



# DIRECTIONS

*Technology in Special Education*

Vol. 5 , No. 11

August 1999

## The Year in Review

With the close of each year's volume we print an index of the articles printed during the year. If you spot any that you find interesting, contact us (see page 2) and we'll be happy to get that issue to you.

### Vol. 5, No 1

Bridging the Technology Gap in Schools – Community Update, June/ July 98, U.S. Department of Education

Accessible Learning – Computer Art – Lorianne Hoenninger

ATFSCP Notes – What Does This Have To Do With Assistive Technology –Susan Goodman

New Special Education Regulations On Assistive Technology – Susan Goodman

The Steps To Funding Assistive Technology – Kids Together; Inc.

### Vol. 5, No. 2

Assistive Technology In Schools – Real Times, 3 June – Aug, 1998

Accessible Learning – Shareware – Lorianne Hoenninger

Five Key Principles Of Report Writing – Adapted from ; Report Writing; Justifying the Need for Assistive Technology – At Advocate, Volume III, Issue 4

Slide Talk- Lessening the Communication Gap

The Tech Act – Tam Connector Volume 11, No 2 June 1998 – Joel Mittler

Medicaid Funding for Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC) Devices – Part – Lewis Golinker, Esq.

Technology and Persons With Disabilities – Technology in Special Education

Education Leaders Use Technology to Get Parents Involved in Education – Community Update, U. S. Department of Education



## Inside

<b>Family Center on Technology &amp; Disability</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>AAC Frustrations - A Different Approach</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Conferences</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Editor's Note</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>AT &amp; Disability News</b>	<b>8</b>

Please see REVIEW on page 6

# Family Center on Technology and Disability

**Susan Goodman, Esq., Project Director**

<< [www.ucpa.org/fctd](http://www.ucpa.org/fctd) >>

The Family Center on Technology and Disability is making available a new comprehensive document that provides the most current information on the state of the law and AT funding is now available to network members. This document, Funding of Assistive Technology -- The Public School's Special Education System as a Funding Source, published by United Cerebral Palsy Associations and Neighborhood Legal Services, Buffalo, NY, provides you with a working knowledge of the relevant laws, regulations and case law related to a school district's obligations to provide AT funding.

This booklet is a wonderful tool for using the opportunities available in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 to support students with disabilities, family members and personnel through the use of technology.

The Center is also making available a second comprehensive document in a series of assistive technology funding guides published by United Cerebral Palsy Associations, Washington, D.C. and the National Assistive Technology Advocacy Project of Neighborhood Legal Services, Buffalo, NY. This document is entitled "State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies and Their Obligation to Maximize Employment."

This document covers topics such as AT for the College Student: Who Pays and Purchase of AT for Special Education Students in Transition: Who Pays. It provides excellent, up-to-date information on obligations of the state Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies to individuals with disabilities who want to enter the workforce.

If you would like a copy of this document, please e-mail Sgoodman@ucpa.org with your request. In addition, you may now visit the Family Center website at <http://www.ucpa.org/fctd>.

In addition, the website of the Family Center on Technology and Disability has been launched! You can visit at [www.ucpa.org/fctd](http://www.ucpa.org/fctd). While the website is currently a "work in progress," it contains information you can put to immediate use.

We have however, posted our first topic for discussion, Technology and IDEA 97. We will be posting a new topic every two weeks. If you have a topic that you would like to have discussed on the web board, please email me and we will consider it for posting. We hope that you will take advantage of this opportunity to share your insights and experiences. We are also using the board to answer any questions you may have. Instructions for using the web board are on the site under the Bulletin Board link. §

## DIRECTIONS

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Vendors - We welcome product news. Please include pricing and contact name with press releases.

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# AAC Frustrations - A Different Approach

By: Susan Lait

Editor's Note: The following is taken from an e-mail sent to me to be passed on to "Suzanne" from our May/June issue. Suzanne is the mother of a 10 year old non-verbal/non-ambulatory boy, who expressed frustrations and concerns about her son's access and success with AAC.

"First some history....

