

Assistive Technology and Digital Accessibility

Presented by the Easterseals Iowa Assistive Technology Team

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Center and Rural Solutions – Program Director

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Who Is Easterseals Iowa?

Easterseals Iowa provides exceptional services to ensure all people with disabilities or special needs and their families have equal opportunities to live, learn, work, and play in their communities.

Our Mission

Easterseals Iowa is leading the way to 100% equity, inclusion, and access for people with disabilities, their families, and their communities.



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SECTION 1

**What Is Easterseals Iowa's
Assistive Technology Program?**

Easterseals Iowa Assistive Technology Program

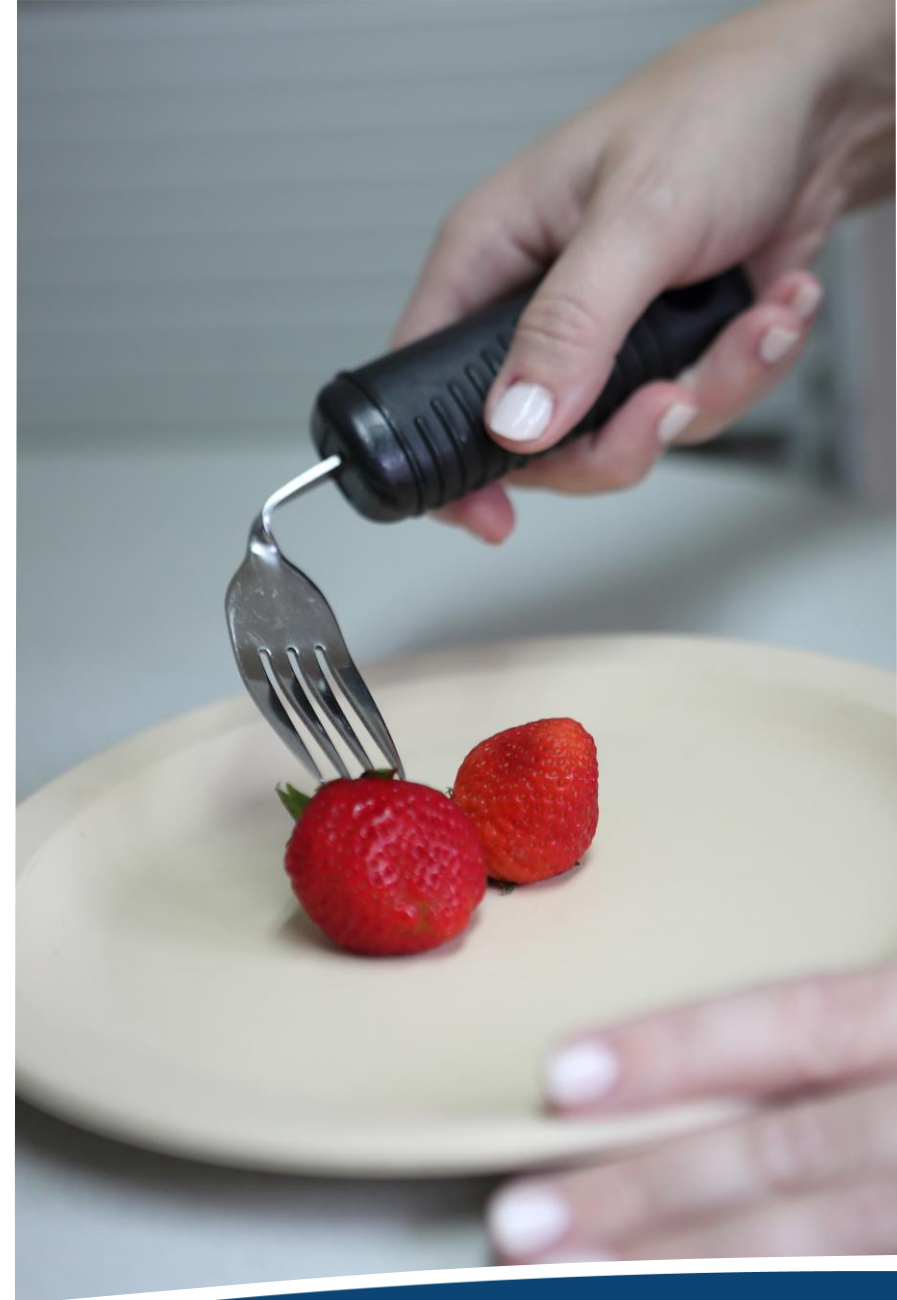
The **Easterseals Iowa Assistive Technology Program** helps Iowans learn about and access the assistive technology (AT) they need as part of their daily lives.

