

North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program Procedural Guidance

Reference: Assistive Technology Policy

Assistive Technology Loan

Introduction

These procedures are for the loan program outlined in the North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program (NC ITP) Infant-Toddler Services Policy and Assistive Technology (AT) Policy. **The guidelines provided here are not meant to encompass all aspects of the policy or procedural guidance.**

The current **Loan Administrator of the NC Infant-Toddler Program's Assistive Technology Loan Program** is J. Iverson Riddle Developmental Center (JIRDC)/Family Infant Preschool Program (FIPP), 300 Enola Road, Morganton, NC 28655, Phone: (828) 438-6502, Fax: (828) 438-6503.

Procedures

1. Identification of Concern

When a family expresses concern(s) about their child's development and participation in daily routines and activities, a functional outcome is developed. If the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) team agrees that some category of assistive technology (AT) may be needed by the child and family in order to achieve the established outcome(s), the exploration of assistive technology begins. AT services are added to the service delivery page through IFSP review with date of parent signature as start date. AT services encompasses assessment and equipment trial, adaptation of items in the home, regular monitoring by Service Coordinator and treating therapist, training and technical assistance for family and professionals, and purchasing. The *Assistive Technology (AT) Framework and/or the Assistive Technology Coaching Conversation* can be used as a guide for decision making when the IFSP team agrees that some category of AT may be needed by a child and family to achieve an established outcome. Devices/items requiring an AT Framework include all weighted or compressions vests, standers, strollers, activity chairs, gait trainers, reflux wedges, and Bionix straws. Weighted and compression vests require an additional approval by the CDSA Director. CDSAs have the option of requiring the use of the AT framework for all loans but this is not mandatory.

2. Assessment and Equipment Trial Loan

Assessment and equipment trial loans occur while the IFSP team is in the decision-making process regarding assistive technology needs of the child and family. These loans are made to a family/child in consultation with the IFSP team and can remain in the family's natural environment for trials and daily routines. The 30-day timely service compliance timeline does not apply; however, requests for trial loans should be sent to JIRDC as soon as possible so that their staff can secure and deliver the requested AT devices in a timely manner.

- a. The process of assessment and trials must be included as methods and strategies to achieve specific outcome(s) on the child's ***NC ITP Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)***.
- b. The EI Service Coordinator (EISC) completes the ***NC ITP Assistive Technology Loan Request Form***, as decided by the IFSP team for assessment and equipment trial and submits the form via fax or email (which is encrypted or password protected according to DHHS policies related to transmitting PII) to JIRDC within **five** business days of discussion. AT will not be loaned until the AT framework is completed for required list. The request form is to be completed on an AT device whether the device is housed at the CDSA's AT Library or at the AT Loan Program Library in Morganton.
- c. JIRDC personnel enter device name(s) and inventory number(s) on the ***NC ITP Assistive Technology Loan Agreement-Form*** and provide requested device and loan agreement form to the EISC via fax or encrypted/password protected email. JIRDC has the right to substitute equipment if the requested piece is not available.
- d. The EISC arranges for acquisition of the assistive technology device(s) by the provider or family and secures the family's initials and signature on the ***NC ITP Assistive Technology Loan Agreement-Form*** acknowledging receipt of device(s). The treating therapist may receive equipment to deliver to the family when adjustment of equipment and training is necessary. The provider can secure the signature of the parent(s) on the AT Loan Agreement form and return the signed form to the Service Coordinator.
- e. JIRDC is available throughout the length of the trial loan for technical support through the CDSA AT Contact.
- f. The EISC should follow up with the family and IFSP team within 90 days of delivery of device on trial to make decision on moving to Specific Device Loan or exploring additional equipment. This should be documented by the EISC in a service note.

3. Specific Device Loan

Once an assistive technology device is selected, the device is added to the ***NC ITP IFSP Service Delivery Plan*** and made available to the child and family. Moving directly to Specific Device Loan can occur without moving through Assessment and Equipment trial.