We began our journey with AAC and Assistive Technology when our daughter was two years old. Our daughter will be 10 next month. During the past 8 years, we have received Special Education Services in 3 states and in 4 different school systems. The pattern has been the same no matter where we have lived. Suzanne's e-mails sounded like entries from my own journal. She expressed our same concerns. Our daughter has had numerous evaluations over the years. Some by school staff....some independent and paid by the school system....some independent and paid by parents. She has had an IEP related to the school domain and a home and community plan/therapy/training that was paid for and monitored by parents.

Pull-out therapy has always been difficult due to territorial issues. An OT or PT may feel that they do not need to invest time and effort into the domain of speech therapy by becoming familiar with AAC or a communication device. Most school speech therapists do not have specialized training in AAC or Assistive Technology. Most School Systems do not employ

individuals who have specialized AAC/AT Training. The school system is willing to purchase AAC/AT Equipment recommended by the AT Evaluations. The system is not willing to invest the time and energy into implementing AAC/AT as a mode of communication. Few systems realize that purchasing the technology is just the beginning. For years, we worked hard to implement appropriate supports in a collaborative manner. We made a family commitment to be trained and educated members of our daughter's IEP Team. The School Professionals would usually get it together by the end of the school year but by then, it was time to move to the next grade, a new teacher, new therapists and we would start all over again.

Message to Suzanne.....

In the 7 years of receiving services in 3 states and 4 school districts, we were never able to find an AAC/AT Program sponsored by a school system or a private school. Your journey has taken you to the same spot that my husband and reached last year. We had a dream of "inclusion" but that is not where our daughter ended up. She ended up sitting in a classroom isolated. Educational professionals were unable and not willing to implement our daughter's mode of communication. She could not communicate with her peers. She received frequent OT, PT and speech therapy pull-outs with professionals who could not, or would not communicate with her using her mode of communication. The School System had created an environment of "isolation" rather than "inclusion". Our daughter was unhappy and did not want

to go to school. So.....we held our breath and made the jump into Home School. I was scared to death of what homeschoolers call the big "S" Word (Socialization). I felt like a failure because after all our years of hard work, we kept returning to the same spot over and over again. We have just finished our first year of homeschooling, and I hope you don't mind me sharing some of my reflections with you.

Home School was not the end for us but the beginning. I now realize that we were not able to notice for 8 years that we were doing the same thing over and over again in an almost addictive way without results. Common sense should have directed us to the thought, "Why are we doing the same thing over and over again if it's not working?" The answer for us was that we had a need to make things better not just for our daughter but for all children with disabilities. We thought that we needed the system to reach this goal. We felt scared and guilty at the thought of giving up and leaving the system. So we split our efforts....in addition to homeschooling, we are also active parent advocates. As far as the Big "S" Word.....we have been able to find many opportunities for socialization with both public and home school friends. Our local home school support group & community sponsors field trips, sports and social activities. The stress level in our home has reduced. Our daughter is much healthier and happier. I

do not miss the frequent colds, pink eye or head lice warnings. We have achieved our dream of "inclusion" in the community rather than in public school. Our daughter is no longer isolated. She has become a social butterfly and her delightful personality makes her stand out. I even have more time for myself and advocacy. We discovered that the school system was not a user friendly environment for our daughter or parents. There is lots of confusion as a result of the Federal Regulations for IDEA 1997 going into effect this past May. Many school systems appear resentful of the changes. I have heard rumors that many systems will deny or delay services forcing parents to make the extended commitment to Due Process. Home School is an alternate choice that for us turned out to be the best choice. We will continue to advocate and keep a watchful eye on the system but we do not want our daughter to be isolated by a system that sees her disability as barrier....a system that can not see her abilities.

