

# Prepare for Success with Self Advocacy and Assistive Technology

Tools for Life  
Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation  
Georgia Tech

HSHT February 2020

CREATING THE NEXT®

# Your Speakers Today



Liz Persaud - Program and Outreach Manager



Danny Housley - Acquisition Manager



Sam Peters - Program Specialist



Annabel Joyner - AT Lab Specialist

CIDI creates practical solutions that work, with a focus on utility, ease of use, and high quality.

- Accessibility Consulting
- Braille Services
- Captioning Services
- Professional E-Text Producers
- Certified Assistive Technology

# Tools for Life

Tools for Life, Georgia's Assistive Technology Act Program, is dedicated to increasing access to and acquisition of assistive technology (AT) devices and services for Georgians of all ages and disabilities so they can live, learn, work and play independently and with greater freedom in communities of their choice.



# What is Assistive Technology?

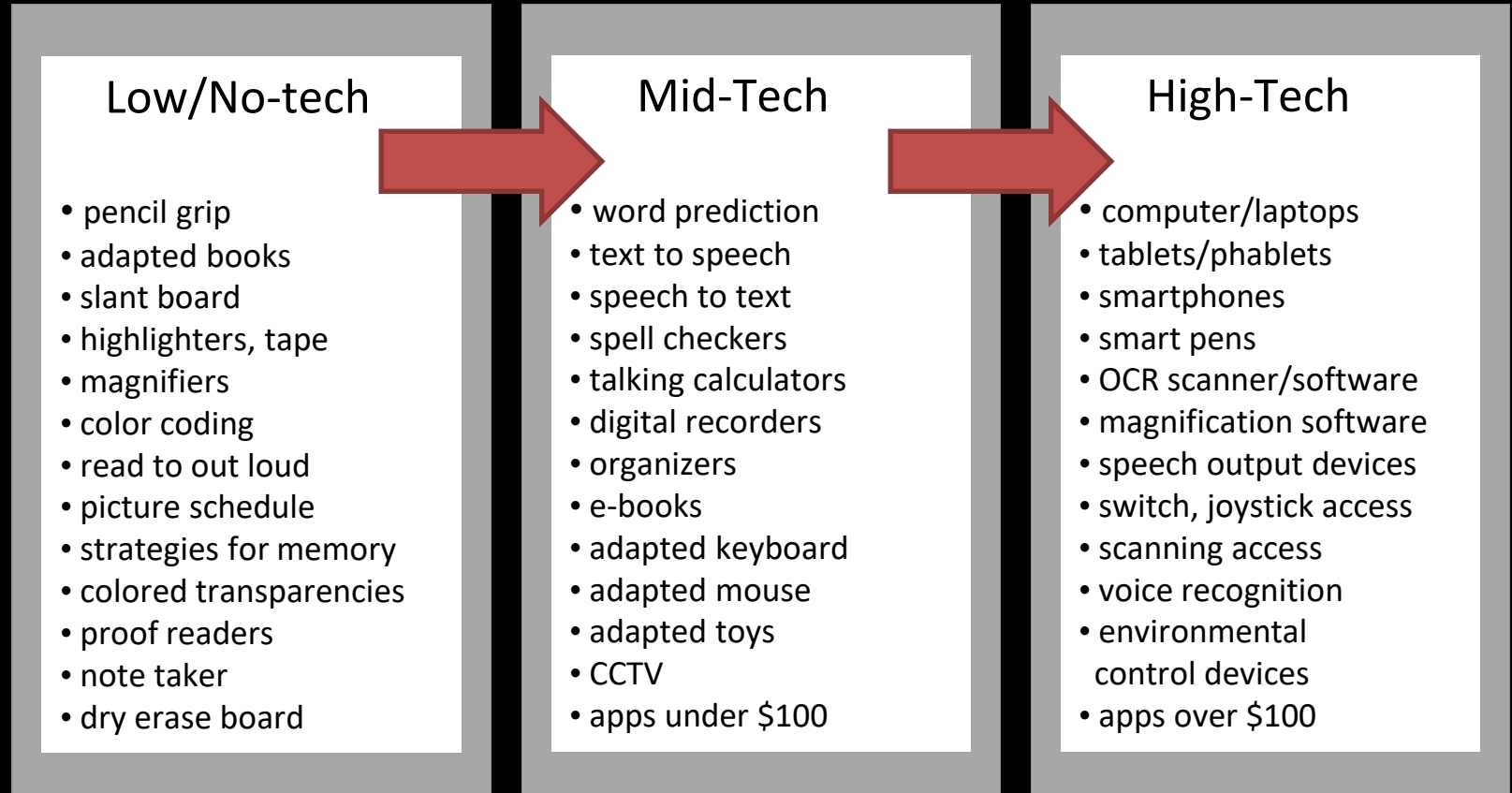
Assistive Technology (AT) is any item or piece of equipment that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of life, including at school, at work, at home, and in the community