- a. The assistive technology is listed on the ***Service Delivery Plan*** of the ***NC ITP IFSP*** and written parental consent for provision of the service is obtained on the ***NC ITP IFSP Agreement or Review Section***. If the equipment is currently in home, an IFSP review is needed but another AT Loan Request is not necessary.

NOTE: When adding assistive technology to the IFSP, listing the type or class of device (Example 1: AT/Augmentative Communication/Voice Output; Example 2: AT/Mobility/Gait Trainer) is recommended as opposed to listing the specific name or brand of the device.

- b. If the equipment is not already in the home through Assessment and Equipment trial, the EISC completes the ***NC ITP Assistive Technology Loan Request Form*** for specific device(s) and submits to JIRDC within five business days of parental consent on the IFSP.
- c. JIRDC personnel enter device name(s) and inventory number(s) on the ***NC ITP Assistive Technology Loan Agreement Form*** and provide requested device and loan agreement form to the

EISC via fax or encrypted/password protected email. JIRDC has the right to substitute equipment if the requested piece is not available.

- d. The EISC arranges for acquisition of the assistive technology device(s) by the provider or family and secures the family 's initials and signature on the ***NC ITP Assistive Technology Loan Agreement Form*** acknowledging receipt of device(s). The treating therapist may receive equipment to deliver to the family when adjustment of equipment and training is necessary. The provider can secure signature of the family on AT Loan Agreement and return signed form to Service Coordinator
- e. JIRDC is available throughout the length of the loan for technical support through the CDSA AT Contact.
- f. At least every 90 days, the EISC should monitor and document the continued need of equipment to meet the outcome, any necessary adjustments to fitting of equipment to child, condition/repair of equipment, use of equipment by family during daily routines and to begin discussion of possible purchase. If the child continues to need the loan, purchasing should be explored if this is something that will grow with the child. Equipment will not be removed from the home at the 90-day checkpoint if it is determined to be an ongoing need and continues to be used successfully.

4. Device Procurement Procedures

When the ***NC ITP Assistive Technology Loan Agreement Form*** is received, JIRDC will determine the most efficient method of procuring and delivering the device(s) to the requesting CDSA. JIRDC has the right to substitute equipment if the requested piece is not available. This needed device may be:

- a. located at the requesting CDSA;
- b. located at another CDSA location; or
- c. shipped or delivered from JIRDC.

CDSAs will not be responsible for any fees associated with shipment of assistive technology or be expected to pick up/drop off AT devices. JIRDC will ensure that all devices leaving the facility will be clean, in proper working order and have batteries (if appropriate). If the AT device(s) is too large to mail, JIRDC will ensure delivery of device(s) in a timely manner.

Upon receipt of the assistive technology device, the requesting CDSA shall complete a final check to ensure that the device meets safety and cleanliness standards and includes batteries (if appropriate) prior to releasing the device to a family or service provider. The EISC will facilitate an inspection at the time of delivery of the device(s) by the family, who may request a notation be made about the condition of the device on the ***NC ITP Assistive Technology Loan Agreement Form***.

5. Families moving to a new CDSA catchment area

There are times when a family enrolled in the NC Infant -Toddler Program may move from one CDSA catchment area to another. If the family has loaned Assistive Technology that is part of the JIRDC inventory, please follow these procedures:

- a. The ***AT Return/Transfer Form*** is to be completed by the EISC from the sending CDSA when a family moves to a new CDSA catchment area and the child will remain enrolled in the NC ITP. All

AT equipment currently supported by the IFSP is to be transferred with the child. The person responsible for completing the *AT Return/Transfer Form* Transfer section (EISC) checks off what equipment is being transferred with the family when moving to a new CDSA catchment area and enters the date of transfer. The EISC enters the date of transfer, the name of the receiving CDSA (the name of the CDSA catchment area where the family is moving to), the name of the new EISC, and any comments regarding the transfer. The EISC should inform the new EISC of the AT equipment as part of the transfer information. The EISC submits the *AT Return/Transfer Form* with the Transfer section completed to JIRDC within three (3) days of being notified that the child is moving to another CDSA. A copy of the *AT Loan Agreement Form* and the *Return-Transfer Form* should be included during the transfer process, per the Record Transfer Procedures. JIRDC forwards a copy of the forms to the new CDSA's AT Contact to inform him/her as to what AT equipment the child has.