Homeschooling as an alternative has helped me feel good about the supports & services that my daughter is receiving. Our home life has improved. My marriage has improved. Our family is much closer. We are no longer responding to a weekly and often daily crisis at school. I actually have a life outside of disability advocacy. I now realize that as primary caregiver to my daughter, the interactions with the school system were more stressful than I was admitting to myself and having an effect on our quality of life. I am glad to no longer be addicted to the system. I am enjoying advocating for change in the system. Some people because of their jobs or other demands can not make a choice to home school. Besides you never know what the future may hold.....we may choose to request services in the future. §

## Conferences & Events

**Date: Sep 30 - Oct 2, 1999**

Southeast Augmentative Communication  
Birmingham, AL  
Contact: 205-251-0165

**Date: October 1 - 2 & 4 - 6, 1999**

Technology & Inclusion Fall '99 & 6th Annual Instruction, Inclusion & Technology Conference  
Austin, TX  
Contact: 512-280-7235  
fall99@taicenter.com

**Date: October 6 - 9, 1999**

Assistive Technology Industry Association  
Orlando, FL  
Contact: www.atia.org  
atia@northshore.net

**Date: October 19 - 20, 1999**

17th Annual Closing the Gap Conference  
Minneapolis, MN  
Contact: www.closingthegap.com  
info@closingthegap.com  
507-248-3294

**Date: December 2 - 4, 1999**

RESNA: Promoting Independence and Quality of Life for Older Persons  
Buffalo, NY  
Contact: Chairman, Conference on Aging, U of Buffalo  
wings.buffalo.edu/ot/cat/conference

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*REVIEW continued from page 1*

**Vol.5. No. 3**

Medicaid Guidance – Federal Medicaid Administrators – Lew Golinker

Accessible Learning – Software for Disabilities – Lorianne Hoenninger

ATFSCP Notes- Medicaid funding for Augmentative & Alternative Communication Devices – Part 2 – Lewis Gokinker; Esq.

**Vol.5, No. 4**

What Does the Research Say About Severe Disabilities and Speech-Recognition Technology? From Passivity to Participation- The Transformational Possibilities of Speech-Reognition Technology , Cavalier & Brown Teaching Exceptional Children July/Aug. 1998

Accessible Learning – The Intellikeyboard – Lorianne Hoenninger

Assistive Technology Can Facilitate Transition into Adult Services – Steve Mendelsohn, Esq. And Susan Goodman, New 3D Action Activity from RJ Cooper

**Vol.5 No.5**

Augmentative Communication Devices – A look at Medicaid & Medicare as Funding Sources – Impact, Volume IV Issue 1

New Devices & Toys - From Prentke Romich & Enabling Devices

Joining In – Including the Young Switch User in Group Activities – Pat Crissey

**Vol. 5 No.6**

Reviewing Educational Software – Camilla Hileman

Accessible Learning – Lorianne Hoenninger – The Closing Gap

Assistive Technology & Wheelchairs – Disability Resources Monthly Vol. VI No.3 – October 1998

ATFSCP Notes – The Assistive Technology Funding and Systems Change Project – Tech Express, December 1998

AAC Initiative Offers Collaboration Opportunities – To Develop the Concept of Automated Language Activity Monitoring

Disability Radio Show On A Roll – Talk Show On Disabilities and Lifestyles

**Vol. 5 No. 7**

Quality Indicators of Effective Assistive Technology Services – Part 1 - TAM Connector Volume 11, No. 5 February 99

Accessible Learning – Lorianne Hoenninger – Pervasive Developmental Disorder

National “Creative Use of Braille Award” Presented at APH - American Printing House for the Blind

ATFSCP Notes – The Assistive Technology Funding and Systems Change Project – Tech Express, December 1998

In The News- Credit Card Switch

Quality Indicators of Effective Assistive Technology Services – Part 2 – TAM Connector

**Vol. 5 No. 8**

In The News – The Foot Rat

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ATACP '99 – Assistive Technology Applications Certificate Program –

ATFSCP Notes – The Assistive Technology Funding and Systems Change Project – Tech Express, December 1998

AAC; Principles, Research, and Outcomes to Guide in System Selection – Barry Romich Company and Bernard Spiegel, PH.D., CCC-SLP, University of Toledo

### Vol. 5 No,9

AAC Frustration – Janet Hosmer – Executive Director Dreams for Kids, Inc,

Accessible Learning – Lorianne Hoenninger – Reasonable Priced Software for Kids

International Parent to Parent Conference – Pioneer Spirit – Blazing New Trails May 5-7, 2000, in Reno, Nevada.

