

assistive *technology*



Discovering the unique potential
within every child

assistive technology

Dedicated to supporting
state-of-the-art education
and therapies, creating an
environment for our students
to excel and discover their
own unique potential.



Discovering the unique potential
within every child

What is Assistive Technology?

By definition, assistive technology is “any item, piece of equipment, product, or system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of children with disabilities.” Federal Register, August 19, 1991, p. 41272

Assistive technology (AT) is not just limited to THINGS, but also includes SERVICES, such as training and support in using AT devices.

AT helps students with disabilities achieve their educational goals by providing them access to learning activities. Since students with physical, cognitive, or visual disabilities often have difficulty moving their bodies, manipulating objects, communicating, and accessing the standard educational curriculum, they frequently benefit from assistive technology, which



gives them the tools they need to meet their academic and developmental goals. AT provides supports and opportunities for students to access all facets of their day, improving the quality of their lives, and developing independence.

AT ranges from **low-tech** (e.g., reading glasses) to **mid-tech** (e.g., switches) to **high-tech** materials and equipment (tablets, iPads, Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices, or motorized wheelchairs). In applying AT, the student, the environment, and the task are matched, beginning with the simplest technology (low-tech) and moving up the continuum.

Assistive Technology services are provided according to the ***NJ Administrative Code:***

NJ Administrative Code 6A: 14-3.7

“...When developing the IEP, the IEP team shall:

7. Consider the communication needs of the student
9. Consider whether the student requires assistive technology devices and services

Sec. 300.6 Assistive technology service includes:

- (a) The evaluation of the needs of a child
- (b) Purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of AT



- (c) Selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining
- (d) Coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with AT devices
- (e) Training or technical assistance for a child with a disability and their family
- (f) Training or technical assistance for professionals

The Assistive Technology Program at P.G. Chambers School

P. G. Chambers School (PGCS) offers a unique AT Program, providing students with multiple disabilities greater independence for accessing all available learning opportunities.

The **Assistive Technology Program** at PGCS is a specialized, collaborative program with an array of services incorporating the latest technological advancements and developments in the field.

Assistive Technology



AT services are offered to:

- Students enrolled in PGCS
- Children enrolled in early intervention
- Children receiving PGCS Private Therapy Programs
- Students in our Community Service Programs
- Students enrolled in area public and private schools

Areas of Assistive Technology

- Vision
- Hearing
- Mobility
- ADL (activities of daily living)
- Positioning and seating

- Receptive/expressive communication
- Motor aspects of writing
- Access to devices
- Learning/studying
- Composing written materials
- Recreation and play
- Environmental controls

Scope of Program

The Assistive Technology Program has three components:

1. **Evaluations/Consultation/Training** (on-site and off-site for both PGCS students and others)
 - Assistive Technology (AT)
 - Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)
2. **Clinics** in specialty areas (clinics for both PGCS students and others)
 - Equipment
 - Orthotics
 - Splinting
 - AAC
3. **Access to Education** for PGCS students



Program Quality

A team of therapists and educators works with orthotists, parents, students, and other professionals to identify the best AT devices that will facilitate mobility, activities of daily living (ADL), communication, and learning for students.

Our program fully supports and involves:

- Students
- Families
- Teachers
- Therapists
- Vendors

The AT Team includes:

- Educators
- Occupational therapists
- Physical therapists
- Speech-language pathologists





The Assistive



Qualifications

Our staff have advanced training in AT, including certifications in Assistive Technology, Advanced Practitioner Wheelchair Seating and Positioning, Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA), Assistive Technology Professional (ATP) Certification, and Neurodevelopmental Treatment (NDT) Certification.

