



DIRECTIONS

Technology in Special Education

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Accessible Learning

by Lorianne Hoenninger

Accessible Learning Technology Associates

Wouldn't it be wonderful if all students with disabilities had access to the technological tools they needed to be successful learners? Imagine if all computers were customized with just the right combination of software and hardware to facilitate maximal educational growth?

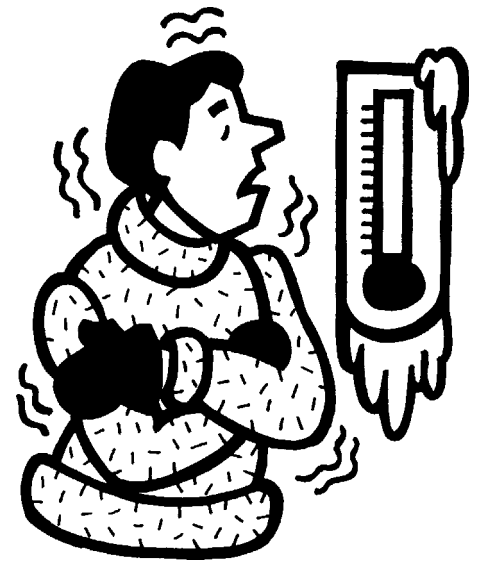
A dream you say? Well, as an Educational Technologist, I have spent years searching catalogs and websites for software that will enhance accessibility, promote customization and facilitate learning for children with special needs. Through such efforts, I have discovered that there is a wealth of software available, often for just a minimal registration fee.

Each month in this column, I will share the results of my research, including public domain, shareware and commercially available software for both Macintosh and IBM compatibles.

One of my favorite web sites is <http://www.switchintime.com>. Jon Adams, the gentleman who created that outstanding switch accessible music software "Switch in Time" for the Apple II, has developed several freeware products for the Macintosh, all available for the downloading. All of these programs listed below are single switch accessible, designed for children aged 6 and up and promote learning, recreation and inclusion.

"Word Search" is a program that every child learning to read should have access to. It is a simple drill and practice program designed to develop sight word recognition. Teachers and parents can create customized word lists. Pronunciation is recorded through a microphone, allowing for word lists in any language. It is both single switch or keyboard accessible and has automatic record keeping options. Word Search is an excellent teaching tool for children with physical or learning challenges who need auditory and visual input.

"Single Switch Bingo" helps students to mark their bingo card and to call



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I Have So Many Questions.....

Source: *Has Technology Been Considered?*
A Guide for IEP Teams

What is Assistive Technology?

“... any item, piece of equipment or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities” (20 U.S.C., Chapter 33, Section 1401(25)). This means that many of the adaptations, modifications and accommodations made for a student, in order for him/her to participate, may be considered as assistive technology. It could be as simple as a pencil grip or as complex as a computer. Assistive technology also includes services necessary in the selection, acquisition or use of an assistive technology device.

It's Just Not in the Budget

Cost is a consideration but not a controlling factor. In a South Carolina case (19 IDELR 355) regarding a thirteen year old student with multiple disabilities, the parents requested a Liberator (a sophisticated communication device, which costs approximately \$6500) while the school district argued that an IntroTalker (a less sophisticated, communication device costing approximately \$2000) would be appropriate. The hearing officer in the case ruled that in order to receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), the Liberator was the more appropriate device for the child. If more than one option will provide for the provisions of FAPE, then cost may be a legitimate factor in

determining whether a particular device or service is appropriate. However, the determination must be done on an individual basis with the components of IDEA being followed. Cost may not be a factor when the alternative is denial of the provision of FAPE.

Who is Going to Pay for This?

The school district is responsible for providing for the assistive technology needs of the child, whether it is accomplished through the district or community agencies. Districts may utilize alternative funding sources for the provision of assistive technology devices or services, however, these funds cannot be used if the results would be a reduction of medical or other type of assistance to the child and the family. Additionally, the use of private insurance proceeds must not pose a realistic threat of financial loss to the parents of the child with disabilities. Schools may request but cannot require parents to use private insurance to pay for a child's required services or devices. Most experts agree that public benefits such as Medicaid can be used without parent permission.

