



Technology Forward Initiative

DDS has developed an initiative to promote the use of **Supportive Technology: Assistive Technology and Remote Supports & Monitoring** to increase the opportunities for individuals to achieve greater independence in their lives.

Supportive Technology

- Allows individuals to have more independence in their lives
- Provides tools that can increase health and safety for individuals
- Can be one of the solutions to the direct care staffing shortage
- Is often a less expensive option to providing direct support staff

Assistive Technology & AT Services

- **Assistive technology (AT)** is any item, piece of equipment, software program, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities.
- **AT Services:** “*Any service that directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition or use of an Assistive Technology device.*” (AT ACT, 1998, as amended).

DDS defines
Assistive
Technology as
consisting of
three distinct
components:

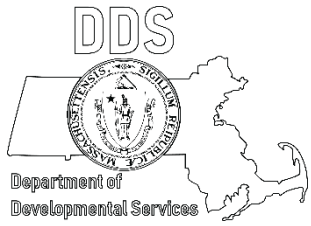
- **Assistive technology consultation/evaluation** - an evaluation of the assistive technology needs of an individual, including a functional evaluation of technologies available to address the individual's assessed needs and support the individual to achieve outcomes identified in his or her individual support plan (ISP).
- **Assistive technology devices**- the cost of assistive technology equipment or devices (e.g. door alarm, stove sensors) purchased per the AT assessment.
- **Assistive technology support** - the set-up of AT equipment, education and training that aids an individual in the use of assistive technology equipment as well as training for the individual's support network (paid/unpaid) or who are otherwise substantially involved in activities being supported by the assistive technology equipment.

Evaluations for Assistive Technology



- The need for a professional evaluation is determined by the team on a case-by-case basis and based on a provider generated AT screening tool (previously AT assessment, 2014 roll out).
- The evaluation may be completed by:
 - A licensed professional including OT, PT, SLP
 - A certified AT Professional (ATP)
 - A certified Rehabilitation Engineering Technologist (RET)

The evaluation is a collaborative process with the individual and support team. This should include a qualified Remote Support vendor authorized to consult, install, and monitor electronic systems if individual is interested in such supports.



Examples of Assistive Technology

Electronic motion sensor devices

Door alarms

Sensors that detect that a stove has been left on

Telephones with modifications such as large buttons, picture buttons or flashing lights

Devices affixed to wheelchair or walker to send an alert if the individual falls

Bracelet that detects seizure activity

Devices that enhance images for people with low vision

Voice activation of lights, appliances, doors, etc

Hand-held computer devices



Why Assistive Technology?

- For a person without a disability, technology makes things easier....
- For a person with a disability, technology makes things possible.
- **TIP: USE AT.** I have yet to meet a successful student with disabilities who doesn't use Any AT.



Remote Support and Monitoring Systems

Communication and non-invasive monitoring technologies to assist individuals to attain or maintain independence in their homes and communities.

Uses two way "real time" audio/video use technology to provide support/supervision which is delivered by staff at a remote location.

Two levels of support

Remote Supports and Monitoring must include:

- Two-way video/audio communication
- Privacy assurances, emergency back up systems, emergency response systems
- Ability for device to be controlled by the individual and can be turned off as needed, with plan in place if risk associated
- Internet and/or cell phone coverage
- In person backup plan
- Individualized Remote Support and Monitoring plan

Remote Supports and Monitoring may include:

- Sensors in the home that alert remote support staff and/or track wellness information
- Other Assistive Technology equipment or applications as identified in the Assistive Technology Evaluation

Remote Support Systems



- Remote supports systems are designed to provide the right level of support for the individual.
- The planning team must assess if remote supports are sufficient to meet the health and safety needs of the individual through an Assistive Technology Evaluation.

REMOTE SUPPORTS OPTIONS:

There will be two levels of Remote Supports

- Level A - Remote supports that involves real time check ins and supports by a remote caregiver and on demand support initiated by the individual. This level of support.
- Level B- Remote supports that involves real time check ins and supports by a remote caregiver, on demand support initiated by the individual, and an enhanced personal emergency response system (PERS) which requires sensors or other safety mechanisms and would enable the monitoring center to send an alert to identify the emergency.



Personal Emergency Response System (PERS)

- Enables an individual to secure help in an emergency using an electronic device.
- An electronic device(s) that is programmed to signal a response center once the help button is activated and/or sensor triggered.
- The emergency response activator must be able to be activated by breath, by touch or some other means and must be usable by the person who are visually or hearing impaired or physically disabled.

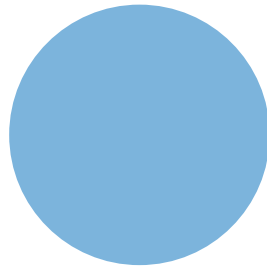
Remote Support Systems



Remote Supports can be used:

- In conjunction with Individual Home Supports or other services, such as Personal Care Assistance or Self-Directed Services and Family Support.
- To decrease the need to have staff physically present.
- In individuals' own homes or family homes.

Remote Supports Success Story



Build Supportive Technology Competency & Capacity

COMPETENCY

In FY21, DDS issued a Supportive Technology Innovation Funding RFR

11 Providers awarded up to \$50,000 to promote Assistive Technology, each provider has submitted a final summary of the work they have done.

Examples for building Competency include:

Opportunities for DSP to participate in AT certificate programs

Collaboration with Higher Education providers to develop certificate programs

Expanded opportunities for OT/PT/Speech and AT students to work with ID/D population

Development of Training Modules (for DDS staff)

CAPACITY

[Nine \(9\) Providers](#) have been awarded AT contracts covering all DDS regions:

NE Arc, UCP of Western MA, Community Autism Resources, Easterseals of MA, HMEA, Lifestream, Proven Behavior Solutions, Seven Hills, Venture Community Services

Five (6) Providers have been awarded Remote Supports and Monitoring Contracts. DDS will continue to review RFRs as these are submitted. The current providers are Latham Centers, Life Stream, UCP of Western MA, South Shore Support Services, REACH and NE ARC.

What is next for DDS:

- a) Identify a process for identifying the need at the ISP level
- b) Support DDS staff in understanding the AT screening assessment tool.
- c) Identify a process for DDS Referral and Prioritization for AT Evaluation
- d) Initial and Ongoing training for DDS service Coordinators
- e) Developing billing and contracting guidance for DDS and Providers
- f) Supportive Technology Manual
- g) Use of Technology Policy development
- h) Waiver amendments