What is AT?

Assistive technology is anything that helps someone with a task they otherwise would not be able to accomplish.

Who do we help?

We serve all ages in all areas of Iowa. This includes aging Iowans in addition to those with disabilities and special needs. Any individual experiencing a need or their support team can reach out to us.





Today's Takeaways: Why Use Easterseals' AT Program?

- ✓ Participants will identify the process to obtain support for assistive technology services.
- ✓ Participants will identify 25 pieces of assistive technology available in the Lending Library.
- ✓ Participants will identify six techniques to enhance digital accessibility through the Digital Access for Everyone online modules

How We Put Our Expertise to Work for You

Any individual in Iowa can reach out to us with questions, concerns, or needs.

Consultations

If you can be supported through our services, we connect you with the team member in charge of the specific services you need so you can make an appointment.

Rural Solutions

We offer agricultural worksite and home modification consultations and many support resources for farmers AND any Iowan in a community of less than 2,500 facing a disability.

Referrals

If the needs of the individual cannot be directly supported by our services, an external referral is researched and provided.

How We Connect People With AT Equipment

Demonstration Center & Lending Library

- Demo equipment before purchasing
- Equipment and resources for families, individuals, counselors, and schools
- Create a free account and browse our [online inventory site](#)

AT Exchange

- Online classified ads that list devices people are selling or looking for

Durable Medical Equipment Loan Program

- Hospital beds, power and manual wheelchairs, etc.
- Nominal fees for an unlimited length of time





How We Support Assistive Technology Adoption

We're trained to approach each consultation on an individual basis of need. We expect bumps in the road and know how to navigate them until a successful AT solution is in place.

- ✓ The average person tries 7 different pieces of assistive technology before finding one that works for them.
- ✓ Being guided through a proper consultation helps avoid frustration and AT abandonment.

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SECTION 2

**Getting Familiar With
AT Device Options**

High-Tech and Low-Tech Assistive Technology

We often talk about AT device options as high-tech or low-tech.



- ✓ Low-tech devices are nonelectronic or very simple electronic devices.
 - Examples: Human note-taker, weighted spoons, magnifiers, alarms

- ✓ High-tech devices may be complex, expensive electronic devices that require a longer learning curve and oftentimes additional training.
 - Examples: Smart pens, text-to-speech (TTS) software, touchscreen devices, talking bottle readers

Commonly Requested Low-Tech Devices



Fingernail clipper attached to small board – Gives support and stability while trimming nails



Box topper – Tool for people with limited grip strength that helps open sealed boxes



Sand timer – For children who struggle with transitioning between activities and general awareness of time passing

Commonly Requested High-Tech Devices



Adaptive gaming tools – A range of buttons, switches, and triggers to replace traditional controls on gaming consoles

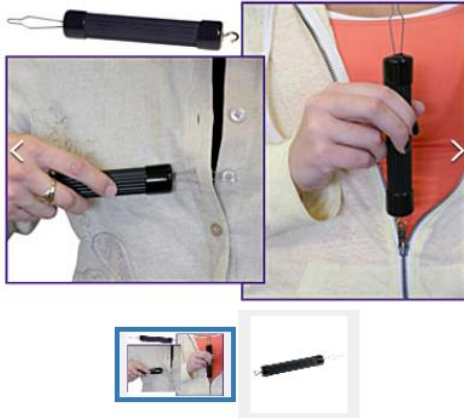


Talking pedometer – Announces distances and times to help encourage exercise in those with visual impairment



TAP wearable keyboard – Allows users to control keyboard functions by bending and tapping fingers

Commonly Requested Seasonal Devices



Winter (warm clothing)

- ✓ People with limited use of their fingers will benefit from this double-duty button aid and zipper pull.
- ✓ The formed wire pulls the buttons while the brass hook pulls zipper tabs.