Can't This be Accomplished Some Other Way?

If the IEP team has followed the guidelines for consideration, there should be documentation in place which supports the need for any

Please see *QUESTIONS* on Page 9

DIRECTIONS

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Connecting Learning Communities

The Council for Exceptional Children's Annual Convention

April 15-18, 1998

Minneapolis, MN – The Council for Exceptional Children's Annual Convention remains the leader "connecting learning communities." This annual event brings together experts who span the range of our profession, all bringing new ideas to share, as well as tried and true ideas that work. This year's theme, "Connecting Learning Communities," will hallmark another year of advancements in the field of special education. Join us in Minneapolis along with fellow educators and administrators in your field to connect with the best of the best at the only convention held exclusively for professionals like yourself in the field of special education. Celebrate our achievements and learn from other's experiences in our ever-changing profession.

IDEA 1997

IDEA — Discover what you need to know about the IDEA 1997 requirements. CEC's annual convention will offer you an opportunity to hear from representatives from the Office of Special Education Programs, as well as other experts in the field, concerning the new provisions. Attend workshops, strands, and other sessions and take home practical ideas for implementation in your school and classroom.

New Features This Year!

Mini-workshops — You will receive

in-depth skill training with a high degree of participant involvement from these 3-hour sessions.

Roundtable discussions — practical group discussions on special interests will feature such topics as discipline, adapting curriculum, team building, and assessment. The expanded Technology Center will feature demos and hands-on exhibits in areas such as enhancing instructional strategies and self-directed learning.

One thing you can count on not to change is the quality of the programming. This year's Strands will cover such topics as Cultural & Linguistic Diversity; Instructional Strategies; IDEA, Standards, & Reform; Paraprofessionals; Curriculum Reform; and Alternative Placements. Preconvention Workshops will highlight such hot topics as IDEA/504, The Ungraded Classroom, and Self-Determination. These dynamic workshops are very popular and fill up fast! So, sign up now to be assured of the workshop of your choice.

The Ever-Popular Exhibit Show

Technology, software, books and magazines, tapes, and sweatshirts... It's all here, in one huge exhibit floor of over 75,000 square feet. Products and services all designed for the special educator are awaiting your perusal and purchase. Hundreds of exhibitors will be on hand to show their newest and finest, to answer your

questions, and even to offer hands-on demonstrations that will allow you to step into the classroom of the future... today. See demonstrations on new products such as software-based math manipulatives and assistive technology devices, and new activities and games to develop critical skills. Take a little something back to your very special students!

Career Choices

Earn valuable, career-advancing CEUs by attending selected sessions. (CEC staff is always available to help with your selections.) And, if you're ready for a career move, check out CEC's Career Connections where over 75 organizations are on hand to review your resume... and even offer you the job.

Don't Miss the Special Events

Join us for the CEC and the Yes I Can! Awards on Friday, and don't miss the CEC Gala Celebration on Saturday. All are opportunities to mingle with old friends and to meet new friends in your field with your concerns. Last year we had over 5,000 special and general educators in Salt Lake City and this year we are expecting even more!

Don't Miss Minneapolis

...and the 1998 CEC Annual

Please see CEC on page 10

ATFSCP Notes

The Assistive Technology Funding and Systems Change Project

http://www.ucpa.org/html/innovative/atfsc_index.html

How to Fund Assistive Technology through Social Security Income By Steve Mendelsohn, Esq.

The Social Security Act is a unique source of funding for AT devices and services. Although it does not directly provide funds for technology, it does so indirectly. The ACT allows recipients of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments and beneficiaries of Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) to keep cash payments or private resources that would otherwise be lost as a result of employment.

