

# Checklist with Pro Tips for Running Your First Pediatric Teletherapy Session

Pediatric teletherapy is the perfect way to provide effective treatment that complements the schedule, preferences, and needs of busy families and their children. Overall, modern care consists of in-person support, support between sessions (questions/feedback), and the ability to do live video. If you are new to pediatric teletherapy, this simple how-to guide will help you ensure your first sessions are a success.

## Step 1: Plan Ahead

- ☐ Think about when a pediatric teletherapy session would work best. When choosing a time, be sure to factor your patient's routine (like mealtime routine and feeding activities) into your scheduling.
- ☐ Share a quick lesson plan outline with parents/caregivers, and include a list of items or toys required for the session. This can be placed in a new session thread for viewing before, during, and after the session.
- ☐ Ensure your materials and resources are ready to share prior to the session.
- ☐ Before your first session, do a tech test to ensure the asynchronous chatting or live video is working for both you and your client.
- ☐ If you haven't already, have a client's phone number and email on hand in case you need to connect with them and coach them through getting started.

## Pro Tips from the Field

### ***Be Prepared to Partner and Explain More Than In-Person***

"While in session, say out-loud what you are thinking in your head. You have to start having those mental conversations externally so that parents understand how you

went to point A to point B, and why this would be the next step. Prep yourself before the session for communicating this way as it makes some providers uncomfortable if they now are explaining their once silent magic."

- ***Alisha Delgado, M.A. CCC-SLP***

## **Step 2: Start the Session**

- ☐ Warmly greet your clients or caregivers and confirm they can both see and hear you.
- ☐ If necessary, give instructions on how to adjust microphones, smartphone and/or webcam to ensure optimal communication.
- ☐ Have your cell phone ready in case of a disconnection.
- ☐ Review any questions, concerns, video clips, chats or goals from the previous week.
- ☐ Ask about progress or milestones since the last communication.

## **Step 3: Provide Therapy**

- ☐ While in the session, be yourself, and provide excellent treatment as you would in-person.
- ☐ During the session, create personal video clips and images of what the parents/caregivers will need to reinforce for their home programming between sessions

Based on the child and his or her growth goals, your therapy will be unique. Regardless, the following considerations can help to ensure a successful pediatric teletherapy session:

## Pediatric Teletherapy Coaching Tips

### ***Share the Power of Joint Activity Planning***

During the activity, remind family or caregivers of the importance of working together. Ensure all session activities resonate with everyone involved in care.

### ***Listen and Observe***

Make listening and observing your first priority during therapy. Be sure to take as many notes as you can. These will serve as great teaching opportunities later.

### ***Provide Feedback***

Give parents or caregivers constructive feedback and clear ideas of how they can improve.

### ***Ask Questions***

Ask parents or caregivers questions that will help them reflect on their performance and identify areas for improvement.

- Kaitlin Doyle, MS, OT

## Step 4: Finish the Session

- ☐ Summarize your session, highlighting particular items that need attention in the home programming strategies between sessions.
- ☐ Digitally send goals, successes, and home programming (created during the session) to all caregivers (not just the caregiver present)
- ☐ Provide highlights of the next session, including expectations that there will be a review of the caregiver progress and questions on home programming.

## Pro Tips from the Field

### ***Notice the Caregiver Shift When They Know the “Why”***

“As know have subtly taught the parents what you are looking for with stress cues, markers, etc., you will start to realize that an additional benefit is that the information that parents give you between sessions and after sessions is SO MUCH higher quality and engaged than before. Parents are now hyperaware, dialed in to what we are after to inform a personalized treatment plan for their child. You will find speed, progress and quality.”

- ***Alisha Delgado, M.A. CCC-SLP***

## After the Session

- ☐ Following the session, call the caregiver and family if you have any concerns; this could include things like: the child’s behavior, opportunities for technical improvements, distractions, etc.
- ☐ Encourage parents/caregivers to create videos of them implementing home programming or hard-to-capture-behaviors and send to you (via HIPAA-secure messaging) for review between session for feedback (note: conversations outside of face-to-face qualify as billable asynchronous telehealth)
- ☐ Create a calendar reminder for a short follow up message with all parents/caregivers half-way between sessions to check-in and send any questions or home practice videos to you

***Bonus:*** *For reminders between sessions to spur activity and questions, “schedule” emails using Outlook or Gmail features, and also use stock message templates that you can easily copy and paste.*