



Technology Principles

Everyday Lives

People in our society access technologies to engage in major aspects of life such as education, health care, employment, recreation, and civic engagement. It is a common part of everyday life for most people.

Using technology that is the same as what most other people are using should be the top priority. When people with disabilities are supported to get devices and adopt strategies all people and communities use as the first option, they are part of the mainstream of society. Specialized or customized items designed to meet person-centered needs should be usable and compatible with generic systems when possible.

Technology is a conduit to community. Finding, exploring, and connecting with others is a key feature of technology today.

Students with disabilities must learn about technology alongside their peers so that they are able to participate and engage as equals.

Empower People

Ensure individuals have control of and engage with technology on their own terms. Using technology is a choice, and no person should be coerced or mandated to use technology. Individuals must have freedom and control; those who do not communicate with words or speech must have decision-making authority and ways to express their choices.

Technology can modify individual homes and the environment to increase a person's ability to live as they wish. Using person-centered approaches, teams should design plans to incorporate technology that maximizes independence and supports self-determination.



Relationships

Assure technology isn't a replacement for needed human resources, like direct support staff, friendships, and co-workers. Technology should not be used solely as a cost saving measure, which could result in reducing services, loss of effectiveness of services, or limiting real world experiences.

The joys of face-to-face connection with one another, reciprocal relationships, and inclusion is important to quality of life. Technology use must be balanced against the risk of losing in-person interactions and decreased time in the community.

Relationships built through online communities are real, authentic, and meaningful and should be treated with equal status and value as direct in person friendships and relationships.

Security, Privacy and Risk

Individuals exercise their rights, make their own decisions, protect themselves, and take risks. Each person should have individualized support, information, education, and services to safely access technology.

We oppose surveillance without consent.

Privacy is a human right. Digital communications should not be monitored or controlled by others.

Security must be assured to protect civil rights and human dignity.

There are risks with online communities, such as cyber bullying, financial exploitation, and other negative aspects of anonymous social interactions. People should plan how to keep safe and protect themselves.



Learning, Education and Ongoing Support

Expertise is built through experience. We need many ways to learn, explore and grow over a lifetime. Exploring technology in schools, with peers, is the best time to start. Students access to technology should not be limited to school settings alone.

We must close the digital divide – Access to technology devices, internet service, cell phone data plans, broad band, and Wi-Fi are essential to day-to-day life.

Training, knowledge, skill building, and learning must be continuous and ongoing. Education must be provided in ways that are accessible to individuals with disabilities and their families.

Ongoing services and resources are needed to maintain technology and equipment. Generic community businesses should learn to repair and fix specialized equipment used by those with disabilities. This capacity would overcome common barriers and help ensure people can resolve problems quickly.