Spring (outdoor hobbies)

- ✓ An easy-steering, rolling garden cart can be a huge improvement for those with limited mobility, ensuring they can still enjoy this popular hobby.



Summer (continued schoolwork)

- ✓ School-age clients with dyslexia or other reading difficulties continue their classes.
- ✓ A portable, USB-chargeable exam reader supports reading independence by reading text aloud.



Fall (holiday food prep)

- ✓ Specialized preparation boards make it possible to whisk, grate, peel, and cut one-handed.
- ✓ Suction cups keep the board in place.

DIY and Customization

Assistive technology does not have to be a commercially available product. It can be a product with aftermarket modifications when a commercially available product doesn't fit.

Can be less expensive and more individualized, like using an egg carton as a playing card holder or using PVC pipe to build a tablet stand.

We offer training for DIY opportunities.



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SECTION 3

**Understanding Our
Consultation Process**



First: Define the Goal

- ✓ We seek to understand what aspect of life the individual wants to engage in. **This is the goal.**
- ✓ Assistive technology is not the goal—it is the tool used to work toward the goal.

Second: Determine the Team

We'll ask a series of questions to help us fully understand who is involved and what role they play, and we consider this in our device recommendations.

- ✓ We consider family, friends, co-workers, employers, and paid support.
- ✓ We give the individual an opportunity to share their own desires and goals. They know their life and the challenge that brings them to Easterseals for AT support best.

The most important member of the team is the **end user**.



Third: Get to Know the End User

We engage the team in a conversation regarding the person's abilities, the environment in which the device(s) will be used, and the task or goal.

We'll ask questions like:

- ✓ Does the individual need support with eating?
Communication? Reading?
- ✓ What are their motivations and hobbies?
- ✓ Has the task been performed with another device in the past?
- ✓ What barriers—physical, learning, or attitudinal—might we face?
- ✓ Can the same device be used in all environments?



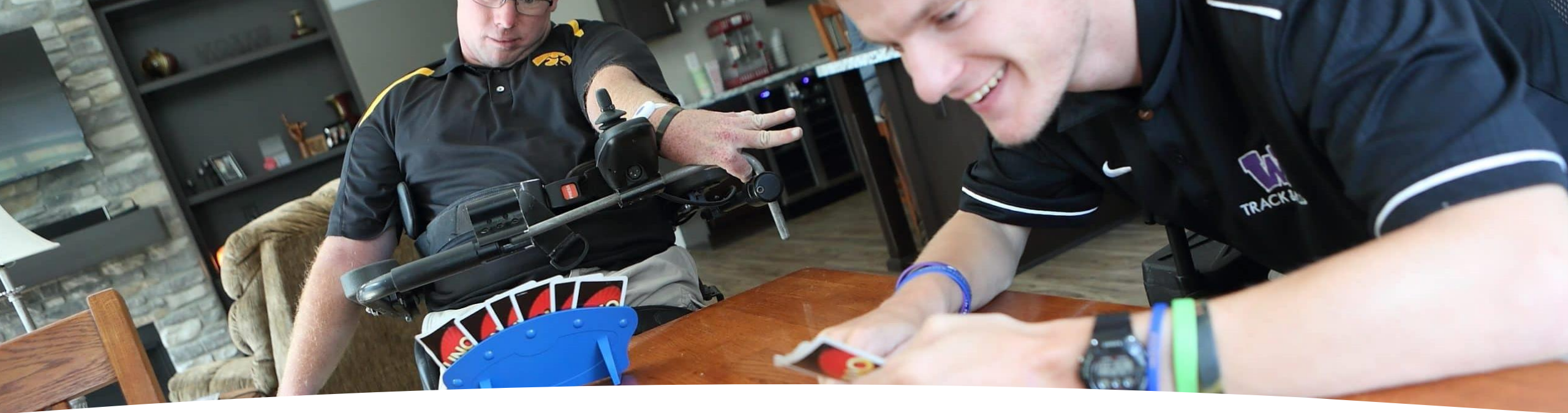
Specialized Consultation Services for Rural Iowans

