

June 6, 2018

I am the mother of a 20-year-old intellectually disabled fantastic young man!

We were extremely fortunate to be a part of a county that offered monies toward an iPad through I believe the children's miracle network. This opened up a whole new world for my son in good ways and not so good ways. I think assistive technology is amazing and can be life-changing and even for some a life necessity. The concerns that I have regarding assistive technology as an experienced parent, advocate, and guardian are several. When my son first received his iPad my husband did his best to put security controls on it. Unfortunately after some time passed our son was able to get around them. Not uncommon for youth of today but can be very damaging especially to those that are vulnerable. So when I think about using computers, iPads, and other technology I think about how can our disabled youth and adults protect themselves, how to protect others, etc. Not just regarding what they're browsing but also security for personal information if using to pay bills or if somehow their account is hacked. How would they know and how is this being monitored or is there service that could do that?

I also noticed when reading through the PDF all the different places that offer loans or borrowing devices and or support by some of these providers. I would like to share an experience we had a few years ago when we were connected with the Center for Independent living in our area. I called wondering about the possibility of being able to have someone help me set up my sons iPad so that he would have reminders on it maybe even picture reminders to help him do every day self-care. I also wanted to use it to help him identify days and time as well as a couple other things. Very nice young gal came out to the house spent time talking left after saying she would look some information up and would give me a call. (this is after I already explicitly shared what my goal was in a phone conversation prior to this home visit) We did end up speaking in a follow-up conversation where she had guided me to some apps online that were supposed to help accomplish my initial mission. I proceeded to try a couple of the apps and it would only allow me to put one or two request items at a time onto the iPad under the app with no charge. Then the price was quite significant I believe \$14.95 Per each request. Meaning if I did a prompt to brush teeth that was one if I did a prompt to do mouthwash that would be another and so on. That idea quickly fell apart. Which is ridiculous because if my son had access to someone who could directly come out to the house or that we could meet who could then set up an application onto his device that would help benefit him and his caretakers- to me speaks independence.

There seems to be an abundance of service providers (all of which are making money and employ people who are also making money) but from our end navigating the system in place is very time consuming, appears inefficient, and needs simplification. We always have to be conscientious of who we are serving. These are families who most of them are already facing a tremendous amount of responsibility. Individuals with a varying array of disabilities whose goal it is to be as independent as possible. So in closing I would say do not just say these things are available- do not just make them available but follow through and make them usable.

Thank you for your time! Joy Krogstad

