

Section 6—Helpful Tech

Knowing about smart devices

Knowing how to use things like smartphones, tablets, and laptops has become a big skill to have. For most jobs now you need to know how to use them. People with a disability should begin to learn early, especially if they use a different way to speak. If you do not know how to use a smart device, ask your parents and teachers to put that on your transition plan. That may be the biggest skill you need to help you live on your own.



Smart Home Convenience

Thanks to the computer age, life has become super quick. You can buy stuff online or talk to family and friends across the world. And you can control a lot of different things at home with a single smartphone or tablet. One of the largest new groups of people to use this hi-tech is people with disabilities. There are many items you can purchase that are called “Smart.” All together we refer to them as smart home devices. If you connect these devices together through the internet, it creates a smart home.

When gadgets can talk to each other, it can be life-changing for people with disabilities. A smart home gives you control. These devices can help you enjoy living on your own while easing the worries of your loved ones.

Think about getting all comfy in bed then you remember you forgot to turn down the a/c. Now think about reaching for your phone and changing the a/c without having to get out of bed. While you are at it, you can set your alarm to wake you up and also turn on your porch light. Smart gadgets have made life easier for people with disabilities. People that might not have ever thought they could live outside their family home now have ways to stay safe and live on their own.

Smart Home Safety

Safety means different things to different people. You might want to be safe from someone breaking in or you might be afraid of leaving your stove on. No matter what it is, smart home tech can help give you and your family peace of mind. Smart tech can alert you and your family if there is a burglar in your home or if you left the stove on. It can tell you if there is a water leak. It can even let you unlock the door for someone if you want.

TIP!

If you need financial assistance to pay for some of the smart devices you will need, contact your Support Coordinator to request funding from the Individual Family Support program at your regional human services authority or district.

There is no doubt that smart home gadgets have made life easier for people with disabilities. High tech will give you more control over how you will live and let you do more on your own.

| <i>Examples of Smart Home Gear</i> | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Smartphone or Tablet | <input type="checkbox"/> Smart TV |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Security Cameras | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Alert System |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Smart Locks | <input type="checkbox"/> Video Doorbells |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Smart Sensors | <input type="checkbox"/> Voice Assisted Technology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leak Sensors | <input type="checkbox"/> Smart Thermostats |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Smart Plugs | <input type="checkbox"/> Smart Lights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Door Sensors | <input type="checkbox"/> Motion Sensors |

Remote supports can allow family or friends to check in on you and support you when they're not there. It can also help you check in with them. Remember, it is your choice what tech you use and how it is set up to meet your goals. Remote support should not invade your privacy.

| <i>Some Ideas for Remote Supports</i> | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Remote checking of health vitals | <input type="checkbox"/> Remote alerts when meds are taken |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Remote control of a/c and heat | <input type="checkbox"/> Remote alerts when you leave or come home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Remote check-ins from family or friends | <input type="checkbox"/> Remote control of door lock and making a virtual key |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Remote talking to visitors outside the door | <input type="checkbox"/> Remote alerts of hazards in the home (like smoke, fire, gas, leaks, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Remote alert of a break in | <input type="checkbox"/> Remote view inside of home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Remote view of the outside of home | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Feeling safe is one of the biggest things in a person's life. It gives people a chance to enjoy their lives without the fear that they could be harmed. To make yourself safe at home you have to do some things in advance. You have to plan and make goals to build your confidence. You may not be safe all the time anyway. But there are things you can do to protect yourself most of the time.

Here are some ideas you and your family could use to make the most of your safety. Talk with your family and friends about how to handle yourself when you are out.

- Always be aware of who and what is around you. If something feels odd, it probably is.
- Know where you live and if there are different ways to get home if you don't feel good about going home the normal way.
- Always keep your cell phone on you with phone numbers and family contacts listed as favorites.
- Talk to others with boldness. It will make you less likely to be a victim.
- Know who you can and cannot talk about money matters with outside of your family.
- Check your home for things like faulty locks, broken windows, windows with no locks, etc.
- Always make what you want and don't want to be known in relationships. It's up to you to set limits.
- Be okay with saying NO.
- Don't be afraid to yell or make noise to get attention if you feel afraid or unsafe.
- If you don't talk, have someone else record a message on your phone that you can play to say you feel unsafe and need help.

Internet Safety

Keeping yourself safe is about your mind's well-being as well as your body's well-being. You also want to keep your money safe as well as all your things. The internet is full of people who would love to get hold of your money or make you feel unsafe.



The internet can help make people with and without disabilities more alike in many ways. It can help connect people and make you feel less alone. There are some big issues that come with being on the internet though. You need to weigh the good against the bad and decide how much about yourself you want to tell on the internet.

Some good things about the internet include learning things and connecting with other people. The internet can be fun and give you things to do. It can also help you be more self-sufficient.

There are also bad things about the internet. You could be bullied online, or see things that are not appropriate. Strangers could get in touch with you, or someone could get you to do things you shouldn't do. You might share too much of your private information, or buy something when you didn't mean to.

Here are some good internet tips:

- Do not share personal information with anyone online. This includes your name, address, phone number, date of birth, age, etc.
- Do not give away bank account numbers or credit card numbers to anyone online.
- Do not share photos of yourself online.
- Never invite anyone to your home.
- Never agree to meet anyone.
- Block people that send you inappropriate things or keep asking you for private information.
- Remember, it doesn't matter how many times you may have chatted with someone online, if you and your family have never met them in person, they are still strangers.

Resources

Fully Accessible Guide to Smart Home Tech by ZD Net

<https://www.zdnet.com/home-and-office/smart-home/fully-accessible-guide-to-smart-home-tech-for-the-disabled-and-elderly/>

Checklist

| Independent Living Skills | I Can Do This | I Need to Practice | I'm Going To Start | I Will Always Need Support | This doesn't apply to me | Notes |
|---|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| DIGITAL LITERACY SKILLS | | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have a smartphone | | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I know how to use my smartphone | | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have a smart tablet or computer | | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I know how to use a communication device | | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have an email address | | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I know how to check my email | | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I know how to send an email | | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I know how to get on the internet | | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I know not to share personal information on the internet | | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I actively use social media | | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I know how to purchase things online | | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I can recognize spam | | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I can use a word processing program | | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I know how to download programs | | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I can renew things online | | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I can change my digital password | | | | | | |