Through our Rural Solutions Program, Easterseals Iowa offers:

- ✓ Agricultural worksite and home modification consultations
- ✓ Peer support
- ✓ Services for the family
- ✓ Information and referrals
- ✓ Medical equipment loan services through the Assistive Technology Program

Today, Rural Solutions supports Iowans with disabilities living in communities with populations under 2,500—not just farm families.





AT in Action

Let's meet some people using AT
and living better lives as a result!

Empowered Aging

Meet Elaine, an energetic 78-year-old with diminished mobility due to a minor stroke. The stroke also impacted Elaine's hearing and memory. She lives alone.

Elaine's Easterseals assistive technology experience included:

- ✓ Help identifying a vendor for her power wheelchair
- ✓ Ramp installation at her home
- ✓ An envelope guide to help address envelopes
- ✓ An amplified landline with large buttons
- ✓ A smart pill dispenser with a flashing light



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Empowered Aging Continued

These assistive technology tools are enabling Elaine to age in place and live independently. Her family is reassured she is staying on top of her medications, and phone calls are a much more enjoyable experience for the family since Elaine is hearing better.

In School & After School

Meet Grady, a fourth grader who was born without fingers on his right hand (dysmelia). As he gets older, Grady has become more determined than ever to keep up with his siblings at home and his peers in the classroom. The best part of his week is connecting socially through extracurricular activities.

Grady's Easterseals assistive technology experience included:

- ✓ A holder to help hold books open at school
- ✓ A typing aid to help with keyboarding at school
- ✓ A silverware cuff and non-slip mats for eating at home and school

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In School & After School Continued

- ✓ Jellybean switches in place of traditional gaming controllers for his e-sports club
- ✓ A gripping aid so Grady can ride his bike

Grady feels empowered and confident using his AT tools. He fits in with his peers, and he faces fewer obstacles to his learning and mental well-being.

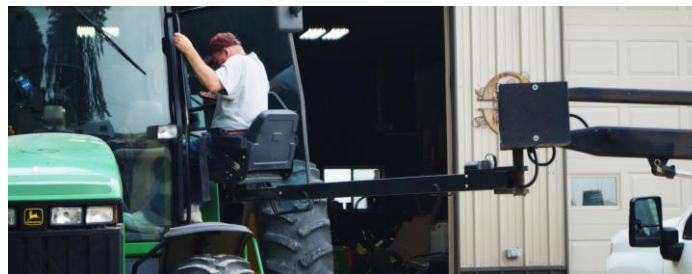
On the Farm

Meet Josh, a 55-year-old farmer, husband, and father of three who experienced an on-farm accident that left him paralyzed from the waist down. Before contacting Easterseals, Josh and his family were in crisis mode, unsure whether Josh could carry on with farming, their sole source of income and Josh's lifelong passion.

Josh's Easterseals assistive technology experience included:

- ✓ Numerous visits from the Rural Solutions team to not only identify AT options, but to help connect the family with resources like support groups and counseling
- ✓ An Essential Life Lift mounted in the back of a pickup truck, so Josh can move from the truck to the tractor or combine independently

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On the Farm Continued

- ✓ A modified ATV with a feeder on the back, which greatly streamlines Josh's cattle feeding
- ✓ A track-driven wheelchair that easily navigates uneven ground around the farm

With these AT solutions in place, Josh and his family are adapting to their new normal and can face the future with hope.

In the Workplace

Jessica is a 19-year-old adult with autism. She has limited verbal abilities, so communication by speaking can cause anxiety. She sometimes has trouble staying on task. Along with her parents and her support team, Jessica set a goal to get a part-time job.

