

Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) Program  
Westchester Institute for Human Development  
University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities  
New York Medical College  
Team Project Abstract  
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**Title:** Assistive Technology Applications to Support Parents with Intellectual Disabilities

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**Proposal Description:** The goal of this project was to assess the ability of assistive technology (AT) applications to bolster parenting skills for parents with intellectual disabilities (ID).

**Objectives:** Assistive technology (videos, applications, handouts and smartphone apps) has been increasingly used to improve skills of persons with intellectual disabilities. This population is increasingly integrating into communities and becoming parents. Their success as parents can improve when given appropriate support. However, despite the number of online applications available to foster skills among the general population, there is a lack of evidence-based research documenting the benefits of specific applications that support parents with intellectual disabilities. The goal of this project was to find and assess commercially available assistive technology applications in terms of cost, skills taught, ease of use, appropriate audience, and adjustability. The results of the project will be shared with Project Impact, a program at WIHD that supports parents with intellectual disabilities.

**Methods:** A literature review was undertaken to search for articles, handouts, videos, websites and applications about available assistive technology geared for persons with special needs. Apps were evaluated using a scoring rubric (Malone and Peterson 2013.)

**Community Partners:** Interviews were conducted with social workers in Project Impact and with Dan Davies, CEO of Ablelink Technologies. Interview results revealed the aspects of parenting skills on which to focus and options for app customization

**Results:** Sixty-five AT resources were found and explored. None were specifically designed for parents with ID. According to the Malone and Peterson scoring rubric, 12 apps were rated highest. Thirteen other resources were also identified, which aligned with the Project IMPACT curriculum. Resources were found in 6 of the 9 skilled based categories covered by Project IMPACT. Nutrition and planning resources were the most readily available.

**Conclusions:** AT resources can serve as an important supplement to parent skills training, but

cannot fully replace clinician support. AT is easily, and readily available, can provide visual support that does not rely on literacy-based learning, and can offer education and reinforcement without clinician presence. It also offers opportunity for customized, consistent practice with immediate corrective feedback. There are currently no AT resources designed specially for parents with ID. AT selection, setup, and troubleshooting requires clinician support. The cost of AT hardware and access to wireless networks can be prohibitive. Additionally, not all parenting skills can be taught and supported with AT. AT alone is not sufficient to fill the gap of needed services for parents with ID.

**Next Steps:** Pilot test existing resources with parents with ID in Project IMPACT to determine extent AT can supplement clinician- taught skills and increase retention to skills.