There is work that is work, and there is play that is play; there is play that is work, and work that is play. And in only one of these lies happiness.

– Gelett Burgess, American poet

In Chapter 1, assistive technology (AT) is defined as “the resulting processes, methods, or inventions supporting people with disabilities” (Bryant & Bryant, 2003, p. 2). Envisioning methods to support people with disabilities is inherent in many cultures.

At a gallery in Santa Fe, New Mexico, the proprietor explained to this author the significance of an unusual Kachina doll carving of two individuals. The first individual, being carried on the shoulders of the other, did not have functional legs for walking; the second individual, doing the carrying, did not have functional eyes for seeing. Together, through teamwork, they were able to navigate their life’s journey and in the process became empowered. The individual on the shoulders could see further than any in the tribe; the one on the ground developed strength and stamina beyond his peers. Both developed communication that was succinct, efficient, and effective. The proprietor concluded by emphasizing that supporting one another has long been an important principle among Native Americans and this carving was to symbolize and remind the onlooker of...
that principle. In light of the AT definition, it could be said that the carving is a reminder to all of us of the purpose of AT-discovering processes, methods, or inventions to support people with disabilities, with the final goal that all members of the new inclusive community become empowered.

The first objective of this chapter is to clarify the importance of AT for people with disabilities in the home and in accessing leisure and recreation opportunities. The second objective is to provide an introduction to and a sample of AT sources which support individuals in the home and in leisure and recreation activities. The third objective is a hope that the reader will commit to communities discovering the possibilities for fulfilled lives of all citizens. This chapter is addressed to individuals with disabilities, educators, parents, siblings, friends, therapists, service providers, youth and sports leaders, transition specialists and case managers with the outcome that they, as a team, become knowledgeable about and effective advocates for supporting individuals with disabilities across the age span.

As outlined in Chapter 1, The Technical Assistance to the States Act in the United States (Public Law 100-401) describes an assistive technology device as “any item, piece of equipment or product system whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized that is used to increase, maintain or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.” Typically devices are grouped as no technology (no-tech), relying primarily on the user’s ability to utilize various body parts and thus come at no expense, or low technology (low-tech), off-the-shelf inexpensive consumer technologies, or high technology (high-tech), typically expensive electronic technologies such as computerized toys (King, 1999; Mistrett, 2004). Most of the ones described herein are no-tech or low-tech.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY IN THE HOME

Self-care, Dressing, Grooming, and Hygiene

Self-care, to include dressing, grooming, and hygiene, is a very personal and intimate act that most of us take for granted. Ultimately, the ability to take care of one’s self-care needs is strongly related to independence, self-determination, and self-empowerment. Thus, when an individual is not able to perform common acts of self-care due to the absence of assistive technology, not only can it cause daily inconveniences, but also can cause a loss of self-empowerment, and therefore self-esteem, due to dependence on others. For individuals with physical limitations and for environmental care