# Assistive Technology Continuum

## Observations and “Hanging out with Intent”

Assistive Technology is a *continuum of tools, strategies, and services* that match a person's needs, abilities, and tasks.







# Team Approach

- Person with the disability
- Circle of support/Family of choice
- Teachers
- Case Managers
- Technologist
- Occupational Therapist
- Speech-Language Pathologist
- Physical Therapist
- Engineer
- Neighbors
- Bus drivers



# The “FAST” Track

*Frustration*

*Anxiety*

*Stress*

*Tension*



# Why Assistive Technology?

For a person without a disability, assistive technology makes life easier.

For a person with a disability, assistive technology makes life possible.

*Tip: USE AT! We have yet to meet a successful person who doesn't use any AT.*



# Guiding Principle and Public Law

Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to:

- A. live independently;
- B. enjoy self-determination and make choices;
- C. benefit from an education;
- D. pursue meaningful careers; and
- E. enjoy full inclusion and integration in the economic, political, social, cultural, and educational mainstream of society in the United States.

Public Law 108-364

**Self Advocacy** is like Kudzu.  
Know how to make it grow?  
Just throw down the seeds and  
run!

*Gail Bottoms*  
*Past President, People First of Georgia*



# What is Advocacy?

## What Is an Advocate?

- An advocate is a person who argues for a cause, a supporter or defender. One that pleads on another's behalf.

## The Advocate Performs Several Functions

- Supports, helps, assists and aids
- Speaks on behalf of others
- Defends and argues for people or causes
- Problem solves and finds solutions agreeable to both sides

# What is Self - Advocacy?

Developing self-knowledge is the first step in self-advocacy skills. Learning about one's self involves the identification of learning styles, strengths and weakness, interests, and preferences.

Self-advocacy refers to an individual's ability to:

- effectively communicate, convey, negotiate or assert his or her own interests, desires, needs, and rights.
- It involves making informed decisions and taking responsibility for those decisions.

# We are Among Greatness!

Business executives who pay great sums for consultants to teach them to “think out of the box” would do well to observe the habitually creative thinkers in their midst – people with disabilities.

The necessity of addressing mundane problems with creative solutions has likely prepared many people with disabilities to be innovative in more complex areas, including the challenges faced by school and business.



# Why Am I Here Today?







**“She won’t and can’t be successful.”**



My Parents were advised to put me in a school for individuals with developmental disabilities and took me out the next day when they realized that *system* was not designed for me.

**“I will and can be successful”**

Strong self-advocate, always wanting to help others, chosen as peer supporter to other students numerous times in elementary and middle schools. I always had good grades, made honor roll every year!



Success in the affairs of life  
often serves to hide one's  
abilities, whereas adversity  
frequently gives one an  
opportunity to discover them.