Jessica's Easterseals assistive technology experience included:

- ✓ Social stories to help Jessica prepare for an office environment
- ✓ Testing a variety of subtle tools to manage anxiety, like a stress ball and fidget spinners
- ✓ A wearable reminder device to provide cues throughout her work hours and keep her on task

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In the Workplace Continued

These tools have given Jessica the framework she needs to be an asset in the workplace. She spends three afternoons a week at a local insurance agency, preparing mailings, filing paperwork, and tidying up—tasks that were always hard for the staff to get checked off the list!

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SECTION 4

**Determining the Right
Assistive Technology**

Trial the Assistive Technology

After the consultation, it's time to identify next steps and trial the devices!

There are thousands of devices available to help with various tasks.

It's essential to have conversations about what is working and what isn't working during the trial phase.

Remember: It may take up to 7 device trials to determine the best match.

Demonstration Center

At the Demonstration Center, we help clients **test out devices** that support recreation, access to daily living activities, computer use, learning, and much more.

- ✓ Compare options before taking a device home.
- ✓ Device examples: Adjustable height desks, Amazon Alexa and accessories, personal care devices, home care devices.
- ✓ Located at the Assistive Technology Center at Camp Sunnyside in Des Moines.
- ✓ **By appointment only.** Call 866-866-8782 (toll-free) or 515-289-4069 (TTY).



Device Loan Through the Lending Library

The Lending Library provides an option to **try devices for free** before you decide to buy.

- ✓ Search the inventory and bookmark items you're interested in at our [online inventory site](#).
- ✓ Create a free account and request a loan online.
- ✓ Borrow up to 5 devices for a 30-day trial period.
- ✓ A paper application is available at [iowaat.org](#) on the [How to Select a Device page](#).

Once you've checked out, items can be shipped OR picked up (by appointment only) at the Assistive Technology Center.

Items can be shipped back or returned to the Assistive Technology Center (by appointment only).



Scan to visit
our online
inventory
site

Easterseals Iowa Assistive Technology Program: Device Loan: Device Search

Search Parameters

AT Program: Easterseals Iowa Assistive Techno	Region: Main Location
Device Category: Vision	Device Type: All
AT Location: All	
Search Parameters: <input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Search Items"/>

Search Results

Info! Your search returned 66 devices.

Highlighted	Device Image	Device Name	Device Category	Device Type	Device Location
		2 Pack - Blue Light Blocking Glasses	Vision		Main Location
		2X UltraOptix Rectangular Clear Magnifier	Vision		Main Location
		Aukey Ultra-Portable Video Magnifier	Vision		Main Location

Lending
Library
Online
Device
Search
Example

Online AT Exchange Program

The Assistive Technology Exchange Program is a “classified ads” database, connecting lowans with the AT they need statewide.

- ✓ Search availability at the [Assistive Technology Exchange Program site](#).
- ✓ Contact the seller directly.
- ✓ Any lowan with AT equipment they no longer need can list items.



Scan to visit
the AT
Exchange
Program
site



Easterseals Iowa Assistive Technology Program: Reutilization: Device Search

Search Parameters

AT Program: Easterseals Iowa Assistive Techno	Region: All Locations	Reuse Program: All
Device Category: Mobility, Seating and Positioning	Device Type: All	
Search Parameters: <input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Search Items"/>	

Search Results

info! Your search returned 6 devices

Highlighted Listing Type	Device Image	Device Name	Device Category	Device Type	Region
True		Quantum Power Scooter	Mobility, Seating and Positioning	Main Location	Priced
		Hospital bed okay	Mobility, Seating and Positioning	Main Location	Priced OBO
		Permobil m300 powerchair	Mobility, Seating and Positioning	Main Location	Priced

Exchange
Program
Online
Device
Search
Example

Durable Medical Equipment Loan Program

The right medical equipment supports living at home and functioning independently. This program loans equipment to lowans with disabilities for a nominal fee.

- ✓ Runs solely off donated durable medical equipment: wheelchairs, walkers, shower benches, etc.
- ✓ Easterseals sanitizes and refurbishes the equipment.
- ✓ A healthcare provider must fill out part of the loan application.
- ✓ Application available at iowaat.org on the [How to Obtain a Device page](#).





Equipment Donations Needed!

We are desperately seeking donations of quality durable medical equipment.

