



## **Happy Assistive Technology Awareness Day!**

On March 1, the U.S. Senate will pass a resolution to shed important light and celebrate National Assistive Technology (AT) Awareness Day. The day honors people with disabilities who require AT to access their education, workplace, community, and recreational activities. The day also recognizes the leadership of the Assistive Technology Act programs whose teams strive to help millions of individuals acquire low-cost and often no-cost AT in all 50 states and Territories.

Join us to celebrate [#ATAwarenessDay!](https://ataporg.org/national-at-awareness-day/) <https://ataporg.org/national-at-awareness-day/>

## **New to AT Forward or Want to Browse Past Email Updates?**

Go to the Wisconsin DPI [AT Forward webpage](#) and click on [Previous AT Forward Monthly Updates](#).

## ***What is AT Forward?***

The Assistive Technology (AT) Forward Project works with educators, practitioners, caregivers, and families to increase student autonomy in utilizing Assistive Technology tools to support access, engagement, and progress in learning. The AT Forward Project provides a variety of resources and learning opportunities, including [Community of Practice \(CoP\) meetings](#), [micro-credentialing](#), and monthly email updates. Please help us grow our AT community in Wisconsin and refer others to the [AT Forward CoP](#), by visiting the [AT Forward Registration page](#).

From AT beginner to expert, the AT Forward CoP welcomes all knowledge level backgrounds!

## ***Table of Contents***

The **table of contents** below is designed so you can quickly jump to various sections of this update. You can also search this document using the command “Control F,” with a keyword to search for specific information. All monthly AT Forward [Updates](#) are stored electronically as resources on the AT Forward website.

- [ATLC Survey](#)
- [Upcoming AT Forward CoP Meetings](#)
- [Micro-Credentials Update](#)
- [Resource Suggestions](#)
- [Sometimes All We Need to Do Is Start a Conversation....](#)

- [AAC Corner](#)
- [QIAT Question](#)
- [What is a feature match?](#) Math

### **Assistive Technology Lending Center (ATLC) Survey**

Wisconsin DPI has a one-year additional investment in the Wisconsin Assistive Technology Lending Center to invest in low and mid-tech assistive technology (AT) equipment. This investment can address any type of AT need (e.g. communication, physical, social and emotional, etc). DPI and AT Forward would like your input on how you think this funding should be used (i.e. what equipment to purchase for the lending center).

The Assistive Technology Lending Center (ATLC) is a lending library that currently only includes high-end Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) equipment for trial purposes. The ATLC provides these high-end AAC devices costing \$4000.00 or more for loan to Wisconsin LEA public school licensed professional educators for trial with children ages 3 to 18 who have IEPs and are enrolled in public schools or students age 19-21 who are enrolled in a Wisconsin LEA school program and have an IEP.

Thank you for helping us think about what types of low and mid-tech AT equipment could enhance the ATLC.

[Click to Take the ATLC Survey](#)

### **Upcoming AT Forward CoP Meetings**

Please mark your calendars for the upcoming AT Forward CoP meetings:

March 1, 2023, 4:00pm.-5:00p.m. [Providing Accessible Educational Materials; How to monitor progress using AEM](#). This is the final session of the four-part AEM series and will focus on how to collect and utilize data to support AEM progress monitoring.

AEM series' recordings and presentation slides are available to learn about AEM or engage in a refresher from the CoP meeting schedule section, [AEM in Wisconsin: Are You Ready?](#)

March 7, 2023, 4:00pm-5:00pm. : [Executive Function Skills and the Impact on Behavior in the Classroom](#) presented by Paige Buckingham. Do you want to help your students organize their materials, regulate behavior, or follow classroom routines? Then this training is for you. We will look at different Executive Function Skills, the impact in the classroom, and how you can adjust daily activities to model these to aid in your students learning skills for life. A variety of AT Tools will be discussed.

April 18, 2023, 4:00pm-5:00pm.: [AT Assessment—Where Do I Start?](#) Presented by Dr. Penny Reed. This session will present a team-based system for completing an Assistive Technology assessment. Through this presentation participants will understand the requirements for assessing a student's need for assistive technology, review the Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative (WATI) forms for completing an assistive technology assessment, and participants will learn about a variety of assistive technology assessment tools to use in their practice.

