

# **TYPES OF LEGISLATION THAT SUPPORT THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN LIFE**

*IT STARTS FOR EVERYONE WITH FREEDOM OF SPEECH*

## **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

The ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, state and local government, public accommodations, commercial facilities, transportation, and telecommunications.

## **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

That law, known as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, or the EHA, guaranteed that eligible children and youth with disabilities would have a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) available to them, designed to meet their unique educational needs.

## **Assistive Technology Act of 1998**

The Assistive Technology Act, also known as the “Tech Act”, provides funds to states to support three types of programs: (1) the establishment of assistive technology (AT) demonstration centers, information centers, equipment loan facilities, referral services, and other consumer-oriented programs; (2) protection and advocacy services to help people with disabilities and their families as they attempt to access the services for which they are eligible; (3) federal/state programs to provide low interest loans and other alternative financing options to help people with disabilities purchase needed assistive technology.

## **Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act Amendments of 1998**

Schools are required to integrate academic, vocational and technical training, increase the use of technology, provide professional development opportunities to staff, develop and implement evaluations of program quality, expand and modernize quality programs, and link secondary and post-secondary vocational education.

## **Fair Housing Act Amendments of 1988**

This legislation addresses non-discrimination issues for potential tenants with disabilities. It is unlawful to deny housing to a renter/buyer because of a disability that the person may have.

## **The Hearing Aid Compatibility Act of 1988**

This law requires that all telephone equipment manufactured or imported for use in the United States after August 1989 be compatible with hearing aids.

## **The Television Decoder Circuitry Act of 1990, Section 3**

The deaf and hearing impaired should have access to information and entertainment via television medium to the fullest extent possible through technology.

## **Workforce Investment Act of 1998**

In the vocational rehabilitation process, this law defines technology and its use in job planning, and acquisition and retention of people with disabilities.

## **ABLE Act of 2014**

Allowing people with disabilities to establish special accounts where they could save money to pay for education, health care, transportation, housing and other expenses. Individuals could deposit up to \$14,000 annually under current gift-tax limitations and accrue as much as \$100,000 without risking eligibility for Social Security, Medicaid, and other government programs.

Source:

[Assistive Technology Laws](#). Center on Technology and Disability. Republished with permission from the Family Center on Technology and Disability. Updated September 2014.

All people have the right to participate in life through communication, which is guaranteed by the constitution. The Developmental Disabilities Supports Division mandates that all individuals, regardless of the severity of their disability, should be supported to participate in life through communication.

Let's review this "Communication Bill of Rights" which can be used as a guideline to ensure that people participate through communication.

- 1) The right to request desired objects, actions, events, and persons, and to express personal preferences or feelings.
- 2) The right to be offered choices and alternatives.
- 3) The right to reject or refuse undesired objects, events, or actions, including the right to decline or reject all offered choices.
- 4) The right to request, and be given, attention from and interact with another person.
- 5) The right to request feedback or information about a state, an object, a person or an event of interest.
- 6) The right to active treatment and intervention efforts to enable people with severe disabilities to communicate messages in whatever modes and as effectively and efficiently as their specific abilities will allow.
- 7) The right to have communication acts acknowledged and responded to, even when the intent of these acts cannot be fulfilled by the responder.
- 8) The right to have access at all times to any needed augmentative and alternative communication devices and other assistive devices, and to have those devices in good working order.
- 9) The right to environmental contexts, interactions, and opportunities that expect and encourage persons with disabilities to participate as full communicative partners with other people, including peers.
- 10) The right to be informed about the people, things, and events in one's immediate environment.
- 11) The right to be communicated with in a manner that recognizes and acknowledges the inherent dignity of the person being addressed, including the right to be part of communication exchanges about individuals that are conducted in his or her presence.
- 12) The right to be communicated with in ways that are meaningful, understandable, and culturally and linguistically appropriate.

Sources:

[Guidelines for meeting the communication needs of persons with severe disabilities](#). National Joint Committee for the Communicative Needs of Persons with Severe Disabilities. (1992). ASHA. Supplement, (7), 1–8.

Dedrick J. Coalition: [People with cognitive disabilities have equal right to technology](#), Information Access. CU Connections. February 17, 2023.