

# TECHNOLOGY TODAY

## ODP Technology Taskforce Newsletter



Let's *fall* into the sixth edition of the ODP Tech Taskforce's newsletter: *Technology Today*. We understand accessibility is key and strive to support individuals with disabilities, family members, and providers with resources, events, and other important updates in the assistive technology world.



### Call for Personal Stories



Our Taskforce is always looking for more individuals with disabilities to provide personal stories. We want to know how assistive technology has made a positive impact on people's lives. These personal stories can be in the form of videos, blogs, or written essays. They will be highlighted in our future newsletters.

**If you're interested or want to know more, reach out to:** [ra-PWODP\\_Outreach@pa.gov](mailto:ra-PWODP_Outreach@pa.gov)

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# Supportive Technology Language Guide

There are many different terms that are used when talking about supportive technology which can make it confusing to tell the difference between different services and supports. This guide provides an overview of some common terms and examples related to assistive technology.

[Click here to learn more.](#)

## Mobile Application Resources



**Petralex:** This free app allows you to turn your iPhone or iPad into a hearing aid simply by using headphones. It will automatically adjust to specific features of your hearing and has individual hearing correction technology for both ears. [Click here](#) to learn more.

**Chiceworks:** For a one-time fee of \$19.99, this app helps children 3+ complete daily routines by using unlimited schedules, timers, and images. This helps them manage their feelings, improve their waiting skills, and supports their independence. [Click here](#) to learn more.



## Accessibility is Key!

- [Pennsylvania State Parks:](#) A recreation guide that's accessible to all.
- [Accessible Philadelphia:](#) A guide to navigating accessibility in the City of Brotherly Love.
- [Google Maps:](#) Find wheelchair accessible places through the "Accessible Places" feature.
- [accessibleGo:](#) The first-ever accessible hotel booking site.
- [Handiscover:](#) Find accessible accommodations & hotels for the disabled worldwide.



## Sensory-Friendly Holidays



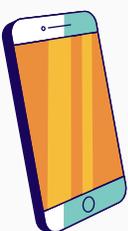
The holidays can be a wonderful time of year. They can also be very stimulating, even over-stimulating. There can be parties with new or unfamiliar people. There are bright lights lining the streets, new decorations around every corner, and smells of meals made for 20. While this can bring joy, for some it can be overwhelming to the senses...

[Click here for tips to help you & your family have a more successful holiday.](#)

### TECH CORNER: Wegmans: Shopping Carts, Aira, & Hearing Loops

Attention Shoppers! Wegman's recently announced their newest addition of assistive technology within all of their stores! Their goal is to help make their stores accessible to all and to help "customers of all abilities enjoy their shopping experience."

Aside from standard **shopping carts**, Wegman's will now have 5 other types available to help those with specialized needs. Three carts to help carry children: baby car seats, child carts, and Caroline's cart; for children with special needs. The last two are to help those with physical disabilities: wheelchair carts and motorized carts.



Customers will now have free usage of the **Aira smartphone app**. This app helps connect visually impaired individuals with certified agents while shopping. The agents are able to see what the visually impaired person is seeing in real time to describe items/prices/sale and guide them in the right direction.

**Hearing loops**, also called an audio induction loop, will be available to those with hearing impairments at the service desk and registers. These hearing loops allow individuals to directly connect their hearing aids to any other technology they may be using such as self-checkout machines, for a more clear and effective sound.



[Click here to learn more.](#)



## Personal Story

Like many other college graduates her age who are living back home, 25-year-old Alexa is ready to move out onto her own. While grateful for the support of her parents during this transition, Alexa has two exciting part-time jobs and she's ready for a change. And a change is imminent – Alexa and her parents recently purchased a ranch-style house in their community! With a move-in date scheduled for later this fall, Alexa and her family are busy planning the home modifications she'll need. In her parents' home, a SureHands ceiling lift helps Alexa get from bedroom to bathroom. The lift provides the support Alexa needs, and it's an easy and safe way for her to transfer. Alexa plans on getting an identical lift mounted in her new home, and she's making plans to widen the doorways, install a roll-in shower, and build a ramp so that she has a no-step entrance. All of these modifications will make it possible for Alexa to be more independent in her new home.

[Click here to read Alexa's story written by the PA Assistive Technology Foundation.](#)

## Upcoming Events

### My Tech for All: Technology Training

**What:** A **FREE** series of **SIX** live internet-based training sessions on using technology. You will learn how to use Zoom, Facebook, email, web browsers, Alexa, Google Search, Smartphones, and Tablets.

**When:** Every Tuesday from October 10 - November 14, 2023, 1 - 2:30.

- [Virtual Registration](#)



### PA Family Network Virtual Resource Fair: December Technology Summit

**What:** This online resource fair offers an opportunity to connect virtually with families and service providers to learn about local community resources representing disability services, health and wellness, and education

**When:** **FIVE** Virtual Summits in December. (Specific dates TBD)

**Last Day to Register:** October 30, 2023

- [Virtual Registration](#)



## Questions to Consider When Thinking of AT

### What tasks are difficult for you?

- Will the use of AT help you complete these tasks more independently?
- Will you be able to use the AT in different places (work, home, social situations)?

### What have you tried before?

- What ways of doing things have you tried?
- What materials, equipment, or tools have you used in the past?

### How involved will you be in the process?

- Will you be part of the decision making to figure out what AT you should try?
- What do you hope the AT device will do for you?
- Will you have a chance to try it before buying it?

### How will you know if the AT device is a good fit for you?

- Will you be trained on the new AT device?
- Will you actually use it?
- Will it help you meet your goals?

## Charting the LifeCourse

"Charting the LifeCourse" is a comprehensive framework that helps individuals and families plan and achieve their life goals by providing a person-centered approach to planning. It offers a range of tools and principles to support individuals with disabilities in achieving their desired outcomes and improving their overall quality of life.

One of the person-centered tools we would like to highlight is the Integrated Support Star. The Integrated Support Star helps organize and generate ideas in the following areas: Personal Strengths and Assets, Relationships, Eligibility-Specific, Community-Based and Technology. The support star can be used for planning, problem-solving, and exploring.

[Click here to read more.](#)



## Want to get involved?

For more information about the Taskforce, to get involved, or to submit a question please contact:

[ra-PWODP\\_Outreach@pa.gov](mailto:ra-PWODP_Outreach@pa.gov)