

Assistive Technology & Early Childhood

Assistive technology, such as positioning equipment, mobility devices, bath equipment, therapy equipment, augmentative communication, and van lifts can play an extremely important part in the development of a young child with a disability. The major sources of funding are outlined in this fact sheet as follows:

Funding

First Steps

First Steps is a statewide early intervention system which provides services to children with developmental delays from birth to age three. Services include: Evaluation/Assessment; Service Coordination; Transportation; Assistive Technology and other services that help diminish the effects of developmental delays. Services are based on the child's needs and will be identified by the child's Individualized Family Services Plan. There is no cost to eligible children and their families. For more information, contact Kentucky Early Intervention Service at (877) 417-8377.

Medicaid

Medicaid is a federal assistance program designed to cover medical costs for people with low incomes and is administered in Kentucky as the Kentucky Medical Assistance Program. Generally, income and resource requirements determine eligibility for the program, although anyone who receives SSI benefits automatically qualifies for Medicaid. To receive assistive technology from Medicaid through the Durable Medical Equipment program, a person must have a medical need for the technology and it must be recommended by a physician. More services can be acquired under the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) Program for children under the age of twenty-one. Augmentative Communication Devices can be provided for under EPSDT if there is demonstrable medical need for the device. Individuals can inquire about Medicaid eligibility at their local Department of Community Based Services Family Support Unit. Contact the state office at (502) 564-3703 for the local number.

Local School Districts

In Kentucky, any child three years of age or older who has a disability is eligible for services from their local school district. An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) must be developed for each child in this group. The IEP is the key for receiving assistive technology through the local school district. If the assistive technology is included as part of the IEP, the local school district is required to see that it is provided. They may look for other sources of funding, but must pay for it if no other funding is available. Parents should contact the Special Education Coordinator of their local school district for more information. They may also contact (KDE) division of Learning Services at (502) 564-4970 and ask to speak to a consultant.

Commission for Children with Special Health Needs

Clinics offered through CSHCN provide a family centered multidisciplinary approach to care. During each visit, children and families have access to nutritional services, social services, care coordination through a registered nurse, and specialty physicians. Physical and occupational therapies are included for clinics serving children with orthopedic conditions and cerebral palsy. Speech therapy is available for children with hearing loss or other conditions that affect speech and language development. Clinics that treat complex conditions offer the services of multiple physicians who provide a team approach to the management of these complex conditions. CSHCN services are available to patients under 21 who meet diagnostic and financial eligibility requirements. For more information, call the Kentucky Commission for Children with Special Health Needs at (800) 232-1160.

Charitable Organizations

There are a variety of charitable organizations that can provide assistance to children from birth to six years of age. Many of these organizations have a very specific eligibility criterion which is often connected to the child's disability. This list below is not meant to be all-inclusive.

The Dream Factory

Provides services to children with critical illnesses by providing funding for a child's request. (800) 456-7556

High Technology Fund of the Lions Club Blind/Visual Impairments

Provide assistive technology to children with visual impairments for educational purposes. (502) 245-2463

Make-a-Wish Foundation

Provides funding for a child's request who has a life-threatening illness. (800) 722-9474

Muscular Dystrophy Association

Provides services for neuromuscular Diseases including AT and medical equipment. (502) 456-1440

Shrine Temple

The Shrine Temple provides services such as mobility devices for children with specific physical disabilities. (502) 585-5412

Sunshine Foundation

The Sunshine Foundation provides funding for a child's request who has a critical illness. (215) 396-4770

Woodmen of the World

Woodmen of the World provide mobility devices for individuals with mobility impairments. (270) 753-4382

Another possibility is local service clubs. Many of these groups will take a special interest in individual cases and raise the money required for the child. Some such groups include the Civitan Clubs, the Kiwanis Clubs, the Lions and Lioness Clubs. The KATS Network can help you find an active local club near you.

Sources of Assistance

The following agencies and organizations can provide a variety of services (not necessarily related to assistive technology) to families with infants, toddlers and young children with disabilities:

Autism Society of Kentuckiana	(502) 222-4706
Children's Services Coordinator - DBHDID	(502) 564-4527
Division of Maternal & Child Health	(502) 564-3756
Division of Learning Services - KDE	(502) 564-4970
KY Special Parent Involvement Network - KY SPIN	(502) 937-6464
National Lekotek Center	(773) 528-5766
Services for Deaf/Blind Children (UK)	(859) 257-9489
Visually Impaired Teacher Training Program (UK)	(859) 257-1520
Spina Bifida Association of KY	(502) 637-7363
Visually Impaired Preschool Services	(502) 636-3207
Early Hearing Detection and Intervention	(877) 757-4327

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