6. Return Procedures

Loaned devices should initially be returned to the CDSA originating the loan unless a child moves to a new CDSA catchment area and the transfer paperwork has been submitted. Each CDSA will establish local procedures for processing loan returns, such as designating a location for loan returns and notifying the CDSA AT Contact or designee of the return. Within five business days of the return, the CDSA AT Contact or designee will send the *NC ITP Assistive Technology Return-Transfer Form* to JIRDC, including:

- a. Device(s) returned including item name and inventory control number(s)
- b. Date returned to CDSA
- c. Condition of device:
 - Ready for Re-loan
 - Missing Parts
 - Needs Repair
 - Needs Extensive Cleaning
 - Damaged Beyond Repair
 - Lost Equipment
 - Stolen Equipment
- d. Ensure equipment is functional for reloan
- e. Preferred Disposition of Device:
 - Leave at CDSA
 - Return to another CDSA
 - Return to JIRDC

Upon return of the assistive technology device to the CDSA, JIRDC will contact the CDSA AT contact if a device housed at one CDSA is needed for transfer to another CDSA. JIRDC will arrange for transport. The CDSA will not be responsible for any fees associated with shipping of the device(s).

7. Single Use Items

Single use items such as adaptive spoons, cups, bottles, bowls, straws, should be requested by EISC for inventory purposes (unless owned by the CDSA). An *AT Loan Request Form* is required. An AT Loan Agreement is not required.

8. Cleaning Devices and Safety Check

JIRDC will provide cleaning supplies to CDSAs for the purpose of cleaning returned devices. The CDSA AT Contact will ensure that the returned device is cleaned and all batteries removed prior to returning to inventory and should notify JIRDC in the event that a device requires extensive cleaning. The CDSA AT Contact should notify JIRDC in the event that there is a high rate of returns in a given time period. In this event, JIRDC will provide assistance to the CDSA to ensure the devices are cleaned. Ensure all equipment is safe and functional for reloan.

9. Repair and Replacement of Device

The CDSA AT Contact will notify JIRDC if a device requires repair. JIRDC will make arrangements to pick up the device for servicing, purchasing repair part(s), and/or contacting vendors for assistance. The AT Contact will notify JIRDC if device is unsafe for loan.

10. Confidentiality of Information

JIRDC is considered a participating agency (i.e., any contracted agency that collects, maintains, or uses personally identifiable information [PII] to implement the requirements and regulations of IDEA Part C with respect to a particular child). Therefore, the CDSA can disclose PII without parent authorization to JIRDC. Prior to sharing of information, the EISC must ensure that the PII being shared with JIRDC is on a need to know basis, specific to the child needing AT device(s), that the parent(s) are informed of the communication between the CDSA and JIRDC, and that the information to be shared is supported by the child's IFSP.

11. Exchange of Information

Electronic communication is typically the most efficient way to communicate information between the CDSA and JIRDC. CDSAs and JIRDC must ensure that when communicating in any form, personally identifiable information (PII) for children and families is protected. The following procedures must be followed when sharing personally identifiable information to procure assistive technology loans from JIRDC:

- a. PII should never be included in an email subject line or body of an email.
- b. Encryption or password protection of all attachments is required if there is any Personally Identifiable Information (see below) in the communication.

As defined by Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the term "*Personally Identifiable Information*" includes, but is not limited to:

- a. The child's name;
- b. The name of the child's parent or other family members;

- c. The address of the child or child's family;
- d. A personal identifier, such as the child's social security number, or child number;
- e. Other indirect identifiers, such as the child's date of birth, place of birth, and mother's maiden name;
- f. Other information that, alone or in combination, is linked or linkable to a specific child that would allow a reasonable person in the community, who does not have personal knowledge of the relevant circumstances, to identify the child with reasonable certainty; or
- g. Information requested by a person whom the participating agency reasonably believes knows the identity of the child to whom the early intervention record relates.