

**REGIONAL CENTER OF THE EAST BAY  
PURCHASE OF SERVICE POLICY #3402**

**Revised: 10/2010**

**ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY**

**PHILOSOPHY**

Assistive technology (AT) includes items designed to facilitate mobility, communication, community access or environmental control to maintain or maximize function and independence. Some items serve to maintain or improve health status or facilitate specialized care in the home. Examples of AT include durable medical equipment (DME) such as wheelchairs, apnea monitors, bath equipment, and personal lifts, adaptive switches, specialized eating utensils, dressing aids, and communication devices.

**SERVICE DEFINITION**

Assistive Technology items are generally prescribed by a physician in consultation with a physical, occupational, or speech therapist or other health care professional. The Regional Center of the East Bay Occupational Therapist assists with the selection of the right equipment to meet the consumer's needs as well as provides the necessary support to use and care for the equipment so that the individual will benefit fully from such technology. The RCEB OT will assist with identifying and accessing generic resources.

All AT devices must be removable. Permanent structural changes, van conversions, or installations will only be considered when they are most cost-effective and essential alternatives. Structural changes will only be considered on a case-by-case basis.

RCEB may purchase vehicle lift tie-downs and installation for consumers for whom full inclusion in family life/community outings is impeded, who weigh more than 45 lbs., and are not likely to ambulate. Permanent conversions to a van are considered on a case-by-case basis. Simple maintenance and cleaning are the responsibility of the consumer/family. Lifts must be removable. When a consumer/family is planning the purchase of a new vehicle, they are asked to coordinate the purchase with RCEB to ensure compatibility. Where possible a lift will be moved from old to new vehicle rather than funding a complete replacement.

RCEB may purchase a communication device for a consumer who can formulate communication and for whom a demonstrated communication strategy with environmental supports is in place. A Speech and Language Pathologist must be involved in recommendations and training when a communication device is considered. RCEB considers the portability of a device as a priority when selecting a communication device as this allows for communication in multiple environments to increase independence as well as safety.

**BOARD POLICY**

Assistive Technology may provide many benefits for individuals with developmental disabilities. For purposes of consultation the RCEB OT shall be part of the Planning

Team. RCEB may purchase AT when it is required for reasons related to the developmental disability and when the Planning Team believes either a) the equipment or device will prevent further disabilities, maintain or improve current functioning; b) such equipment is integral to the health care or function of an individual and/or makes specialized care in the home possible; c) the equipment allows the consumer to interact optimally with his/her environment and increases independence and family/community inclusion.

RCEB will “identify and pursue all possible sources of funding for consumers receiving regional center services. These sources shall include but not be limited to, both of the following:

1. Governmental or other entities or programs required to provide or pay the cost of providing services...

2. Private entities, to the maximum extent they are liable for the cost of services, aid, insurance, or medical assistance to the consumer”(W&I Code 4659(a)

RCEB will “ not purchase any service that would otherwise be available from Medi-Cal, Medicare, the Civilian Health and Medical Program for Uniform Services,... California Children’s Services, private insurance, or a health care service plan when a consumer or a family meets the criteria of this coverage

but chooses not to pursue that coverage.”(W&I Code 4659(c)) RCEB will “ not purchase medical...services for a consumer three years of age or older unless the regional center is provided with documentation of a Medi-Cal, private insurance, or a health care service plan denial and the regional center determines that an appeal by the consumer or family of the denial does not have merit.” (W&I Code 4659(d)(1))

### **SERVICE COORDINATION GUIDELINES**

When the Planning Team identifies a possible need for assistive technology, the case manager will obtain an assessment/recommendation from an appropriate professional and a prescription if necessary. The case manager consults with the RCEB OT to obtain an appropriate source for an assessment or the RCEB OT may complete an assessment, as needed. The OT will coordinate with the case manager to identify sources for the recommended AT and will assist in the identification of generic resources. The OT will complete a note documenting the following:

1. Name, type, and need for the AT

2. That the need for the AT is related to the developmental disability

3. That the equipment or device will prevent further disability or maintain or improve current function and/or makes specialized care in the home possible and/or the equipment allows the consumer to interact optimally with his/her environment and increases independence and family/community inclusion.

4. That the purchase is the most cost-effective to meet the consumer’s needs safely

5. Generic resources that were considered to fund the AT

6. Training needed to use the AT and complete routine simple maintenance and cleaning . Identification of who will provide the training.

For AT related to a medical need, a RCEB Physician or RCEB Nurse may review and complete a note documenting the above information.

The case manager will ensure that all generic resources have been explored and denials received as appropriate prior to purchase.

**AUTHORITY**

California Welfare and Institutions Code Section 4212(b) and 4659