Myths and Facts Surrounding Assistive Technology Devices and Services

The 'Myths and Facts Surrounding Assistive Technology Devices and Services' publication by the Department of Education addresses widespread misunderstandings about assistive technology (AT), which includes speech generating devices (SGDs), within the IDEA framework. By debunking myths about AT and SGDs, we aim to shift perceptions and broaden access for those who can benefit from it. We've selected more than 10 myths from their publication to highlight, believing they will be particularly insightful for you. For reference, see the full article linked below.

Myth: Assistive Technology (AT) should only be considered at some individualized education program (IEP) Team meetings.

FACT: AT, including SGDs, can benefit students with a wide range of disabilities, enhancing their educational experience and functional capabilities. IEP teams must considered whether each child needs AT as a support.

Myth: An AT evaluation must be conducted before providing an AT device and service to a child with a disability.

FACT: An AT evaluation can be included as an AT service for a child but is not required under the IDEA.

Myth: Only staff who specialize in AT can deploy AT devices or provide AT services.

FACT: The IEP Team should include qualified educators who can support children with disabilities. The selection and provision of AT, including SGDs, depends on each child's needs, and can be delivered by related service providers or teachers.

Myth: AT does not need to be considered as part of the secondary transition process.

FACT: AT should be included in a child's transition plan for post-secondary life.

Myth: AT devices and services are only needed for the academic classroom and only for use at school.
FACT: An AT device or SGD should be used in all settings to enhance the child's proficiency and guarantee consistent daily support.

Myth: There are limited funding sources for AT devices and services.

FACT: There are multiple funding sources for AT devices and services.

Myth: Using AT devices and services will not improve child outcomes.

FACT: Research shows AT devices and services, like SGDs, enhance outcomes for children with disabilities across environments, aiding in tasks like reading, writing, and communication.

You can find their full resource at:
https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/Myths-and-Facts-Surrounding-Assistive-Technology-Devices-01-22-2024.pdf

Myth: The use of AT devices and SGDs lowers a child's motivation because it does the work for them.

FACT: Research indicates that AT not only helps fulfill FAPE requirements for children with disabilities but also boosts their motivation and engagement.

Myth: Children can learn to use an AT device, which includes SGDs, on their on their own; educators have no obligation to provide training to a child or to their family.

FACT: The LEA must ensure that children with disabilities, their parents, and educators understand the AT device's operation by providing AT services.

Myth: If a child doesn't want to use AT, a teacher doesn't need to follow up to model and encourage the child to use the AT.

FACT: If a child resist using an AT device or SGD device, the IEP Team must identify and address the cause, whether it's due to stigma, dislike, or misunderstanding. Solutions may include training, demonstrating the device's use, and connecting it to everyday activities.

Myth: Infants, toddlers, and their families do not benefit from AT devices and services.

FACT: AT devices and services often help infants, toddlers with disabilities, and their families meet developmental needs and support the child's growth.

Myth: AT does not need to be considered when a toddler transitions from early intervention services to special education services at the preschool level.

FACT: AT consideration is essential during a toddler's transition from early intervention to preschool, even if they haven't received AT through an IFSP.

Myth: All AT devices must be approved by the technology (IT) department.

FACT: The IEP Team determines necessary AT devices and services.

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