Contact us at 866-866-8782 or atinfo@easterseasia.org to donate.



What Happens When an AT Device Trial Does Not Work?

Don't get discouraged! There are literally thousands of devices. Keep trying until you find something that works.

The staff at the Assistive Technology Center is always available to help identify a creative new solution.

Buying New and Funding an AT Device

- ✓ Easterseals Iowa is not a direct funder of assistive technology, but we can connect you with resources to assist in this effort.
- ✓ We also offer advice for choosing an AT vendor/supplier, including questions you should ask.
- ✓ Visit iowaat.org for brochures on both topics.

We collaborate with [Able Up Iowa](http://AbleUpIowa.org) to operate an alternative lending program that offers options for people with disabilities, including **reduced interest loans**, **small business loans**, and **credit builder loans**. Applications are available to fill out or print on the Able Up Iowa website.



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SECTION 5

**Digital Access for
Everyone**

Digital Access for Everyone

- ✓ Easterseals Iowa's Digital Access for Everyone is a two-hour introductory course.
- ✓ This course provides an overview of the top five topics that can help you make your content more accessible.
- ✓ The course is divided into navigation instructions, six modules, and an optional quiz.
- ✓ The modules may be taken in any order.

- Each module takes approximately 15 – 20 minutes.
- After each module, please fill in the feedback survey.
- To get an optional Certificate of Completion, please take the final quiz. Scores of 75% or higher receive a certificate.
- You may view [Student Profile](#) to Review Answers or Print Certificate again.
- [View our Funding Statement](#)





Review of Online Modules

Module 1 : Introduction

Module 2 : Alternative Text

Module 3 : Color Contrast

Module 4 : Accessible Headings

Module 5 : Descriptive Links

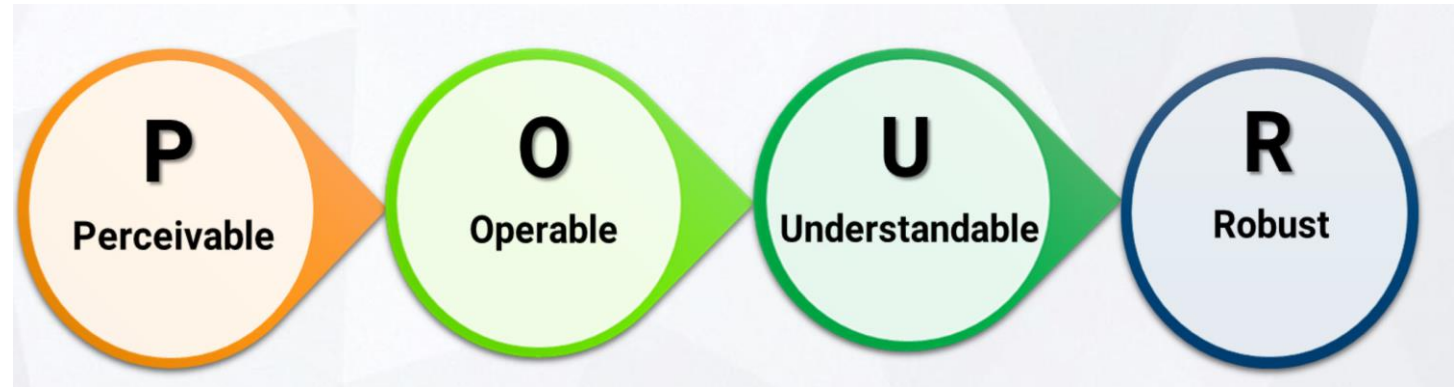
Module 6 : Clear Language

Introduction Module

Learn about digital accessibility, why it is important, and what standards exist.