An Overview of the Assistive Technology Program

AT Program Component	Focus	Offered to	Cost	Staffing	Locations
<div>Evaluations</div> <div>  </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistive Technology Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PGCS students Students enrolled in area public and private schools Children receiving private therapy Infants and toddlers enrolled in early intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fee for service 	<div>Two members of AT team:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical therapists Occupational therapists Speech-language pathologists Teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-site – PGCS Off-site – public and private schools, agencies, other
<div>Clinics</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipment Orthotics Splinting AAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PGCS students Students enrolled in area public and private schools Children receiving private therapy Infants and toddlers enrolled in early intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free to PGCS students Family cost-share through NJEIS Fee for service Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical therapists Occupational therapists Speech-language pathologists Orthotists Equipment vendors Classroom team <div>  </div>	<div>PGCS</div>
<div>Access to Education</div>	<div>Using AT tools and adaptations to enhance learning and independence</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PGCS students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free to PGCS students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AT collaborative team Classroom team 	<div>PGCS</div>

Program Components: ***A Deeper Look***

Evaluations

A typical AT evaluation is completed by two members of the AT team and examines the student's ability to access the school environment and curriculum. The evaluation may include trialing different devices and software. The evaluation report provides recommendations to enhance access to the curriculum and may include recommendations for use of different devices, software, and positioning. Evaluations are offered to school district students (fee charged to district) and on a private basis (fee charged to family).

Augmentative Assistive Communication (AAC)

AAC is a mode of communication for individuals who are non-verbal or have limited verbal skills.

- Assessments are provided by appropriately trained and certified speech-language pathologists
- Conducted to determine and recommend devices, methods, and strategies to represent or augment spoken and written language to optimize a student's ability to communicate

Clinics

Clinics are offered at PGCS for a full day, once weekly. They are open to all students at PGCS as part of their tuition fee, early intervention children,

family cost-share through the New Jersey Early Intervention System (NJEIS) system, and open to the public and school district students for a fee (see website for current fees: www.chambersschool.org/therapy-servicesfees-for-services/)

Equipment Clinic offers:

- Consultation on school and home equipment
- Adaptations and modifications to equipment
- Opportunities for students to trial a wide variety of equipment
- Guidance in selecting equipment
- Purchase and repair of equipment

Orthotic Clinic offers assessments that include:

- Gait analysis
- Recommendations for appropriate orthotic wear



- Trials and instruction in kinesiо-taping and alternative taping methods
- Orthotists to assist families in purchasing orthotics

Splinting Clinic offers:

- Evaluation of upper extremity positioning to determine appropriate splints
- Fabrication and/or purchase recommendations for splints (in consultation with orthotists) that will promote access to the school curriculum and acquisition of ADL skills

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Clinic offers:

- Consultation for student communication needs in both expressive and receptive language related to AAC
- Co-planning and co-teaching for classroom AAC implementation
- Aided language stimulation
- Adaptation for AAC classroom supports
- Device trialing library
- Vendors available for support

Access to Education

The goal of this innovative program is to improve learning outcomes by increasing engagement, motivation, and teachable moments for students with multiple disabilities using a collaborative team approach.



- Specifically provided for students at P.G. Chambers School
- Use of AT tools and adaptations in order to promote and enhance student learning
- Access to and understanding of the assigned curriculum
- Expansion of functional skills

Process

1. Assessment

- Including student's medical history, disabling conditions, characteristics of strength, movement strategies, neuro-motor status, vision, hearing, behaviors, seating, best position for learning, access ability, communication, technology and equipment use, and class curriculum

2. AT Plan developed by the team



Collaborative Team Approach

As with all efficient and effective teams, each member has a specific role and function, while all work together towards an outcome that will increase a student's access to the educational curriculum and foster independence.

Teacher

- Focuses on academic and vocational skills
- Considers implication of specific disability to instruction
- Implements appropriate classroom design
- Improves academic performance
- Considers cognitive and behavioral abilities

Teacher Assistant

- Integrates and implements AT with curriculum requirements
- Adapts low-tech classroom materials
- Integrates student's AT plan

Occupational Therapist

- Determines challenges for access and functional needs in school-related tasks
- Considers implications of specific disability to instructions
- Facilitates access to touch screen, keyboard, switch use
- Assesses sensory needs
- Determines mounting
- Identifies equipment and devices

Physical Therapist

- Assesses seating, positioning, mobility as it relates to using AT
- Considers implications of specific disability to instruction
- Evaluates movement
- Improves seating
- Facilitates mobility
- Identifies equipment and devices

Speech-Language Pathologist

- Assesses communication within curriculum requirements
- Considers implications of specific disability to instruction
- Builds receptive language
- Facilitates expressive language
- Introduces and trains a student to use communication systems





Our students need environmental adaptations to navigate the school building, classroom access, and have other mobility needs for independence.