Broadly speaking, the law's goals in making these exceptions are to encourage work. So, provisions such as the trial work period (TWP), impairment-related work expenses (IRWE's), the plan for achieving self support (PASS), and Section 1619 (b) (42 U.S.C. Sec. 1382h) are collectively known as work incentives. Work incentives make it easier for recipients to keep cash or medical benefits they would otherwise lose because of employment. For purposes of assistive technology acquisition, the law only contains incentives to help people who are seeking employment.

Major Features of SSI

Who benefits? SSI is a strictly means tested income supplementation program for people who are blind or disabled and poor, or over age 65 and poor.

By law, poverty is defined according

to the amount of "countable resources" an individual has (bank accounts, etc). To qualify, an individual must have countable resources of \$2,000 or less with a very low income. The monthly amount distributed to recipients is called Federal Benefit Rate (FBR). In 1997, the rate is \$484. So, if a person is blind/disabled, or over 65 and has no income, he or she is entitled to receive \$484 per month. Some states supplement the federal benefit rate; this amount can vary depending upon the state.

This rate only applies to an unmarried person who lives alone. For married couples, individuals or couples with children, and children receiving SSI (parents' income must be taken into account), the FBR is higher.

SSI payments are reduced when other income is received. SSI categories income into:

- 1) earned
- 2) unearned

An individual is allowed only \$20.00 of earned income per month before the SSI benefit begins to decline. When monthly income goes above that figure, the individual begins to lose SSI. The formulas on how much will be lost are complicated but basically, a person loses one dollar in SSI for every two dollars

earned from employment.

Impairment-Related Work Expenses (IRWE)

The approach to taking advantage of social security work incentives is to change "countable" income and resources into "non-countable" resources. SSI recipients are permitted to exclude from countability the portion of their income used to meet their impairment-related work expenses (known as IRWEs). IRWE's cover "disabled" recipients. BWEs cover expenses for individuals who are designated as "blind". IRWE's and BWE's differ in the scope of expenses they cover and in the benefit rate.

IWRE and Assistive Technology

The application of IRWE's or BWE's allows the deduction, from countable income, the cost of AT if it is used for or needed for work. The impact of this incentive is obvious.

Example: A single woman earns \$600/month. She lives in a state that does not have a supplement. Her SSI payment is \$0.00. This woman purchases assistive technology that qualifies as an IWRE (or BWE). She is now able to keep some of her social security payments.

We will not explain all the benefits

calculations here but an example—if you had \$400 of countable earned income, your SSI check would be somewhere between \$194 and \$294, depending on other factors. The remaining amount represents a subsidy for work-related technology.

There are also other kinds of expenses that qualify for IRWE's or BWE's. A brief list includes things such as medications, transportation, and personal assistance on the job.

Social Security does not require prior approval before a worker claims a work expense. In some cases, the worker must first incur the expense then wait for SSA to determine whether or not the expense is allowable. When regular expenses are incurred every month, such as installment payments on work-related AT, after the initial approval, the beneficiary can feel somewhat confident that there will be no request for justification. Another tip: if you are paying for your work-related AT on a credit card, you may find that SSA repeatedly requests that you verify your claim that the documentation of payment reflects work expense. If possible, it is best that work expenses be the only use for a designated credit card.

SSDI

SSDI is an insurance program designed to replace income. This is similar to the way private disability insurance pays individuals when they cannot work. SSDI is not means tested. You will receive benefits if you meet the following criteria:

1. You paid into the Social Security system long enough
2. You were under the age of 65
3. Due to a medical condition, you were unable to work

The Social Security Administration (SSA) looks for the individual's ability to work when determining eligibility for or continuation of SSDI benefits. This does not mean that income is irrelevant. If the income comes from earnings, it signifies that the individual has the ability to work. SSA is specifically interested in a beneficiary's capacity to engage in "substantial gainful activity" (SGA). In most cases, a \$500 monthly income (approximately \$1,000 for recipients who are designated as blind) is regarded as the SGA threshold. If you are able to earn that much (or in some cases average that much per month) you will become ineligible for SSDI benefits after nine months.