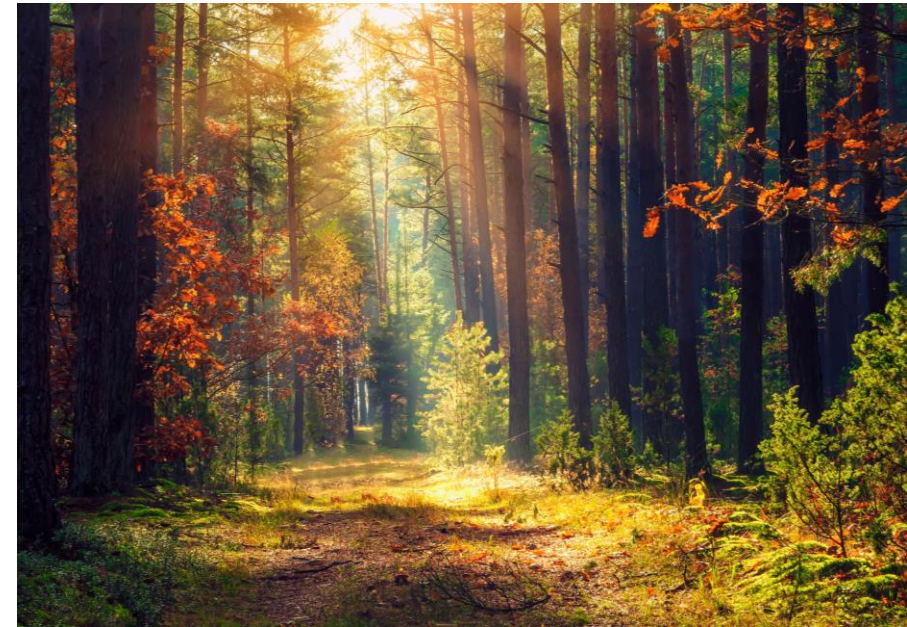
For Example: the POUR Principal is the foundation:

- ✓ Perceivable
- ✓ Operable
- ✓ Understandable
- ✓ Robust



Alternative Text Module

- You may have heard that “A picture is worth a thousand words.”
- If you are able to see the image clearly, complex or many ideas can be conveyed with that single image.
- You will learn how to make your image accessible with text that can be read by screen readers.



Color Contrast Module

- Color can help your audience identify and understand important information.
- It helps you communicate ideas and emotions.
- Unfortunately, color isn't as foolproof as you might think.
- Learn what standards apply and how to choose colors that are accessible.

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Assistive Technology Program

Colour Contrast Analyser (CCA) Edit View Development

Foreground colour (white)
HEX #ffffff

Background colour (black)
HEX #000000

RGB HSL HSV

Synchronize colour values

Red 0
Green 0
Blue 0

▼ Sample preview
example text showing contrast

WCAG 2.1 results Contrast ratio 21:1

▶ 1.4.3 Contrast (Minimum) (AA)
✔ Pass (regular text) ✔ Pass (large text)

▶ 1.4.6 Contrast (Enhanced) (AAA)
✔ Pass (regular text) ✔ Pass (large text)

▶ 1.4.11 Non-text Contrast (AA)
✔ Pass

Accessible Headings Module

- Headings, paragraphs, and white space help break up long content.
- This makes content more readable.
- Correctly formatted accessible headings provide information to users of screen readers.
- We refer to headings in terms of their levels.

H1 Heading

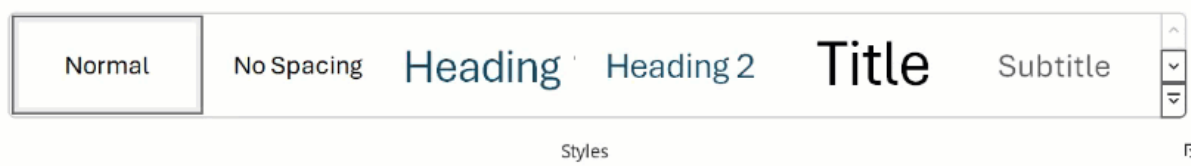
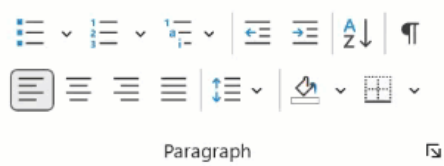
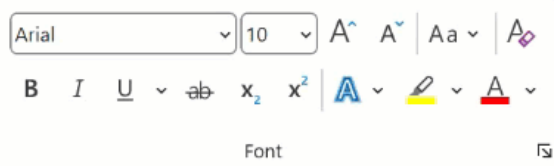
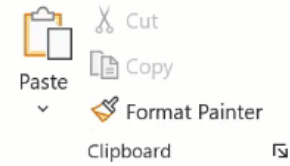
H2 Heading

