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## AIMing for Achievement

**Why Your Child with a Disability May Need Accessible Instructional Materials & How to Work with Your School**



## Welcome!

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## Agenda

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- ▶ Welcome
  - ▶ Introduction to AIM: How Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) can help!
  - ▶ How Do I Start? 4-Step AIM Decision-Making Process
  - ▶ Q&A
  - ▶ Conclusion & Resources
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## Introduction

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### Meet Julia

- ▶ 8<sup>th</sup> grade
- ▶ Reads slowly due to a reading based learning disability
- ▶ Trouble completing assignments on time



### Meet Matthew

- ▶ 1st grade
- ▶ Has cerebral palsy
- ▶ Uses a wheelchair and has poor vision



## Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) Can Help!

- ▶ Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) provide the same content as regular instructional materials (information is the same)
- ▶ Information is presented in a different way that helps the student access and understand the content



## Four Types of AIM (Specialized Formats)

- ▶ **Braille:** Primarily used by people who are blind or have very low vision. System of reading and writing through touch.
- ▶ **Large Print:** Printed materials that uses larger font for words and may include more white space than typical book.
- ▶ **Audio:** Human or electronic voice speaks the text so student can hear the information.
- ▶ **Digital Text:** Presents content in a format that can be read, listened to, or both. Options such as changing the size and color of text, speed of audio, etc. are typically available.

## AIM is about need, not about where you get it!

- If a student is served under IDEA and has a disability that impacts the ability to read printed materials, there is a legal responsibility to provide AIM in a timely manner.
- If a student cannot use current instructional materials effectively, AIM should be explored
- There are multiple sources of AIM



## Related Terms

AIM is not the same as **alternative materials** which address the same educational goals but modify the content (typically to make it less complex). Alternative materials may still need to be provided in specialized formats.

AIM and **assistive technology** (AT) are related, but not the same thing: AIM is the *content* and AT is the method used to *deliver* the content (more on this later!)

## **I think my child may need AIM. How do I start?**

- ▶ Work with the other members of your child's IEP or 504 team to make decisions about AIM
- ▶ Use a 4-step process to:
  1. Determine need
  2. Select specialized formats
  3. Acquire materials
  4. Support use
- ▶ Use the AIM Navigator to guide the team through the process and provide supports when needed:  
<http://aim.cast.org/navigator>

## **AIM DECISION-MAKING PROCESS**

1. **Determine need**
2. Select specialized formats
3. Acquire materials
4. Support use

<http://aim.cast.org/navigator/page/l4>

## **Step 1. Determine Need**

- ▶ AIM should be considered in initial evaluation or reevaluation - how will student access general education curriculum and the materials used by other students?
- ▶ Discuss the possible need for AIM with other members of your child's IEP or 504 team
  - ▶ Request to hold a meeting if your child is struggling to read and you think AIM could help
  - ▶ Team decision-making process that considers student's sensory, physical, and cognitive abilities and related data from family and professionals



### **Need: What information can school provide to team?**

- ▶ Classroom grades and assessment results
- ▶ Observations from teachers and other professionals
- ▶ Evaluation data from psychologists, audiologists, reading specialists, occupational therapists, etc.
- ▶ Trials with specialized formats and any related technologies



### **Need: What information can parents provide to team?**

- ▶ What you've learned by watching or working with your child on reading tasks at home
- ▶ Amount of time it takes your child to complete reading assignments
- ▶ Amount of independence your child has while reading at home (ex: need help turning pages, holding books, parents or others reading aloud?)
- ▶ Informal experiences student may have had with specialized formats (ex. Listening to audio books on iPod)
- ▶ Results from any informal trials with reading related technologies through state lending libraries
- ▶ Results from outside evaluations if any

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### **Do Julia and Matthew Need Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM)?**

- ▶ How are they currently **performing academically** in classes where reading is required?
- ▶ Can they **use** the materials used by others?
- ▶ Can they **see** the material well enough to read the information?
- ▶ Can they **hold a book** and **turn the pages** by themselves?
- ▶ Can they read an assignment **without getting tired**?
- ▶ Can they **recognize or sound out words** well enough to understand what they words say?
- ▶ Do they **understand** the information when it is read to them but have trouble reading on their own?



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## AIM DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

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1. Determine need
2. **Select specialized formats**
3. Acquire materials
4. Support use

<http://aim.cast.org/navigator/page/12>

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### Step 2. Selecting Types of AIM

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- ▶ Determine specialized format(s) needed for each text or other instructional material that will best enable student to:
    - ▶ Access information contained in printed materials
    - ▶ Work as independently as possible
    - ▶ Develop targeted literacy skills
    - ▶ Participate with peers
  - ▶ Consider the student's environment and tasks to be completed
  - ▶ Remember, four types of formats are: Braille, Large Print, Audio, and Digital
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### **Selecting formats: What information can the school provide to team?**

- ▶ List of all print materials used by student (texts, workbooks, worksheets, etc.)
- ▶ Details on tasks the student must complete (complexity, length, detail required, response type)



### **Selecting formats: What information can parents provide to team?**

- ▶ Student's preferences
- ▶ Home environment
- ▶ Other environments (ex: travel, community, etc.)
- ▶ Any history or experiences with any of the format(s) and related technologies
- ▶ Tasks that the student needs assistance with or avoids



## Which formats should be selected for Julia and Matthew? (May be more than one!)

- ▶ Consider:
  - ▶ Vision and listening skills
  - ▶ Motor skills
  - ▶ Memory
  - ▶ Student preferences
  - ▶ Independence
  - ▶ Environments
  - ▶ Tasks
  - ▶ Other



## AIM DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

1. Determine need
2. Select specialized formats
3. **Acquire materials**
4. Support use

<http://aim.cast.org/navigator/page/114>

### **Step 3. Acquiring Materials**

- ▶ If IEP or 504 team determines a student needs AIM, it is school's responsibility to acquire materials in specialized formats for a student
- ▶ AIM must be provided in a timely manner, which typically means the same time as other students receive print instructional materials
- ▶ Source of materials may vary but include National Instructional Materials Access Center, accessible media producers, publishers, and other sources. Many are free or low cost to schools!
- ▶ Sources may have differing criteria for accessing materials.