As we discussed earlier, there are ways to reduce countable income to save benefit payments. IRWE's can be deducted from countable income, which will, in the long run, subsidize the cost of even big-ticket AT items.

In SSDI, if you go over the substantial gainful activity figure (SGA) your benefits will go from whatever you were receiving down to zero: **JUST LIKE THAT!** (The average SSDI benefit is around \$700/month).

SSA does give you a warning. You will be granted a 9-month trial work period (TWP) during which your capacity for work will be evaluated. It

does not matter how much you earn during these nine months. After the nine-month trial work period, if the SSA determines you can perform substantial gainful activity, benefits will cease in three months. If you have enough IRWE's to bring countable monthly income down below the SGA threshold, you can continue to receive benefits indefinitely.

Similarities Between SSI and SSDI

The beneficiary has strict obligations to report all income. Also, prior approval from SSA is not required prior to claiming work expenses. In some cases, the worker must first incur the expense then wait for SSA to determine whether or not the expense is allowable. When regular expenses are incurred every month, such as installment payments on work-related AT, after the initial approval, the beneficiary can feel somewhat confident that there will be no request for justification. Another tip: if you are paying for your work-related AT on a credit card, you may find that SSA repeatedly requests that you verify your claim that the documentation of payment reflects work expense. If possible, it is best that work expenses be the only use for a designated credit card.

Health Insurance

There are other non-cash benefits associated with both SSI and SSDI that may be equally or more important for many people. In most states, SSI recipients qualify for health insurance under the Medicaid program. After a

EASI

Equal Access to Software and Information

An Affiliate of the American Association for Higher Education

<<http://www.rit.edu/~easi>>

EASI's mission is to serve as a resource to the education community by providing information and guidance in the area of access-to-information technologies by individuals with disabilities. We stay informed about developments and advancements within the adaptive computer technology field and spread that information to colleges, universities, K-12 schools, libraries and into the workplace. Currently, EASI is the recipient of a National Science Foundation grant to disseminate information on access for disabled persons to science, engineering and math. Our membership is composed of people from colleges, universities, businesses and other institutions. They include computing staff, disabled student services staff, faculty, administrators, vendors, representatives of professional associations, private consultants, heads of both non-profit and for-profit organizations, faculty and staff from K-12 schools, and students. People with disabilities must have the same access to information and resources as everyone else. EASI is dedicated to helping that happen. The activities, projects and publications listed here are designed to help institutions provide the information and resources that people with disabilities deserve.

Projects, Activities and Publications

Seminars and Online Workshops: EASI presents on-site seminars. We

have made presentations to more than 1,500 people who provide computer and information access to people with disabilities. Topics include: The Americans with Disabilities Act, computer access strategies, lab environments, and support services. In conjunction with the Rochester Institute of Technology, EASI delivers two three-week, online workshops via the Internet. Adapt-it focuses on adaptive computing technology and support services. EASI-SEM specializes in access to science, engineering and math. People from more than 24 countries have participated, in addition to people from all over the United States. Both workshops are delivered several times a year. The registration fee for adapt-it is \$150 including an accompanying video and handbook. EASI-SEM is \$170 including a set of three videos and print manuals. The workshops can be previewed on the Web at <http://www.rit.edu/~easi/workshops.html> or more details can be obtained by sending e-mail to listserv@maelstrom.stjohns.edu with three words in the message: get workshop syllabus.

EASI on the World Wide Web

EASI has just established a homepage on WWW. You can find all EASI materials using URL and then the address: <http://www.rit.edu/~easi> EASI's Web site specializes in information technology and its impact on science, math, and libraries. We are

also developing specialized materials for K-12 students, their teachers and parents.

EASI Gopher: EASI information and publications are also available through the gopher site at St. Johns University. To access EASI from the gopher, connect to sjuvn.stjohns.edu Choose from the top menu, "Disability and Rehabilitation Resources", and from that menu, choose "EASI".

