

First Steps provides assistive technology devices when the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) team determines a device is necessary to improve or maintain the child's functioning in one or more developmental area. The team should carefully consider all available options, including the appropriateness and usefulness of a device. First Steps does not provide assistive technology devices to meet the medical, life sustaining or common everyday needs for a child. The IFSP team may consider the following questions when determining the appropriateness of assistive technology devices.

### **IFSP Outcomes**

- What strategies have worked and not worked to assist in the child's development?
- What are the current outcomes?
- Which IFSP outcome requires the strategy to obtain a device?
- Which daily routines will be improved with the use of this device?
- How will the child's progress with the device be monitored?

### **Child's Skills and Abilities**

- Is the child making progress with current IFSP strategies and activities?
- Is the device developmentally appropriate given the child's current skills and abilities?
- How will this device help the child participate in daily routines and activities?
- Would the child need this device regardless of having a disability?
- Is the child able to tolerate using the device?

### **Family's Concerns and Resources**

- What are the family's questions and/or concerns about the device?
- What are the family's expectations for the device?
- Can this device be easily integrated into the family's daily routines and activities?
- How manageable is the device for the family (e.g., ability to move, function)?
- How much training is required for caregivers to use the device?
- Will the child's environment accommodate the size of the device (e.g., home, child care)?
- Would the family need this device regardless of the child's disability?

### **Time Considerations**

- How long will it take the SPOE Director to acquire the device?
- Will the child have enough time to utilize the device and make progress before exiting First Steps?
- How quickly will the child outgrow the device?

### **Device Considerations**

- What are the specific features of the device that meet the needs of the child?
- Is the device currently available in the child's natural environment?
- Can the device be adapted or made?
- Can the outcome be met with a low technology device or is a higher technology device required?
- Is there a loan or rental program for the device the team could suggest to the SPOE Director?
- Is there a specific brand or modification that the team could suggest to the SPOE Director?

## Assistive Technology Devices in First Steps

The following are examples of items that are considered and are not considered assistive technology devices in First Steps. This is not an exhaustive list and is intended to provide guidance for decisions regarding assistive technology devices.

### Items Considered Assistive Technology Devices

- Devices to improve or maintain self-help skills and functional abilities related to daily living activities. Examples include adapted feeding utensils, devices that assist with seating and positioning (e.g., prone standers), and insertions and adaptations necessary to correctly position or support a child. These devices may include adaptations to common items such as car seats and strollers.
- Devices to improve or maintain functional mobility. Examples include orthotics, walkers, therapeutic strollers and wheel chairs.
- Vision and hearing aids for children with diagnosed visual impairments and hearing impairments. Examples include eyeglasses, external contact lenses, magnifiers and assistive listening devices (e.g., hearing aids or other forms of amplification).
- Accessories and maintenance items for the care, protection and use of assistive technology devices, including devices purchased outside of First Steps. Examples include an eyeglass case, lens cleaning wipes, ear molds and dry aid jars.
- Devices to improve or maintain communication skills and development consistent with expectations for age-appropriate development. Examples include communication boards, augmentative and alternative communication aids, dedicated communication devices and more complex communication systems.
- Devices to improve or maintain cognitive development. Examples include adapted toys with auditory signals for children with visual impairments, switches and necessary connections to toys in order for the child to be more independent in the natural environment.

### Items Not Considered Assistive Technology Devices

- Common items typically needed by all children. Examples include car seats, high chairs, youth beds, play tables, bath seats, infant swings, potty chairs and strollers.
- Toys not adapted for children with disabilities. Examples include building blocks, dolls, puzzles, balls and other common play materials used by all children and not specifically designed for children with disabilities.
- Equipment or medical supplies solely related to a medical condition, chronic illness unrelated to the child's disability and developmental status, or life-sustaining in nature. Examples include medical equipment such as suction machines, feeding pumps, nebulizers, ventilators, apnea monitors, neuromuscular stimulators for shock treatment and pulse oximeters.
- Standard equipment and supplies used by providers delivering early intervention services, regardless of the service setting or preferred methodology. Examples include tables, desks, chairs, therapy mats, therapy balls, vestibular swings, treadmills, listening tapes, special CDs and head phones. This equipment should be provided or loaned to the family by the provider.
- Medical devices that are surgically implanted, including cochlear implants and accessories, or the optimization (e.g., mapping), maintenance and replacement of such devices.
- Warranties or product protection plans for devices purchased by First Steps or outside of First Steps. Examples include warranties for wheelchairs, FM systems and hearing aids.
- Structural modifications or construction to the family's home. Examples include wheelchair ramps, stair or doorway expansions.