

Assistive and Adaptive Technologies

Assistive and Adaptive Technologies are two types of technology that help people with disabilities. Assistive technology is any tool or device that helps people with disabilities do things they find difficult. Adaptive technology changes regular tools or devices to help people with disabilities use them more easily. Both types of technology help people with disabilities live more independently.

Examples of Assistive and Adaptive Technologies with Recommended Resources

DAILY ACTIVITIES

Smart Phone or Tablet Apps can help you with communication, and other tasks and activities. There are apps for messaging, talking and video conferencing, managing your to do list, monitoring your health, and much more. Some are free, some cost money to access.

Eating and drinking technologies include special cups with controlled flow, heavier utensils, spoons that bend, and plates and bowls that stay put on the table to stop food from sliding off.

Kitchen assistive technologies like timers, stoves that turn off automatically, or a microwave that talks can help you cook meals safely.

Personal hygiene devices can help you in the bathroom. There are special toothbrushes and toilets, as well as other bathroom tools. There are also tools to help you dress and undress, and special clothing with Velcro and magnets.

Assistive listening devices are systems that are used in some public spaces to help individuals with hearing impairments hear more clearly.

Screen readers can help you if you have low vision by reading text displayed on a computer screen aloud.

Braille displays convert text on a computer screen into Braille so you can read digital text if you have low vision.

Hearing aids make sounds louder so you can hear more clearly if you are hearing impaired.

Speech recognition software allows you to control a computer using your voice.

Customized keyboards have larger keys or alternative layouts to make typing easier.

Wheelchairs can be manual or electric and can help you move around more independently if you have difficulty walking or standing.

Modified vehicles may have hand controls, wheelchair lifts, or other adaptations to help you be able to drive.

- Find your local Assistive Technology Program Center by visiting the [NC Assistive Technology Program](#) website. This program can help you choose which assistive and adaptive technologies you might benefit from.
- You can also learn about funding resources for assistive technology from the NC Assistive Technology Program's [Funding Resources](#) website.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

A Medical Alert System, also known as a personal emergency response system (PERS), is a wearable device like a bracelet or pendant with a button to push to call for help in an emergency.

- Learn about the different types of medical alert systems and how they work from the [SafeWise](#) website.
- Read about how to choose a medical alert system in this [Healthline.com](#) article.
- Consumer Reports published an article titled [Best Medical Alert Systems](#).

Communication Devices that help you talk to others come in different types. Some are simple, like cards or books with pictures and words. Others are more advanced, like tablets that can talk or watches that track your health. These devices can be changed to fit what you need.

Schedules, alarms, reminders, and checklists can remind you to take medicine or show you what you need to do each day.

- The [Widgit Health](#) website offers free communication tools and checklists related to medical, dental, emergencies, etc.

Safes and lockboxes are strong containers made to keep things safe. They come in different sizes and types and protect things from fire and water. They can keep medicine or dangerous things safe.

- Learn about how to choose the right lockbox for your needs by reading the article titled [Choosing the Right Lockbox for Your Needs](#).

Privacy settings and parental controls are features on many devices, websites, accounts, and apps that let you control what others see. You can limit how much time you spend on devices and choose what you can and cannot see.

- Download the [Family Guide to Parental Controls](#) booklet from Connect Safely.
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HOME AND WORK

Home modifications, such as installing ramps, widening doorways, or adding grab bars in bathrooms can make your home more accessible. Adaptive software interfaces allow you to adjust settings on your phone, tablet, or computer, for example making text size larger and adjusting the colors and contrast.

- Visit the [Simply Home](#) website to learn how they design and implement person-centered technology solutions for independent living.
- Visit the [NC Office of Employment and Independence for People with Disabilities](#) website to find your local office and learn about the services they provide. This used to be called Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

Get Started with Assistive and Adaptive Technologies

Step 1. Identify the activities and parts of your life where you need assistance or adjustments.

Step 2. Find your local Assistive Technology Center by visiting the [NC Assistive Technology Program Center directory](#) website and call them.

Step 3. Use other Resources in this guide.