Electronic Journal

EASI publishes a quarterly electronic journal, "Information Technology and Disabilities," that focuses on technology issues that relate to people with disabilities. The journal is available in two ways. First, it is on the Web and gopher. Second it is available through a listserv list, itd-jnl. (This is a distribution list and not a discussion list.) To subscribe, send e-mail to: listserv@maelstrom.stjohns.edu Leave the subject line blank and send the following one line message: sub itd-jnl followed by your "first name last name".

Electronic Discussion Lists

EASI supports three major, public electronic discussion lists: EASI, AXSLIB-L and EASI-SEM. These include more than 2,000 people from more than 40 countries. The EASI List focuses on general discussions about adaptive equipment, access issues and other disability and computer topics.

The second list is the library access list, called AXSLIB-L. The third list, EASI-SEM specializes in the dissemination of information and materials to advance access to the fields of science, engineering and math for students and professionals in those areas. To join these lists, send a message to: listserv@maelstrom.stjohns.edu. Leave the subject line blank. In the body of the text type: sub easi "first name last name" or sub AXSLIBL "first name last name" or send a message to listserv@listserver.isc.rit.edu with the sub EASI-SEM "first name last name".

From time to time, EASI sponsors discussion lists on specialized topics such as job accommodations, textbook provision and a list for technology specialists.

Publications and Videos

EASI has supported the book, "Information Access and Adaptive Technology," to be published in 1997 by Oryx Press and written by Norman Coombs and Carmela Cunningham. EASI has also created and distributed more than 20,000 copies of pamphlets on adaptive computing technology to date. Publications are available on both the Web and gopher. Print copies are available. For ordering information send e-mail to listserv@maelstrom.stjohns.edu saying: get easi pubs or write to EASI, PO Box 18928 Rochester, NY 14618.

EASI Videos: EASI, with the support of the Rochester Institute of Technology, has created a series of three videotapes. They cover (1) general adaptive computer technology (2) access to math and tactile graphics and (3) laboratory access and faculty

attitudes. Each video has an accompanying print manual. These are priced at \$30 for a video with manual or \$75 for the set of three.

History and Organization

EASI was originally formed as a special interest group within EDUCOM's Educational Uses of Information Technology (EUIT) program. In 1994 EASI became affiliated with the American Association for Higher Education, a national organization of individuals dedicated to improving the quality of higher education. In addition to AAHE and EDUCOM, EASI has received support from the National Science Foundation, The NEC Foundation of America, The Bell-Atlantic Charitable Foundation, Arkenstone, Inc., Apple Computer, Inc., St Johns University, Rochester Institute of Technology, University of California, Los Angeles, University of California, Irvine,

the University of Washington, and the University of Michigan.

EASI Contacts

EASI's real presence is on the Internet. Therefore, we prefer that you contact us electronically.

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AT Survival Kit

A Comprehensive Assistive Technology Resource

INCLUDES.....

- *DREAMMS Guide to Assistive Technology - extensive AT reference anthology of local, state and national agency literature - value \$39.95*
- *A full year subscription to "DIRECTIONS: Technology in Special Education" - value \$14.95*
- *The DIRECTIONS Electronic Digest - the past 2 years on diskette (Mac or PC format) - value \$39.95*
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• www.dreamms.org

ATFSCP Continued from page 5

waiting period, SSDI beneficiaries can qualify for health coverage under Medicare. Many individuals are reluctant to leave the program because they fear losing health insurance coverage.

Because of the high costs outright unavailability of health insurance in the private sector, (especially for people with disabilities), the linkage between cash benefits and insurance coverage under the two Social Security programs are not so tight as many believe. It is true that loss of eligibility for cash payments will often result in the cessation of insurance coverage. But a number of provisions in the law do allow the continuation of health coverage—at least for several years. (Please call the number listed at the bottom of this fact sheet if you need specific information about those provisions).

What is important is that if the health insurance is in effect, and whether the individual is receiving cash benefits or not, the insurance itself is a potential source for AT!

