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Let's Start Teletherapy! Tips for Parents

By Adrienne DeWitt, M.A., CCC-SLP

Teletherapy is a new and exciting way to deliver services to families with a desktop computer, laptop, or tablet. You may also hear teletherapy referred to as telepractice or telehealth. The goals, strategies, and quality will be the same as in-person speech-language therapy session. If you and your speech-language pathologist are using telepractice, here are some tips to ensure your session is a success:

- Make a plan with your therapist before the session starts! This will save valuable time.
  - o Go over the technology you will be using.
    - ▪ Make sure you have the proper hardware. Some clinicians may ask you to purchase a webcam, microphone, headset, or external mouse. However, many computers already have this hardware built in.
    - ▪ Teletherapy requires high speed internet. Go over your internet connection with your clinician.
    - ▪ The teletherapy platform is software that allows you and your child to interact with your clinician. Download all software before the session starts and become familiar with its features, such as screen sharing and drawing tools.
    - ▪ Discuss troubleshooting strategies with your clinician in case there are issues with the sound or camera.
  - o Discuss what the session will look like and your role during the session. Based on the type of therapy and your child's needs, you may be asked to be in the session to assist with technology, address behavioral and safety concerns, or learn how to support your child's communication. Even if you are not asked to be in the room, always be close by and monitor.
  - o You and your clinician should have a backup phone numbers in case of technology issues. Also, give the clinician the number of local authorities in case of an emergency.

- Make sure the environment is ready for learning!
  - o Set up your device away from windows to avoid being back lit or creating a glare. This will ensure your clinician can see you.
  - o Clear out distractions, such as clutter, toys, siblings, etc. This will keep the attention on the clinician. If the session will be on the floor playing with toys, clear out enough space for playing and angle the camera to the floor. If the child will be seated at the computer for the session, make sure to clear off the work area and provide the child with comfortable seating.

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o The clinician may ask you to bring certain materials into a session, such as a book, a specific toy, reinforcers, etc. Have these ready before the session starts.

- In order to respect everyone's time, let your clinician know at least 24 hours in advance if you need to cancel an appointment. Offer other times and dates to reschedule. Emergencies happen, but day-of cancellations are very disruptive to a clinician's schedule.

- Log into the telepractice platform at least 10 minutes before the session starts.

- If you are not present during the session, make sure to check in with the clinician before signing out of the teletherapy platform. The clinician can go over what was accomplished during the session, distribute carry-over activities and homework, discuss a plan for the next session, and work out scheduling.

Resource:

Lowman, J. & Cornish-Raley, N. "Preparing to Offer Quality Services through Telepractice: An Introduction," accessed on April 6, 2020, from https://learningcenter.asha.org/diweb/

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Item #HBH

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