

# Installing Assistive Technology Hardware Devices

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Computers are instrumental in teaching MSSD students. Most of our schools have a computer equipped with hardware and software specifically designed for students with disabilities. This assistive technology (AT) provides additional accessibility for those who cannot utilize a computer equipped with a standard monitor, keyboard and mouse. AT products give necessary access for these students to use a computer for learning, communicating and playing games. The following is a guide on how to install AT hardware, as well as some suggestions on choosing AT devices. ♦



Touch screen

Touch screens/monitors replace the regular mouse. (Touch screens must be plugged into the USB port before loading the software.)



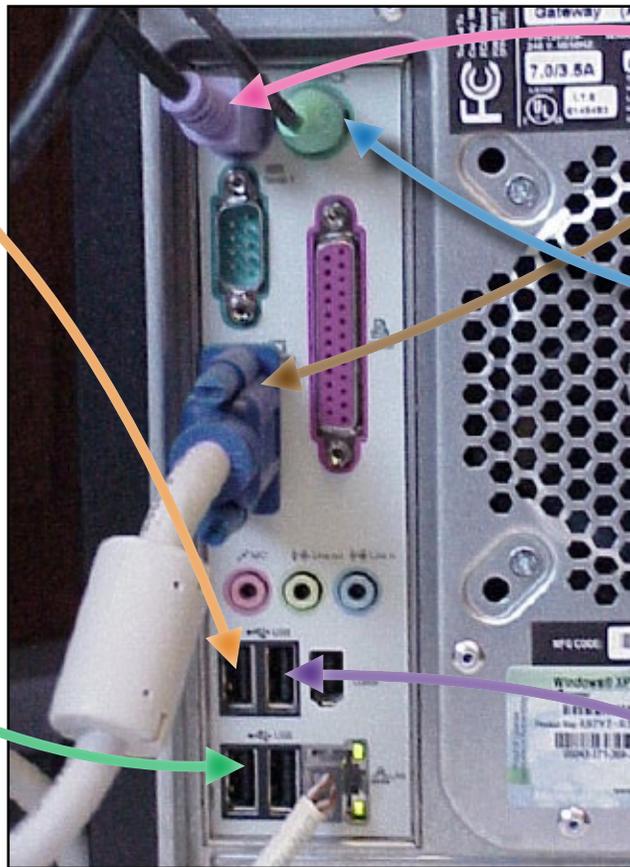
USB Switch Interface  
(Photo courtesy of AbleNet Inc.)

A switch interface links a single switch and the computer. The interface connects to the computer through the USB port.



Big Red® switch  
(Photo courtesy of AbleNet Inc.)

A switch may be used instead of a mouse. (Switches cannot be plugged directly into the computer; they must be connected via an interface.)



Monitor



Keyboard



Mouse

The monitor, standard keyboard and mouse remain plugged into the computer through their labeled, designated ports. (Your computer might have additional USB/other ports in front.)

## Ideas to Consider When Choosing AT Devices

- Identify needs/abilities before determining the necessary modifications.
- Find AT solutions for consideration and trial. Select more than one option so you are not locked into one device.
- A computer is only usable if the student can reach it. Move the components to a place where the student can successfully operate the equipment.
- Allow time to learn how to use the AT device. Do not necessarily expect a smooth and effective implementation; it will come with practice and patience.
- Pick devices that can realistically be used.
- If an activity or device is not effective, find out why. (It is never the child's fault.) Change either the device or the activity until the student is successful.



IntelliKeys USB

IntelliKeys USB and alternative keyboards are used instead of a keyboard and mouse (or as a switch interface). (IntelliKeys software must be loaded before the keyboard is plugged into the USB port.)