Medicare and Medicaid are not the easiest funding sources to access! However they do have potential to fund AT services and devices. Medicaid has been the object of sustained advocacy efforts, which has resulted in some increase in availability of various kinds of technology in some states. We will report on these efforts and the need for grass roots activity in future ATFSCP material.

PASS Plans

Plans to Achieve Self Support (PASS)

is probably the best known of all Social Security work incentives. It applies only to individuals who are receiving SSI. A PASS is used to shelter income or resources from countability when this income is to be used or accumulated to achieve self-sufficiency goals. Examples of these are:

- *to save up the money needed to buy work-related assistive technology;
- *to obtain necessary education or training;
- *any number of other purposes related to living independently.

SSA

SSA's administration of the PASS requirements has grown far more restrictive and stringent over the past year and a half making it more difficult to receive approval for PASS plans. Still, the PASS remains an important tool when the incurred work-related expenses will be paid before one is earning an income from that work.

How it Works

Once the PASS is in effect, the SSI recipient is allowed to set up a bank account where PASS funds are deposited (the amount of funds is specified in the PASS). The individual then spends the money in the agreed upon fashion for the tuition, training, rehabilitation services, technology, etc.

If the PASS has been carefully written, it will specify one's right to exceed the normal limits on countable resources (\$2,000). It will also ensure that if the individual received

unearned income (such as gifts from family or friends) these will not be treated as countable income. So, the PASS may offer an opportunity to accumulate some small savings with which to meet work-related (or more typically work preparation) costs.

It is absolutely important that individuals comply with the terms of the PASS and with the requirements of the law surrounding it. Failure to track the funds adequately, NOT to expend them for the purpose and at the times specified in the PASS, or other deviations, can result in cancellation of the PASS. This can mean that all the money put into the PASS (even money already spent) could be converted to "countable" income: meaning it must be given back!

In the recent past, SSA has tightened the criteria for approving PASS requests and has centralized the authority for evaluating these requests. These actions have greatly reduced the number of PASS plans being approved or renewed. Anyone wishing to start the PASS should seek assistance from experts. Sources include independent living centers, rehabilitation agencies, or advocacy group members who have experience in formulating such requests. It is important that these sources also maintain an up-to-the-minute awareness of how SSA is evaluating PASS plans.

Tip: All income must be reported. Save records of everything..... FOREVER!

For further information about Social Security Work Incentives, contact Steve Mendelsohn at UCP- 1-800-USA-5UCP. §

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specific device or service and why it is being considered. The recommendations may be provided by individuals within the district with the necessary knowledge, or the district may contract with other community resources which have the appropriate knowledge necessary for making assistive technology recommendations.

How do You Know This is Right for This Child?

Once the device and/or service or other solution has been selected, even when the guidelines for consideration have been followed, there are no guarantees. It is only through ongoing evaluation of the child's needs across environments that determination can be made as to whether or not a specific

need is being met. It is important to realize the solution reached at one point in time may not be appropriate later. The child's physical needs may change and ability levels may improve or regress. Environments change, for example, as a child moves from elementary to middle school, to high school or transitions into adult services, and needs may change. Ongoing training will need to be provided for the adults working with a child throughout his/her schooling. There are also times when the same device may simply need to be used with a different strategy or require other modifications. The functional use of interventions is an ongoing process, and the consideration process should provide documentation which supports why a specific device, or

service is being selected, based on established criteria, for the specific needs of the individual child.

Who Decides What is Appropriate for a Child?

Deciding what is appropriate must be an IEP team decision. The child's parent(s) and/or care providers, teachers, and perhaps their therapists, and outside evaluators would be involved as necessary. The team making the decision must have knowledge and experience in relation to the possible intervention strategies, devices and services which may help to meet the specific need of the child. A special education hearing officer in a Utah case (18 IDELR 696) ruled that determining which assistive technology device is most appropriate

Please see QUESTIONS on page 10

ACCESSIBLE Continued from page 1

numbers. This program will also print out blank cards for players who do not require adapted access.