April 26, 2023 Time: 4:00pm.-5:00p.m. [AT and Postsecondary Education: University of Wisconsin McBurney Disability Resource Center](#) presented by Gwynette Hall. Have you wondered about what assistive/adaptive technology resources are available at the postsecondary education level? Then join Gwynette Hall and Todd Schwanke from the University of Wisconsin-Madison McBurney Disability Resource Center for this session. The session will include information on how IEP teams can help support the transition from high school to postsecondary education, including what assistive/adaptive technology may look like at the university/postsecondary level and how is it different from secondary education.

### **Other AT Professional Learning Events**

If you know of a learning event, please share it with others by emailing Kathy White at [kathy.white@CESA2.org](mailto:kathy.white@CESA2.org) with the details.

[ECHO \(Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes\)](#) will hold sessions on the following dates: March 1, April 5th and May 3rd. The sessions will be from 3:30pm - 5:00pm. The themes of the spring session will all be around how to support families with the use of AAC devices.

The **Waisman Center** is excited to announce a professional learning opportunity for early childhood professionals on including learners with disabilities in early childhood programs. [This 5-session ECHO series](#) will be offered April of 2023. The sessions will be for early childhood teachers, administrators, paraeducators, and specialists who want to enhance their understanding of inclusive practices.

**Project ECHO®** is a lifelong learning and guided practice model that is designed to build capacity of individuals around the state to provide evidence-based services. The heart of the [ECHO](#) model is its hub-and-spoke knowledge-sharing networks. Hub teams (specialists and family members) and spokes (ECHO participants) create knowledge-sharing networks in a learning loop.

If you are interested in this opportunity please fill out this survey. [Link to the interest survey](#)

**The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH)** is hosting a free cybersecurity camp for high school students with visual impairments. Camp will be held at the UAH campus in Huntsville, AL, on Sunday, June 4, through Friday, June 9, 2023. All meals and lodging will be provided at no cost and transportation assistance is available. Students will learn cybersecurity skills and concepts through hands-on activities. No previous cybersecurity experience is needed, but basic computer skills are required. Camp is designed to be accessible for students with visual impairments. Campers are encouraged to bring assistive technology. Space is limited and you are encouraged to apply as soon as possible! For more information contact [GenCyber@uah.edu](mailto:GenCyber@uah.edu)

## **Micro-Credentials Update**

The AT Forward is excited to provide free supported micro-credentials and macro-credentials for assistive technology learning opportunities. Micro-credentialing is an opportunity for educators to learn on their own time, pace, and place. Learning is structured in an online platform and is supported with email and video conference communication to enable clarity and success. As participants complete their micro-credentials, they receive feedback to assist in clarifying their goals and earn a digital badge. Digital badges can be added to your email signature to show others your commitment to assistive technology. For the 2022-23 school year, we are excited to announce new learning opportunities around Accessible Educational Materials (AEM), Early Childhood, and AT for Administrators.

### ***Micro Credential status:***

We are pleased to announce the following celebrations:

209 badges have been awarded to date.

19% of the badges earned have been in the area of access and device access for AT tools.

Congratulations to the following people who have earned one or more micro-credentials in Assistive Technology:

Terri Oliver-School District of Milton: 8 badges Terri has earned her *Marco Credentials*

Holly Dart-University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh: 2 badges

Ronald Basler-University of Wisconsin Oshkosh: 2 badges

Alison Vlietstra-DC Everest School District: 2 badges

Alicia Frank-Edgerton Hospital and Health Services: 2 badges  
Mysie Sabin-Muskego Norway School District: 3 badges  
Frank Devereaux- CESA 2: 1 badge  
Laura Johnson- Clinton Community School District: 1 badge  
Marie Yakes- Milton School District: 2 badges  
Hailey Boyer-Green Bay Area Public School District: 1 badge  
Nicole Swets-Madison Metropolitan School District: 2 badges