☐ Yes

☐ No

If you answered “Yes” to any of the statements above, the P. G. Chambers School Assistive Technology Program may be your answer!

Can the P.G. Chambers School Assistive Technology Program help you?

Your answers to the following statements may help you decide.

My child is having trouble using his wheelchair in our home.

☐ Yes

☐ No

My child is not able to sit at the table with the family and eat her dinner.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Our students need accommodations for reading, writing, and computer access.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Our staff has an increased need for in-service training around AT/AAC use and implementation.

☐ Yes

☐ No





Frequently Asked Questions

What is Assistive Technology (AT)?

AT is any high- or low-technology device, piece of equipment, or product system acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used by persons with disabilities to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities, assist them in learning, enable them to participate in the workplace, or otherwise improve their quality of life.

What are the benefits of AT?

AT allows students to actively participate in daily experiences and school activities. Data shows that with AT, students increase independence, academic performance, speed, and accuracy of work, and meet their IEP goals. AT both motivates and reinforces effective classroom instructions and strengthens skill development.

What are some examples of no-tech and low-tech supports?

Several of the traditional classroom aids that have been used for many

years are examples of no-tech and low-tech devices, e.g. pencil grips, slant boards, wedges, teacher-made materials, and communication books. Eye-gaze boards and tactile letters also fit into this category.

What are some mid-tech examples?

Splints, switch operated toys, tape recorders, and calculators are all examples of mid-tech devices.

What is high-tech?

Mobility devices, either manual or power wheelchairs, walkers, orthotics, keyboards, tablets, iPads, mounts, and devices with voice output are all considered high-tech devices.





Here's what parents are saying about the P.G. Chambers School Assistive Technology Team

"We brought Henry's wheelchair to the AT clinic because he was so uncomfortable in it. Ashley and Peter assessed the components and ordered many new parts to help position Henry better. A new head prompt, softer seating, and a different harness have given Henry access that he has never had before. He is learning to use new muscles, turn his head when he needs to, and interact with the world in ways that weren't possible before."

"Aidan and the AT team have been working diligently for the past year since he received a new Nova Chat device. The team's devotion to figuring out the right approach for Aidan has been amazing and I am so grateful for their hard work and determination."

P.G. Chambers School is a 501 (c) (3) organization that provides education and therapy services for children with complex, multiple disabilities, or those at risk for disabilities and developmental delays, and child care for children with and without disabilities. The school's mission statement is **"Discovering the unique potential within every child."** At P.G. Chambers School, "discovering potential" inspires us to provide the best, most comprehensive early childhood education for children with and without disabilities, and special education and therapy programs for children with disabilities and developmental delays. Since 1954, P.G. Chambers School has been changing the lives of children by helping them to develop a love of learning, to strive for independence, and most importantly, to develop unshakeable self-confidence.

Each year, P.G. Chambers School (PGCS), located in Morris County, NJ, provides services for more than 800 children and their families in Morris County and nine other surrounding counties in northern New Jersey. The school's programs reach children of all ages including typically developing infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, and infants at-risk for developmental disabilities; school-age children eligible for special education services; and children diagnosed with cerebral palsy, spina bifida, seizure disorders, autism, and communication disabilities. Services are provided both on-site at the school's state-of-the-art facility in Cedar Knolls, and off-site in schools, homes, and child care centers throughout the region. Important partnerships with local school districts and community organizations help support PGCS students in their own communities. The school is accredited as an Approved Private School for Students with Disabilities and an Approved Clinic and Agency by the State of New Jersey, Department of Education.



“With the AT team I was able to explore a new system that improved my student’s independence. I can now provide better therapy and helpful suggestions to his team, and see the smile on his face!”

- Brittany Simms, M.S., OTR
Occupational Therapist
at P.G. Chambers School



For more information, contact
the AT Program coordinator
at info@chambersschool.org
or call 973.829.8484.



15 Halko Drive, Cedar Knolls, NJ 07927-1380
973.829.8484 • www.chambersschool.org