“ClickIt! Collection” is a collection of scanning overlays for ten of Broderbund’s most popular “Living Books” programs. ClickIt! by Intellitools is needed to use these overlays.

“Switch Hitter” is a two player baseball arcade game. One switch controls pitching and fielding while a second switch controls batting and running. Ball speed, range and a special “hover” feature can be adjusted separately for both players to accommodate a wide range of skill levels.

“Hip to be Square” is a wheelchair square dancing companion. This program allows switch users to play digitized square dance calls over appropriate background music. A fun music and movement activity that is accessible for all.

(Please note: the above software descriptions were drawn from Jon’s presentation at this past October’s Closing the Gap Conference.)

I hope that you find these freeware programs as helpful as I have. Next month, I will focus on software for preschoolers with disabilities. If you have a specific question in the meanwhile, do not hesitate to e-mail me at lorianne@erols.com or write c/o: Accessible Learning Technology Associates, P.O. Box 597, Shirley NY, 11967.

Happy New Year! §

CEC Continued from page 3

Convention! We are looking forward to bringing special educators together... to “Connecting Learning Communities” from across the nation in an atmosphere of learning, discovery, refreshment, and rejuvenation for all of our dedicated educators. Bring your ideas, your energy, and your passion for your profession, and return home with renewed vigor, fresh plans, and maybe even a few new friends. See you in Minneapolis!

Keynote Speaker - Bob Love

This year CEC welcomes keynote speaker, Bob Love. Mr. Love has enjoyed a successful basketball career, retiring in 1976 as the Chicago Bulls’ leading scorer. He still retains the title of second highest scorer in the Bulls’ history. However, upon retiring from the Bulls, Mr. Love found very few doors open to him because of his inability to talk without stuttering. He will share with you, not only how he has been able to fulfill his dreams, but also how communities can connect to help children fulfill their dreams.

Questions?

Please call 1-888-CEC-SPED or view the CEC home page at <http://www.cec.sped.org> for the latest in CEC Annual Convention updates. Convention rates are: Member: \$150, Nonmember: \$210, Student Member: \$75, Student Nonmember: \$105. You can also contact the Council for Exceptional Children at: 1920 Association Drive, Reston, VA 20191-1589. §

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must be made by specifically trained professionals (e.g., occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech pathologists, and others with training and experience with assistive technology) and that the following criteria should be considered by these professionals:

The device’s safety

The device’s functional assistance to the child

The normalcy of the child’s appearance in using the device

The family’s acceptance of the device

The child’s acceptance of the device

These criteria were specific to the Utah case, but are an indicator of the need of developed criteria when evaluating the appropriateness of any device, service or possible solution, necessary for the child to receive an appropriate education. Each type of assistive technology will have its own unique considerations, and criteria specific to the needs of the child.

Has Technology Been Considered? is authored by A.C. Chambers, Wauwatosa School District, and is published by the Council of Administrators of Special Education and the Technology and Media Division of the Council for Exceptional Children as part of the CASE/TAM Assistive Technology Policy and Practice Group. Copies of this publication and others in the CASE/TAM Assistive Technology Policy and Practice Series may be ordered from: The Council of Administrators of Special Education, Inc., 615 16th Street, NW, Albuquerque, NM 87104, (505) 243-7622. §

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HAVE YOU HEARD?

THE

DREAMMS FOR KIDS

PARENT PRICING PROGRAM

IS HERE!