H3 Heading

H3 Heading

H4 Heading

H2 Heading



Favorite Ice Cream Toppings

Fruits

Raspberries
Strawberries
Blueberries

Nuts

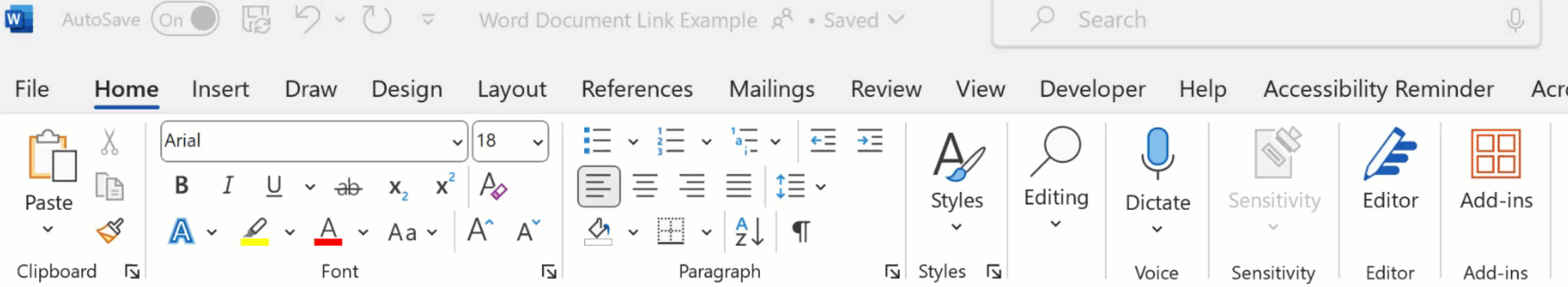
Almonds
Pecans
Peanuts

Sauces

Chocolate
Caramel
Hot Fudge

Descriptive Links Module

- Hyperlinks are a great way to send your audience to a destination like a website or document.
- Learn how to make your links more user-friendly and accessible.
- Non-descriptive link example:
 - <https://www.easterseals.com/ia/programs-and-services/assistive-technology-center/>



Easterseals Iowa Assistive Technology Center helps Iowans learn about and access the assistive technology (AT) they need as part of their daily lives to live, learn, work, play, and participate in community life safely and independently.

Clear Language Module

- Clear language is a style of writing.
- It uses clear wording, structure, and design.
- Clear language helps all readers find, understand, and use the information.
- It is sometimes called plain or common language.
- Learn 8 techniques to help make your writing clearer and more accessible.
 - The first rule is to use shorter sentences and paragraphs.
- Learn how to check grade level (Aim for 6-8 or lower)

Summary

- Learn the top five steps you can take today to create content that is accessible to a broader audience.
- The course comprises six short modules.
- Each module is about 15 to 20 minutes.
- Take modules in any order at your convenience.
- Take optional final quiz to earn a certificate of attendance.
- In 2025, we will offer a limited number of [two-hour in-person training sessions](#). Dates and registration available at [website](#).



How to Find Course

- Visit IowaAT.org.
- Select ONLINE TRAINING from the menu.
- You may also directly go to Training.IowaAT.org.



How to Register

- Select LOGIN/OUT.
- Select Register an Account.

Login

Accessing our courses requires a login below. First time users please register an account first.

Username (Required)

Password (Required)

Remember Me

Login

[Lost your password?](#)

Register

Don't have an account? Register one!

Register an Account



How to Contact the Assistive Technology Program Team

Please contact us if you or a loved one could benefit from any type of assistive technology.

Phone: 866-866-8782 (toll-free) or 515-289-4069 (TTY) • **Website:** iowaat.org

Email: atinfo@eastersealsia.org • **Address:** 401 NE 66th Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50313

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