be carried with a student allows them access in a greater variety of locations. Participants will have the opportunity to share their favorite "in your pocket" tool and examples of such tools will be shared.

What is the Quality Indicator Spotlight for April?

Each month will highlight a Quality Indicator for Assistive Technology, which can easily be utilized to provide training for district staff.   For April, the spotlight is Indicator 5. Indicator 5 is the **Evaluation of Effectiveness of AT.**

"This area addresses the evaluation of the effectiveness of the AT devices and services that are provided to individual students. It includes data collection, documentation and analysis to monitor changes in student performance resulting from the implementation of assistive technology services. Student performance is reviewed in order to identify if,

when, or where modifications and revisions to the implementation are needed." *Indicator 5: **Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Assistive Technology**.* **(2022). Qiat.Org.**
https://qiat.org/indicators/indicator-5-evaluation-of-effectiveness-of-at/

Data collection is essential in determining if Assistive Technology is working for a student. Remember to always return the definition of assistive technology. "…..that is used to **increase, maintain, or improve** functional capabilities of a child with a disability." With this definition in mind, your data should show an increase in skills, a maintenance of skills or an improvement in a skill. Many Assistive Technology programs have built in data collection that can assist with the task of data collection. When looking at data collection, it is important to be specific in what data you are collecting to correctly correlate the students' needs with goals.
Example: Augmentative Communication goal: The student will, when using an SGD, improve their length of speech utterance from just a noun to a noun and a verb. "Go store" Data collection tools can be turned on with an Accent device, Tobii Dynavox device or other SGD.

Common Errors with Assessing Needs for AT (QIAT)

The following pitfalls can result in students not receiving FAPE.
1. "An observable, measurable student behavior is not specified as a target for change." For more information see Monitoring Progress Checklist
2. "Team members do not share responsibility for evaluation of effectiveness. "See Chapter 1 of the ASNAT Manual for information on the Team Process.
3. "An environmentally appropriate means of data collection and strategies has not been identified. "Data collection must be easy to use, appropriate for the goal and take into account the environment. For example, a student who uses a SGD may need external speakers to be heard in a larger classroom or have a method for getting someone's attention.
4. A schedule of program review for possible modification is not determined before implementation begins. For more information on this topic, see the January 10th CoP meeting Assistive Technology in the IEP and Data Collection

Family Connections

With April 2 being World Autism Awareness Day, it is fitting that we look at supports for students with Autism. Recently while traveling in northern Wisconsin this sign appeared.

Raising awareness is important, but access to resources is even more important. This DPI web page has many links for families who are looking for assistance, as does the site for the Autism Society of Southeastern Wisconsin. Assistive Technology for people with autism can range from AAC devices to visual timers and reminders, to pictures supports and software / app that assist with cognitive growth. The website, Autism Speaks, has many tips and suggestions for using Assistive Technology. Another great resource that lists and gives examples of AT and Autism is Assistive Technology for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

What is the Assessing Student's Needs for Assistive Technology (ASNAT)?

ASNAT is the acronym for the manual and process of assessment in the area of Assistive Technology. If your school district would benefit from a step-by-step AT assessment guide, this is the manual for you. This link will take you to the entire manual, but we suggest that you break it down into manageable sections. This month we will look at Chapter 16 Funding.

Assessing Students' Needs for Assistive Technology. (2022). Wati.Org. http://www.wati.org/free-publications/assessing-students-needs-for-assistive-technology/page/2/

Why is funding important? Funding or lack thereof cannot be a reason for not providing AT to students in need. "Under IDEA school districts must make available the specific assistive technology devices and services that are needed by a child to benefit from his or her special education program" …."They (schools) have a responsibility to make a basic array of equipment available for training purposes and to provide any individual piece of technology that is needed to meet the goals and objectives…" *Assessing Students' Needs for*

Assistive Technology. (2022). Wati.Org. http://www.wati.org/free-publications/assessing-students-needs-for-assistive-technology/page/2/

This is yet another reason why it is important for school districts to look into tools that are UDL. However, it should be noted that if a student NEEDS AT, it should be documented in the IEP and not passed over when considering the student's needs just because UDL tools are available.