*Horace*

“You may not control all the events that happen to you, but **you can decide not to be reduced by them.**”

*Maya Angelou*



# Advocacy is Personal *and* Professional

- NFBGA Atlanta Executive Board
- disABILITY LINK Board Chair
- CDFI Coalition Board
- Inclusive Lending Workgroup Co-Chair
- CLD Community Advisory Council
- ADAPT



# Danny's Advocacy Journey

- Kindergarten
- High school
- College
- IL
- Civil disobedience
- Walking the line
- It all started because of an educator



**Who is your biggest advocacy  
influencer?**

**Why is self-advocacy important?**



**When was it difficult to advocate for yourself?  
How did you work through it?**

**Were you involved with your IEP?**

**Talk about your experience with self  
advocacy in school or in your everyday life.**

**“of” vs “for”**

# Peer Led Organizations

- National Federation of the Blind
- Georgia Coalition of the Blind
- Georgia Center of the Deaf and Hard and Hearing
- People First
- ADAPT
- Brain Injury Peer Visitor Association
- Georgia Association of the Deaf
- Centers for Independent Living

# Support Agencies in Georgia



- Center for the Visually Impaired
- Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency
- Metro Fair Housing
- Georgia Lion's Lighthouse
- Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities
- DBHDD
- ADRCs
- FODAC





# Tools for Life Team



**Carolyn Phillips**

Director, Tools for Life

[carolyn.phillips@gatfl.gatech.edu](mailto:carolyn.phillips@gatfl.gatech.edu)



**Liz Persaud**

Program and Outreach Manager

[liz.persaud@gatfl.gatech.edu](mailto:liz.persaud@gatfl.gatech.edu)



**Martha Rust**

AT Access Team Manager

[martha.rust@gatfl.gatech.edu](mailto:martha.rust@gatfl.gatech.edu)



**Danny Housley**

AT Acquisition Manager

[danny.housley@gatfl.gatech.edu](mailto:danny.housley@gatfl.gatech.edu)



**Gina Gelinas**

Educational Outreach Manager

[ggelinas3@gatech.edu](mailto:ggelinas3@gatech.edu)



**Rachel Wilson**

AT Specialist

[rachel.wilson@gatfl.gatech.edu](mailto:rachel.wilson@gatfl.gatech.edu)



**Sam Peters**

Program Specialist

[speters37@gatech.edu](mailto:speters37@gatech.edu)



**Sarah Endicott**

Research Specialist

[sarah.endicott@design.gatech.edu](mailto:sarah.endicott@design.gatech.edu)



**Tori Holder**

Outreach Specialist

[tori.holder@gatfl.gatech.edu](mailto:tori.holder@gatfl.gatech.edu)



**Ciara Montes**

AT Specialist

[ciara.montes@gatfl.gatech.edu](mailto:ciara.montes@gatfl.gatech.edu)



**Annabel Joyner**

AT Lab Specialist

[ajoyner8@gatech.edu](mailto:ajoyner8@gatech.edu)



**DeeDee Bunn**

Speech-Language Pathologist

[dbunn6@gatech.edu](mailto:dbunn6@gatech.edu)



**Ben Satterfield**

Research Associate

[rsatterfield8@gatech.edu](mailto:rsatterfield8@gatech.edu)

# Contact Us



## Tools for Life, Georgia's Assistive Technology Act Program

Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation

Georgia Institute of Technology

1-800-497-8665

[www.gatfl.gatech.edu](http://www.gatfl.gatech.edu)

[info@gatfl.gatech.edu](mailto:info@gatfl.gatech.edu)



facebook.com/gatoolsforlife



@tools4life\_at



@tools4life\_at

Disclaimer: Produced by Tools for Life (TFL), which is a result of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended in 2004. TFL is a program of the Georgia Institute of Technology, College of Design, Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation (formerly AMAC Accessibility) and was made possible by Grant Number H224C030009 from the Administration for Community Living. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of HHS.