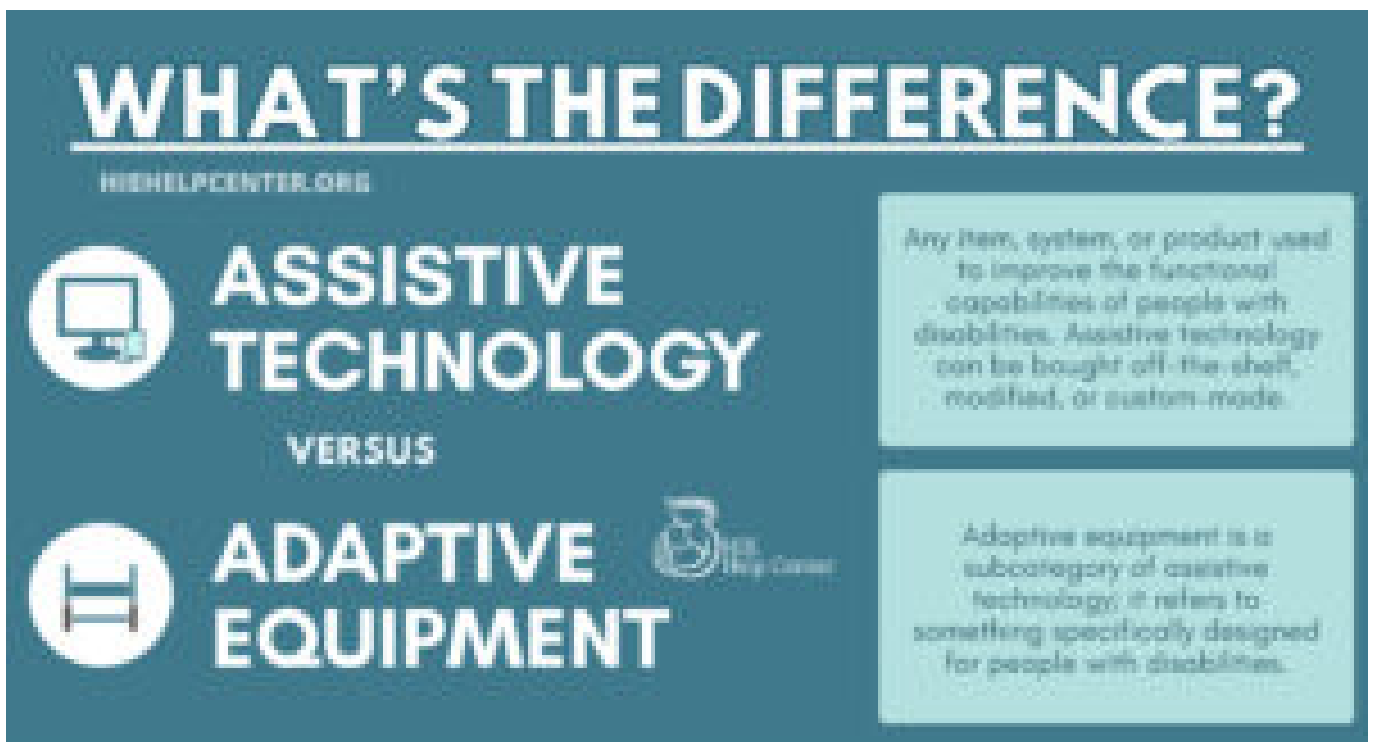


Assistive and adaptive technologies can help some people with disabilities ‘work around’ their limitations. Although the terms are often used interchangeably, there is a slight difference in the definitions of *assistive* technology and *adaptive* technology. Assistive technology is an umbrella term that refers to *any* item, system, or product used to improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. Assistive technology can be bought off-the-shelf, modified, or custom-made. Adaptive technology is a subcategory of assistive technology; it refers to something *specifically designed* for people with disabilities.



WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?
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ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY
VERSUS
ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT

Any item, system, or product used to improve the functional capabilities of people with disabilities. Assistive technology can be bought off-the-shelf, modified, or custom-made.

Adaptive equipment is a subcategory of assistive technology; it refers to something specifically designed for people with disabilities.

Types of assistive and adaptive technology

There are many kinds of assistive/adaptive technologies that address the different needs of people with disabilities, such as:



Mobility aids

The most commonly used category of assistive technologies are [mobility aids](#). These include walkers, wheelchairs, and other items that can help people get around.

Augmentative and Assistive Communication Systems (AACs)

AAC devices help people who have difficulty communicating verbally. A very famous example of an AAC is the communication system used by physicist [Stephen Hawking](#).

Technologies for the visually impaired

These include braille printers, screen readers, computer magnification programs, and other devices.

Technologies for the hearing impaired

These include hearing aids, cochlear implants, teletype phones, etc.

An HIE diagnosis can be difficult, but our team is here to help. Call
us when you're ready.

Technologies for feeding issues

These include curved utensils designed for people with limited dexterity, dishes that stick to the table to minimize spills, ergonomic bottle openers, and more.



Vehicular modifications

Accessible transportation is life-changing. Modifications can be made to some vehicles, such as adding adaptive steering systems, wheelchair ramps, or other features that help people with disabilities to drive or ride in cars.

Home modifications

Parents will have to modify their home to adapt to their child's disabilities as they grow. These include things like handrails near the toilet, non-slip mats, and voice command systems.

How much do assistive and adaptive technologies cost?

In short, it varies greatly. The pricing and availability of different classes of assistive/adaptive technologies depends on:

- General demand
- Need for custom modification &
- Relative proximity to a Assistive Technology & Accessibility Center (ATAC)

Because custom devices that meet an individual's specific needs are often expensive, some universities, state governments, and certain non-profit organizations (such as [United Cerebral Palsy](#)) may have assistive technology 'lending libraries' where individuals who qualify can borrow or rent adaptive devices.



About HIE Help Center

The HIE Help Center is run by [ABC Law Centers](#). We are a medical malpractice law firm that has handled exclusively cases involving birth injuries since 1997. If you suspect your child's HIE may have been caused by medical negligence, contact us to learn more about pursuing a case. We provide free legal consultations, during which we will inform you of your [legal options](#) and answer any questions you have. You pay nothing throughout the entire legal process unless we obtain a favorable settlement.

Related reading:

- [Recreational Equipment](#)
- [20 Questions to Ask Yourself Before Purchasing Adaptive Technology](#)
- [Communication & HIE](#)

Learn more about adaptive and assistive technologies:

- [Assistive Technology for Cerebral Palsy](#)
- [Edutopia's Assistive Technology Resources](#)
- [Assistive Technologies for Young Children: A Guide](#)