### **Acquiring AIM: What is the school's role?**

- ▶ Be aware about which accessible formats are already available in the school
- ▶ Know where materials can be obtained for students based on sources' varying eligibility criteria
- ▶ Designate individual responsible for acquiring each item in a timely manner
- ▶ Ensure specific details are recorded in IEP (not just generic description of adaptation ("students need audiobooks"))
- ▶ Fulfill responsibility to provide AIM to students in private placements IF the student receives services under IDEA through an IEP or IDEA service plan that includes AIM.



### **Acquiring AIM: What information can parents provide to team?**

- ▶ Knowledge gained at trainings such as this webinar or through other sources
- ▶ Experience with using sources to obtain accessible materials for leisure reading (Bookshare, Learning Ally, etc.)



### **Where might AIM for Matthew and Julia be acquired?**

- ▶ Options include:
  - ▶ NIMAC
  - ▶ Accessible media producers (AMPs) such as Bookshare & Learning Ally
  - ▶ Publishers and other commercial sources
  - ▶ Free sources
  - ▶ “Locally created”



## AIM DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

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1. Determine need
2. Select specialized formats
3. Acquire materials
4. **Support use**

<http://aim.cast.org/navigator/page/115>

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### Step 4. Supporting Use of AIM

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- ▶ **Technology** (mp3 player, laptop, etc.)
  - ▶ **Training** (school staff, parents, student)
  - ▶ **Instructional strategies** (teaching the student how to use the format and AT along with strategies for use)
  - ▶ **Support Services** (specialized staff, equipment maintenance, case management)
  - ▶ **Accommodations & Modifications** (quiet space to work, preferential seating, frequent breaks)
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#### **4. Supporting use of AIM: What information can the school provide to team?**

- ▶ Coordinate teacher and staff support for student
- ▶ Monitor progress made by student
- ▶ Classroom and school environment
- ▶ Technology currently available at school



#### **4. Supporting use of AIM: What information can parents provide to team?**



- ▶ Any history of technology used by student
- ▶ Current technology used by student
- ▶ Family's knowledge about specialized formats and related technology
- ▶ Home and community environment
- ▶ Feedback to team about how use of AIM is progressing



## What supports do Matthew and Julia need?

- ▶ Technology
- ▶ Training
- ▶ Instructional Strategies
- ▶ Support Services
- ▶ Accommodations and Modifications



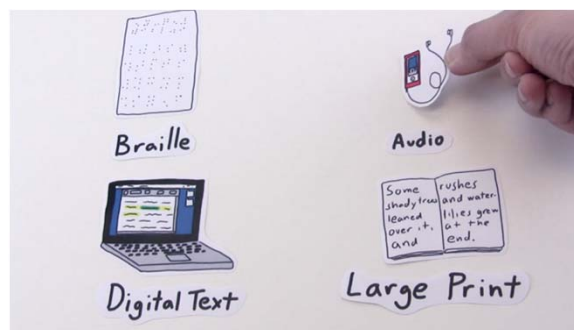
## Q&A, Conclusion, & Resources

## How else can I help my child?

- ▶ Encourage use of this decision making process with school (such as IEP or 504 team) to determine child's need for AIM (see [AIM Navigator](#))
- ▶ Think ahead to postsecondary settings and what formats will most likely be used there to help transition process
- ▶ Find accessible recreational reading materials: Individual membership to Bookshare and/or Learning Ally, audio books, borrow eBooks/audio books from local county library's website, etc.



## AIM “Simply Said” Video



<http://tinyurl.com/simplysaidseries>

or

<http://aim.cast.org>





## Where can I learn more?

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- ▶ National Center on Accessible Instructional Materials  
<http://aim.cast.org>
  - ▶ AIM Basics for Families:  
[http://aim.cast.org/learn/aim4families/aim\\_basics\\_families](http://aim.cast.org/learn/aim4families/aim_basics_families)
  - ▶ AIM Technical Guide for Families and Advocates:  
[http://aim.cast.org/learn/aim4families/aim\\_families\\_advocates](http://aim.cast.org/learn/aim4families/aim_families_advocates)
  - ▶ State-Specific Information:  
<http://aim.cast.org/learn/policy/state>
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## Where can I learn more?

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### Major Accessible Media Producers

- ▶ Bookshare: <https://www.bookshare.org/>
- ▶ Learning Ally: <http://www.learningally.org/>
- ▶ American Printing House for the Blind  
<http://www.aph.org>

See the AIM Guide to Accessible Media Producers for more information

[http://aim.cast.org/learn/practice/acquisitiondistribution/aim\\_amp\\_guide](http://aim.cast.org/learn/practice/acquisitiondistribution/aim_amp_guide)

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## **Thank you!**

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- ▶ National Center on Accessible Instructional Materials:  
<http://aim.cast.org/learn/policy/state>
- ▶ PACER Center: <http://www.pacer.org>
- ▶ Find Your Local Parent Center:  
<http://www.parentcenternetwork.org/parentcenterlisting.html>

