



# Department of Developmental Disabilities

## Office of the Director

John R. Kasich, Governor  
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## **TRANSFORMING LIVES OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES THROUGH TECHNOLOGY**

### ***Expanding access to technology can greatly improve independence, quality of life for Ohioans with developmental disabilities***

Many Ohioans with developmental disabilities encounter obstacles in daily tasks and activities as well as in accessing education and jobs. But these are barriers technology can help to overcome. With the signing of Gov. John Kasich's *Technology First* executive order, Ohio will become the first state to place an emphasis on expanding access to technology for people with developmental disabilities. Devices that can engage in two-way communication, or provide step-by-step assistance, can help people live the lives they want and become more independent.

Working with county boards of developmental disabilities, Ohio will ensure that technology is considered as part of all service and support plans. Individuals served and their families will be able to explore the many ways technology can expand opportunities and make life better. This is not a technology-only policy; instead, the goal is to help people learn more about how technology can improve the quality of their lives.

**Technology Can Supplement the Work of Caregivers:** Personal relationships are an essential part of care, and technology will never replace human interaction. However, the increased use of technology can help address the challenge of recruiting and retaining direct support staff in the developmental disability field. The demand for direct support staff is projected to increase and technology is one tool that can help support and supplement those who do the important work of caring for individuals with disabilities.

**Independence Is Enhanced Through the Use of Technology:** Many new technologies can enable individuals with disabilities to be more independent, productive, and included in their community. For example, assistive technologies may provide instructions on how and when to prepare the evening meal, to help a person maintain a routine or schedule, and how to access public transportation. Assistive technology devices include items like apps, cell phones, smart pads, and smart speakers.

**BOTTOM LINE:** Access to technology is important for everyone in our society, particularly for those with developmental disabilities. With the signing of the *Technology First* executive order, more people will have the opportunity to experience independence and personal freedom.