CONTACT US

FOR DETAILS..

info@dreamms.org

607-539-3027

Conferences & Events

Date: March 5-7, 1998
 Florida Educational
 Technology Conference,
 (FETC), Orlando, FL.
 Contact: www.fetc.org

Date: March 5-8, 1998
 5th Annual Training Seminar
 and Conference Society for
 Cognitive Rehabilitation,
 Wilkes Barre, PA.
 Contact: 717-826-3872; Fax:
 717-826-3898; E-mail:
 KrisCog@aol.com

Date: March 11-14, 1998
 Learning Disabilities
 Association of America, 35th
 Annual International
 Conference, Washington, DC.
 Contact: 412-341-1515

Date: March 17 -21, 1998
 Technology and Persons with
 Disabilities. California State
 University, Los Angeles, CA.
 Contact: 818-677-2578

Date: April 15 - 18, 1998
 Council for Exceptional
 Children Annual Convention,
 Minneapolis, MN.
 Contact: 1-888-CEC-SPED;
<http://www.cec.sped.org>

Date: May 4-6, 1998
 Rehabilitation Technology
 Associates Training
 Symposium, Transitions, Salt
 Lake City, UT.
 Contact: 304-766-2680, TDD:
 304-766-2697, FAX: 304-766-
 2689, rta@rtc2.icdi.ev.u.edu,
www.icdi.wvu.edu

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One-Step Communicator

MINNEAPOLIS—AbleNet, Inc. announced today that it has developed the *One-Step Communicator*, an innovative new device that gives teachers a new and easy way to promote communication for students with severe disabilities. The *One-Step Communicator* is a voice output communication aid that has already experienced strong demand even prior to its formal introduction.

The first product in AbleNet's new AbleLink connectables line of devices, the *One-Step* offers features unlike any other product currently available on the market. What's particularly unique about the *One-Step* and the entire AbleLink connectables line is the add-on feature. The product's base comes with a "snap track" extension piece which allows educators to link the product with additional *One-Step* devices to expand the number of messages a student can deliver as their skills continue to grow.

The *One-Step Communicator* is the next generation of AbleNet's BIGmack Single Message Communication Aid. The smaller, more flexible *One-Step* is specially designed to be easy-to-use. It has an angled surface for easy user access and can be programmed in seconds to deliver a message of up to 20 seconds in length. It is also built to be highly durable and able to withstand extensive use.



The *One-Step's* detachable base allows the product to be temporarily mounted to a wall, making it easy for students to request an activity such as going outside. It can also be attached to a belt-like strap for wearing the *One-Step* around the waist when going on a field trip or learning skills in the community. In addition, the *One-Step* is designed to be used with existing AbleNet mounting Systems. Contact: AbleNet, 1081 Tenth Avenue S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55414-1312 800-322-0956.

Ultimate 8

Ajax, Ontario - TASH International, Inc. has introduced the Ultimate 8. The new 8 message communicator utilizes digitized voice for simple record/playback/rerecord. It features 8 messages of 4 seconds each, and each message is accessed by touching the keypad directly. Overlays may be inserted for easy message recall. Features include an on/off switch, volume control, and built-in switch access (4 messages only). Batteries are included and a carrying case is available. The price is \$185 U.S. For more information contact, TASH International, Inc., 91 Station

Street, Unit 1, Ajax, Ontario
Canada L1S 3H2 800-463-5685

**FINGER ISOLATION BUBBLE
BUSY BOXES!**

Hastings-on-Hudson, NY - Enabling Devices, a division of Toys for Special Children, is pleased to introduce an innovative new series of toys called the *Finger Isolation Bubble Busy Boxes*. These activity centers feature an option to remove the push buttons in order to promote finger isolation, a skill necessary for achieving computer proficiency. They can also be used to encourage eye-hand coordination, fine motor skills and gross arm movement. Four models are available: *The Finger Isolation Vibrating Bubble* has four push buttons that vibrate at different speeds when touched; *The Finger Isolation Musical Bubble* has four brightly colored push buttons which play a different musical tune; *The Finger Isolation Talking Bubble* allows you to record and re-record four 5-second messages that play in response to the buttons being pushed; and *The Finger Isolation Busy Box Bubble* has brightly colored LED's that flash, a music box, a buzzer and a button that vibrates. Toys for Special Children, Inc., 385 Warburton Avenue, Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706, 1-800-832-8697.

 **DREAMMS**
for kids, Inc.
Assistive Technology Solutions
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