

Augmentative/Alternative Communications (AAC) Team



Today there are a variety of technology options available to help support the growth, development, and education of children with disabilities. However, the process of selecting, acquiring, learning about, and using assistive technology devices can be complex and daunting for educators, students, and their family members. The Bucks County Intermediate Unit (Bucks IU) has an experienced and knowledgeable team of experts to help guide and support everyone involved. From facilitating the initial discussions on the best technology options to consider, all the way through equipment maintenance, troubleshooting, and the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) goal development related to the device, the Bucks IU can help.



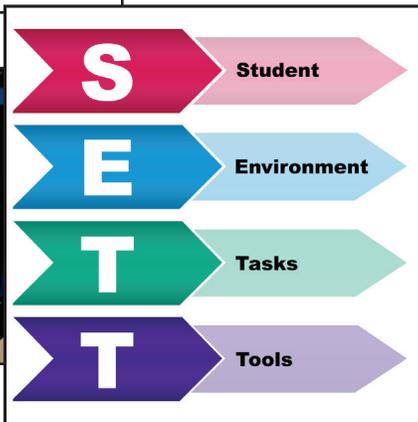
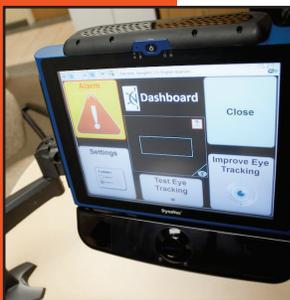
The Assistive Technology Team focuses on a variety of tools to support students including :

- Augmentative Communication Devices
- Writing Tools
- Computer Access Technology
- Switches and Environmental Controls
- Assistive Listening Equipment for the Hearing Impaired
- Access Technology for the Visually Impaired



Requesting Assistance

Any teacher, therapist, or parent can approach their school, or school district (Local Educational Agency - LEA), to submit a request to the Bucks IU to get the process started. The entire process follows the form of a SETT; a guideline for gathering data in order to make effective assistive technology decisions that considers the Student, the Environment(s) and the Tasks required for active participation in the activities of the environment, and the system of Tools needed for



the child to address the tasks. The SETT process may reveal that a high- tech solution is not necessary. Low-tech, and even 'no-tech' solutions, may be recommended as the best solution for the child's improved learning, participation, and independence. The Bucks IU's depth of knowledge and experience in working with children who have special needs allows them to be ideally suited to provide this SETT analysis. An overview of the process is on the reverse.

AAC Team Services

The Bucks IU AAC team will facilitate meetings, provide loaner equipment for trials, and assist with the ordering information and paperwork required for devices purchased through school districts or private medical insurance. Once a device is acquired, the AAC Team will support it's programming and set-up, and provide the implementation support. That will include modeling, coaching, and feedback to assist and promote the child's acclimation to, and acceptance of, the equipment. Training for staff and families is also offered on the software, applications, hardware, implementation strategies, and best practices. IEP goal development, related to the assistive technology being used, is also provided.

Augmentative/Alternative Communications (AAC) Team



**Bucks County
Intermediate Unit**

The Bucks IU SETT Process

The SETT framework used by the AAC Team provides for a structuring of observations and questions that allows the team to best determine the correct tools for the child's needs. The following overview outlines the basic process:

A student referral is received from the child's school district. Based on the school location and the student's needs, a Bucks IU Assistive Technology (AT) consultant is assigned. The AT consultant will arrange an initial observation with the student's IEP team and based on this observation, the student's team will then collect additional baseline data.



Next, a SETT meeting is scheduled by the case manager to include the LEA, special education teacher, parents, AT consultant, as well as any related service providers (i.e., speech-language pathologist, physical or occupational therapists, hearing or vision support, behavior analyst, etc.). If the student's IEP is to be revised at the SETT meeting, a regular education teacher is also included.



The team implements the action plan developed at the SETT meeting, with support as needed from the AT consultant. This can include trials with devices, as well as implementation of educational tools and/or strategies. The team collects data on effectiveness of tools/strategies throughout the trial period.

At the end of the trial period, the team reconvenes to discuss trial data/results and plans for next steps, including:

- Acquisition of a successfully trialed device or equipment (district purchase, parent purchase, or funding through child's medical insurance)
- Continued implementation of successful strategies
- Revision of IEP to reflect the addition of successful tools and/or strategies for accessing the curriculum
- Trials of alternate tools/strategies based on the initial data

Once the SETT request has been made for a student, ongoing support can be requested of the AT consultant, or initiated by them, for as long as the student uses the resulting technology or strategies. A new SETT request is not required for this ongoing support unless it is suspected that new equipment will be needed. Ongoing support may include:

- Device implementation support (modeling/coaching/feedback)
- Device maintenance, programming support, and/or troubleshooting
- Trainings for staff and parents - software and applications, hardware, implementation strategies, best practices, and IEP goal development

Knowledge and Experience

The Bucks IU was established in 1971 by the State General Assembly to serve the special needs of the county's children between the ages of birth to 21. At the Bucks IU, we strive to provide students with the tools and knowledge needed to succeed educationally, while gaining the greatest degree of independence possible.

705 N. Shady
Retreat Rd.
Doylestown, PA
18901

215-348-2940
www.BucksIU.org