## Resource Suggestions

Finding a curriculum that assists students in learning digital skills is difficult in that the digital landscape changes daily. However, Google has done just that! They have created a free site that contains hundreds of video-based lessons for students grades 7-12 or any adult learner. The lessons were created to assist with preparing students and adults for jobs in the digital space. “We believe that every student in every school deserves to have access to the tools and digital skills that will set them up for success in the job market of today – and tomorrow.” (*The Applied Digital Skills Program - Grow with Google* . (2023). Grow. Google. <https://grow.google/applied-digital-skills/>

The site goes on to state “Applied Digital Skills also includes lessons that link digital skills with important technology topics. Lessons like – [Technology’s Role in Current Events](#), [Technology, Ethics and Security](#), [Technology at Work](#), and [Equal Access to Technology](#) – encourage self-directed research that highlights students’ creativity and critical thinking skills.” If you are using Google Classroom tools, these lessons will link easily and quickly into your classroom.

Looking for a Bookstudy? Karen Erickson’s book [Comprehensive Literacy for All](#) has been out for a few years and is an excellent read for teachers, and parents. Erickson’s knowledge around increasing literacy skills for all learners has produced a huge following on Facebook. Over 5,000 educators share ideas and thoughts in this [book study community](#).

## Sometimes All We Need To Do Is Start A Conversation....

[March is Disability Awareness Month](#). It was first declared on February 26, 1987 by President Ronald Reagan with the Proclamation 5613. The proclamation called for ... “understanding, encouragement and opportunities to help persons with disabilities to lead productive and fulfilling lives.” Assistive technology can play a huge role in assisting people with disabilities in securing work, living independently and traveling safely.

Checkout the resources below and start a conversation today that is open, and inclusive. Other disabilities that are recognized in March are:

[Developmental Disability Awareness Month](#)

[Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month](#)

[Epilepsy Awareness March 26th](#)

[Brain Injury Awareness Month](#)

## **AAC Corner**

As a reminder, the Assistive Technology Lending Center(ATLC) library website has been changed to <https://wisconsinat4all.com/>. After you are registered, login and click on Speech Communication; the program field should fill in as ATLC. All devices will show up or you can search for a specific device. If you have any questions, please contact Donna Hudson at CESA 2 [donna.hutson@cesa2.org](mailto:donna.hutson@cesa2.org) or call 262.473.1449.

## **AAC**

When someone has difficulties communicating or using their own voice it can be very isolating. Just imagine if you had no ability to communicate with anyone or were only given 3 buttons that said “I need to use the bathroom,” “ I need a drink” and “yes.” Of course, you would be frustrated! When assisting students and families with AAC devices, we need to use the SETT format (Student, Environment, Task and Tools) , to reduce the barriers to learning communication and increase the acceptance of an alternative type of communication. Let’s start with the student by listing out the students’ strengths, needs and wants. Also, remember to include pets, siblings, friends and phrases that children or adults use at whatever age the person is at. For example a teenager may not want to use the word “hello” as a greeting but something else like “Hey, hey!” Next, look at the environment, which includes all parts of the student’s day, weekends, community places they may attend, work, sports events and so on. You are really looking at things that will excite them to be able to communicate to others. When exploring AAC for a student, you want the student to buy in, and that comes from being excited about communicating and showing the student that with communication comes power; this can be the task. For example, adding a button to a device so a student can call a pet or activate a smart assistant (“Hey Alexa”) to play their favorite song gives them power. You can even think about adding words that could get them in trouble. We all have the right to free speech, but we also need to remember that by saying certain words we might have consequences. For more information on the topic of swearing, see “[You Said What?! Exploring AAC Access to Profanity, Swearing, and Slang](#)” ( This training was brought to you by [WisTech](#).)

The task in the SETT process needs to be purposeful and exciting for our students in school and at home. As we look at the tasks and environment, we also need to think through the barriers for the listeners or communication partners. Take time to educate others in your community, and school about communication etiquette. For example, talk to the person who is using the device, not the caregiver or other adults with voices. Give the person time to create their message. Be a good listener. Respect their screens and space - don't stand over them and try to guess their message. For more information on AAC etiquette, see the blog from [Coughdrop](#).

