



3DA Policy Agenda

2025

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Overview

This document displays the state by state and broadened nationwide policies in which our organization has recognized, prioritized, and are advocating for.

Priorities

1. Technology First legislation and thorough implementation
2. Legal Rights for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families

Technology First

Issue

Technology is not sought after enough when considering assistance in day to day lives for individuals with developmental disabilities, whereas Technology First legislation and successful implementation will help push the concept of technological advances and accessible assistive technology in a widespread effort in solution making surrounding individuals with developmental disabilities. Assistive technology is needed throughout many individuals' entire lives, so the available assistive technology must be more accessible in every state across the United States.

Overview

Making every state a Technology First State is our goal and vision. As of 2023, there are 40 states that have initiated technology first priorities, with only 11 of those states recognized as advanced or expert states in Technology First [1]. Technology First provides many benefits to not only individuals with developmental disabilities, but also parents, caregivers, supporting staff and organizations, and teachers and schools. Not only is legislation important, but so is the implementation and oversight of Technology First as it enhances society and inclusion as a whole.

Increased Independence and Community Integration

Prioritizing technological solutions can support independent living, work, school, and other settings for individuals with developmental disabilities which will result in more fulfilled and integrated living. People with developmental disabilities in the United States have far less access to technology than those without disabilities, resulting in exclusion, less communication, health, and education [2].

Staff Support

Technology can support direct support staffing shortages across the country by increasing the usage of assistive technology, remote monitoring, and access to technology [2].

Parent/Caregiver Support

Having more access to technological needs will also help parents and caregivers have the support that their children and them both need. Technology First can help support parents by providing additional support to their children as well as in their education.

Special Education

As most states continue to have a nationwide shortage of special education teachers, it's important to prioritize technology in solutions to overcome the shortage and assist current teachers, as well as schools at large.

Assistive technology is already required to be addressed on at least an annual basis in IEP meetings, but information about assistive technology as well as accessible means of acquiring and being properly trained on AT needs to be continually pushed, supported, and increased over time.

Technology can also support special education teachers, such as IEP softwares to increase efficiency. This approach not only helps teachers, but it also supports parents, all of which supports the individuals with developmental disabilities that need IEPs to succeed in the classroom.

Post-Technology First Legislation

Widespread training from experts in assistive technology and Technology First is going to be essential for each state to successfully implement the Technology First priority. Training in assistive technology is already a lacking part of the assistive technology field in general,

so there will need to be major action to strengthen AT training as well as make the training and education more accessible.

Technology First Advisory Task Force and Committee

Establishing a Technology First task force or committee in legislation will help maintain proper oversight of implementing Technology First in each state. An example is Minnesota creating a Technology First Advisory Task Force upon becoming a technology First state from 2019-2021, composed of various stakeholders and agencies within the state [3]. A similar model will need to be developed in other states that develop Technology First legislation.

Not only is a task force valuable, but the Technology First legislation and impact can also be overseen and addressed by each state's council or board on developmental disabilities as a recurring measure to Technology First's success in widespread adoption and effectiveness.

Allocated Funding

Long term, as state assistive technology (AT) programs become more utilized, we will need increased funding from the ACL (Administration for Community Living). With over \$31 Million allocated to states (and US Territories) in 2024, AT programs should expect to need an increased capacity as increased awareness and usage of these programs occur [4].

Legal Rights for Individuals and Parents

Issue

Many individuals with developmental disabilities don't receive the equal treatment in society that they deserve, causing extraneous distress to individuals and their families. This happens through stigma, lack of support to parents, social and economic issues in special education, and lack of funding.

Special Education

Parents need more support from schools regarding their children's IEP and education. Many parents experience pushback from schools when the school is obligated to provide a thorough education for all students and make necessary accommodations for children with developmental disabilities.

In addition, special education teacher shortages have been an issue in nearly every state. To overcome the shortages, many states have tried different economic interventions, as each state's specific circumstance requires its own unique solutions. The following need to be considered in each state

- ❖ Increased wages for special education teachers
- ❖ Partial scholarships or loan forgiveness to incentivize students to go into special education
- ❖ Implementing technology in classrooms and schools where it would benefit students and or teachers, such as assistive technology, IEP softwares, etc.

Medicaid

Increasing funding is important to ensure that individuals with developmental disabilities are not sitting on waitlists awaiting services that they are legally entitled to. Medicaid funding varies from state to state. Medicaid funding helps pay for Home and Community

Based Services (HCBS), including staffing; therefore, an increase in Medicaid funding would allow for more individuals with services and remove waitlists entirely.

Study Committees Leading to Educated Change

Increasing legislative awareness of the various areas within developmental disabilities is crucial in implementing and creating positive change for individuals with developmental disabilities. Without study committees being created, it is much more difficult for legislators to make informed based decisions on these important issues. Some examples include the following:

- ❖ Special education economic interventions
- ❖ Direct support staff retention
- ❖ IDD Waiver Research/Planning Committee

For more information, go to 3DA.org to learn more about the work that we do.

Sources

[1] <https://stateofthestates.ku.edu/technology-first>

[2]: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jar.13144>

[3]: <https://acl.gov/about-acl/assistive-technology-act-funding-allocations>

[4] <https://www.lrl.mn.gov/agencies/detail?AgencyID=2393>