ATFSCP Notes – The Assistive Technology Funding and Systems Change Project – Tech Express, December,1998

Family Center on Technology and Disability – It's a Center to Assist Families and organizations with children with disabilities

Technology Plays Vital Role in Special Education and Literacy Development – CEC Today,

### Vol.5 No. 10

APH Web Additions – Mechanical tactile writers for the blind

Accessible Learning – Lorianne Hoennindger – CAST, The text that can be viewed on the computer screen

ABC TO XYZ – Janet Hosmer – Executive Director, Dreams for Kids, Inc.

ATFSCP NOTES – The Assistive Technology Funding and Systems Change Project – Special Distribution to Family Center on Technology and Disability Network Members

SETI – Search = Web Accessibility – The new search engine tool

Levelgames – Games to be played by people with unequal abilities

Prentke Romich News – Picture set CD

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## Editor's Note

A short note to say 'hey' to all of you who are still with us after these 5 wonderful years, and to say welcome to those of you have recently joined our 'regulars'. We're looking forward to the next 5 !!

I would like to apologize for the brevity of this issue, however I have recently injured my right index finger and am somewhat incapacitated therefore not able to complete the full 12 pages before my surgery. (I will have to learn "lefty mousing" - so I should be able to put together a 'hands-on' (pun definitely intended) report of how such a minor adaptation effects my work life :)

Anyhow, hope the summer has been relaxing for those of you who were supposed to relax and enjoyable for those of you who get your relaxation in smaller chunks!

Warm regards,

*Janet*

# AT & Disability News

## AAPD President and Chief Executive Officer, Position Announcement

The American Association of People with Disabilities seeks President and Chief Executive Officer to lead our growing organization into the new millennium. The CEO should have personal as well as professional experience in all areas of disability, as well as demonstrated ability, experience, and success in generating and securing significant resources around just causes.

You have searched far and wide for a top management career that provides growth potential, challenges, and an opportunity to serve. Search no further! The opportunity of a lifetime, the AAPD CEO, may be the job of your dreams. Provide vision, leadership, and management to develop our national cross-disability coalition into the "AARP of disability."

Work with AAPD's talented Board of Directors, an extraordinary group of disability "superstars," to advance the civil and human rights of Americans with disabilities. Current priorities include

civil rights, employment, health care, civic-participation and membership services. Work in our nation's capital, Washington D.C., the exciting heart of federal policy development. Bring your ambition, charisma, fund-raising, and leadership skills to amplify our strong voice for Americans with disabilities.

You may obtain a copy of the position description from AAPD. Please send by August 27 your resume and references, along with a cover letter stating salary and benefit requirements, to the AAPD Search Committee in care of: Helena R. Berger, AAPD Chief Operating Officer, 1819 H Street, N.W., Suite 330, Washington, DC 20006, V/TTY 202-457-0046, FAX 202-457-0473, <http://www.aapd-dc.org>

## Single Switch TV, VCR and Cable Control Unit

Single Switch TV, VCR and Cable Control Unit, manufactured by Enabling Devices/Toys for Special Children, allows you to control the basic functions of three units simply by operating a single switch (sold separately)

The Single Switch TV, VCR and Cable Control Unit operates when the switch is pressed and held down, the various function indicators (on/off, volume up/down and mute) then light up in sequence. You select the desired function by releasing the switch when the corresponding light goes on. On the next switch closure that function changes its state (for example the volume goes up.) Easily adjustable scan/step feature allows you to "scan" through the selected functions or change them one step at a time. The unit can be placed on a tabletop or lapboard, or attached to bedrail or wheelchair by means of an optional gooseneck and clamp.

Enabling Devices also manufactures toys and busy boxes designed for the visually and hearing impaired. Their technical and engineering staff are available to provide custom modifications at a customer's request. A free catalog describing these toys and many other learning and assistive devices is available, call 1-800-832-8697 or visit our web site at <http://www.enablingdevices.com>.

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