## QIAT Question

Have you ever wished there was a place where you could ask a question and get real people who use technology to answer you? Then [Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology](#) (qiat.org) is the place for you! QIAT is a nationwide organization of parents, users, and professionals in the field of Assistive Technology. It is a free to join organization that is always accepting new members.

*Question:* "Does anyone have any suggestions for a Chrome extension that reduces ads and clutter from screen?"

## QIAT community, help me out!

*Answers from the group:* Try these Chrome extensions:

[Postlight Reader](#) Clear away the clutter from all of your articles at no cost.

[Read&Write](#) Simplify Page" feature will remove the distractions.

[Snap&Read](#) also has a "Remove Distractions" feature.

[Google](#) has developed a Reading Mode. Follow the link for directions.

## What is a feature match?

Feature matching occurs when you look systematically at what a student needs and the features of various programs. Below is an example of feature matching as it relates to students who display difficulties in the areas of math.

When completing an evaluation, it is important to look at the student's disability-related educational needs. To further assist with this process, explore this resource on the DPI site that looks at the six areas of academic and functional skill. "Specifically, they are

intended to serve as a guide for developing, reflecting on, and organizing developmentally and educationally relevant questions when planning and conducting a comprehensive special education evaluation aimed at accurately identifying a student's pattern of strengths and disability-related needs.” *Comprehensive Special Education Evaluation: Six Areas of Academic and Functional Skill | Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. (2022).* Dpi.Wi.Gov. <https://dpi.wi.gov/sped/ccr-ieps/comp-eval/six-areas>

Feature matching occurs when you look systematically at what a student needs and the features of various programs.

When conducting an IEP and having the conversation about “whether the student needs assistive technology services or devices,” consider asking these types of questions listed in the chart below concerning the area of math. Does my student have....?

<b>Area of Student Concern- Math</b>	<b>Potential Solution Feature Match</b>
Student has difficulties reading math problems.	Consider programs that read quotations out loud to the student such as Snap&Read Consider a talking calculator  Other considerations are: text to speech, electronic math worksheets, change font/size, increase spacing, use of visuals or pictures symbols
Student finds it difficult to understand the language or literacy of math.	Consider programs that simplify the text or read the text out loud, translation programs or the addition of picture symbols
Student struggles with the visual alignment of math programs.	Consider graph paper or turn regular lined paper in a column format
Student finds it difficulty with multiple step directions or processes in a math program.	Consider task analysis of the skills and list out the skills needed



Student has physical challenges with writing math problems.	Consider drag and drop programs such as those listed <a href="http://Dyscalculia.org">Dyscalculia.org</a> or <a href="http://Washington Ed">Washington Ed</a> .
Student has a physical or sensory impairment that makes holding or using a ruler difficult.	Consider using a larger print, high contrast tactile symbols and or a talking ruler or tape measure, digital ruler, <a href="#">Rollova</a> Consider low tech options such as number stamps, magnetic numbers, stencils, or tactile numbers
Student has difficulties with the computation part of math.	Consider a calculator or even a calculator that talks or has colored function keys <a href="#">Talking calculator app</a> <a href="#">Jumbo Talking Calculator in English</a> <a href="#">Talking calculators</a>
Student has difficulties with identification of coins.	Consider apps that use artificial intelligence to identify the coin and values such as <a href="#">Coinoscope: visual coin search</a>
Student has difficulties using a calculator due to the size of the buttons or other access methods.	Consider a large button calculator, or an on screen calculator

Potential resources/suggestions to assist students with math.

Thank you, Amy Snow, for the following recommendation:

[Desmos](#) is a free app and online tool that has many accessible features as well as an ability to reduce the number of buttons and or calculator functions. The graphic below shows that you can set the calculator to show the tools for graphing, scientific, four function, and more. Some of the accessibility options are screenwriting functions, speak typed characters, speak typed words, and multiple keyboard shortcuts. The tool works on many different platforms including Windows, IOS, and Chrome.

Looking for a **Free Whiteboard App**? Try [Math Whiteboard](#) or [Virtual Graph Paper](#)

Together we can move AT Forward!!