When considering a tool, such as a speech generating device, it is important to think about the needs of the family as well as the school. If your school decides to explore Medical Assistance or private insurance be prepared to increase your data collection efforts and provide a very detailed report. Another consideration for SGD is TEPP funding. This allows a family to own a device for $100.00 out of pocket cost. Lastly don't be afraid to seek out organizations like the Lions Clubs or Rotary Clubs. (service clubs often have scholarships available to help ALL students seeking higher education.) Community organizations often fund SGD for students or help with Smart Home Devices.

AAC Corner - Switch Access

Last month we explored AAC access by eye gaze. This month let's look at students who cannot access devices through eye gaze or direct selection. These students need and desire good rich literacy experiences including the right to protest, question, request and gain the attention of others. Looking at the SETT process it teaches us to look at what the student can and cannot accomplish indepently. This would lead us to the tasks that the student needs to accomplish. Often when working with students with significant needs people jump to requesting specific items. This may or may not be what motivates the student or just stating a noun leaves too much room for interpretation (the function is lost.) A wise woman by the name of Kelly Fonner says "We don't want kids to be just noun pickers!" Check out her website for more information.

For examples of possible AAC goals, see PrAACtical AAC- Goals that matter.

If you are looking for more information on how to get your students to use a switch, Rosemary Bogart & Paul Visvader 2009, put together a great whitepaper called "Got+Switch+What".

Linda Burkhart also has a wonderful whitepaper from 2018 that discusses how to teach switch accessibility. Check it out!

The ATLC Library has many devices that have the capabilities to use switch technology. They are the Tobii Dynavox I-110, I-12, I-13 and I-16; and the Accent 1000, 800 and 1400, and the Nova Chat 10, and 12.

Where can I turn if I have an Assistive Technology question? Join the [QIAT Listserv](#)

The QIAT Listserv is a place where anyone - user, educator, parent, caregiver, anyone, can post a question concerning Assistive Technology. Join the list and participate in the conversations. Together we can all make a difference.

Recently this question was posted: **"How do we serve children with disabilities in private schools?"** The link will take you to a Q&A issued by OSEP on children in private schools and FAPE. It was issued on 2/22.
https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/QA_on_Private_Schools_02-28-2022.pdf

Resource of the Month

Are you looking for a process to begin your district's AT journey? On the [DPI web page](#), you will find all 64 pages of the WATI Assessment pages. It will give you and your team members a step-by-step process on how to complete an assistive technology assessment.
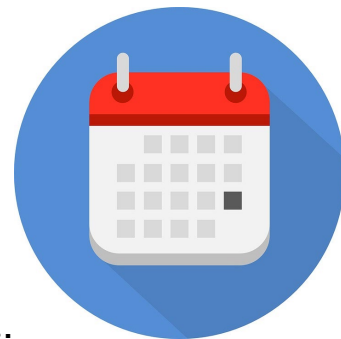
Sometimes all we need to do is start a conversation....

April 2 was [World Autism Awareness Day](#). Students with autism use AAC devices, timers, visuals and many other AT devices. See the section above Family Connections for great links to low, mid and high-tech devices.

Month of April [Limb Loss Awareness](#) If you have ever tried to do something with one hand you know how frustrating it can be. This free resource from [inMotion Magazine](#) offers stories, inspiration and equipment ideas to help anyone who is missing a limb.

Month of April [Paralyzed Veterans Across America Month](#). Looking to inspire a student or young person who is paralyzed? [Read this article](#) all about technology, work and being a productive member of society.

Upcoming AT Forward CoP Meetings:

April 26, 2022: [Finding Tools to Fit the Needs of Today's Students](#)
May 11, 2022: [Non-Academic Activities: Engaging Students in Social and Leisure Activities](#)
May 19, 2022: [Supporting Students with Medical Complexities](#)

Let's move AT Forward together this year!

If you have any questions or comments about the AT Forward Project, please contact Kathy White at Kathy.White@CESA2.org or Stacy Duffy at stacy.duffy@cesa2.org.