

TELEHEALTH GUIDE FOR CAREGIVERS

EDUCATIONAL HANDOUT

What is telehealth?

Telehealth is a therapy that takes place over the internet and involves a live video connection. Telehealth can be used with a child of any age as it provides opportunities for therapy services to be provided in different settings, such as schools and homes.



There are many reasons why a family may choose telehealth over in-center therapy.

- Examples:
 - A child may be homebound due to being ill.
 - Families may live too far from a clinic.
 - A child may attend an online school where all services are provided online.

For occupational therapy, telehealth provides a child with the same services that they would receive for in-center therapy. Treatments would continue to include activities and exercises to help the child with their struggles. It also involves educating caregivers, which allows them to be:

- Actively engaged in their child's therapy session
- Support their child's development
- Build confidence in their parenting skills

How to prepare for a telehealth occupational therapy session:

What type of device do I need?

- Ideally, use a desktop or laptop with a webcam and speaker.
- A tablet and phone can be used, but it may be difficult for a child to participate in certain therapy activities.



What type of internet connection do I need?

- A high-speed internet connection is ideal.
- To improve the internet speed for a session:
 - Members in the home should refrain from heavy internet use.
 - Browser tabs or apps should be closed out on the device.



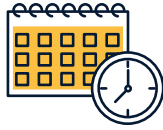
Where do I set up the computer for the session?

- Set up the computer in a quiet place with minimal distractions.
- Have a simple background behind the child.
- Avoid having the window behind the child. The outside light may make it hard to see the child.
- For activities needed at the table, have enough room on the table.
- For movement activities, have a small open space available.



How do I know the time and date of the session?

The therapy company or occupational therapist will provide the time and date for the session and information on how to join the telehealth session.



Do I need to stay in the session?

Yes, you should be present in the session to:

- Guide the child
- Help with the child's attention
- Troubleshoot issues that may arise in the session



How do I prepare for the session in advance?

- The occupational therapist may email you a list of materials that should be prepared before the session.
- Materials should be placed nearby.
- Have the child's favorite toy or activity nearby to help with the child's attention.



How do I help my child understand telehealth?

- You can share with your child that the computer will be like a "live video show," where they can:
 - Play games
 - Learn new things
 - Get stronger
- The occupational therapist will be the teacher who will help them learn and have fun.



What happens if the session does not go as planned?

- When working with a child, things tend to go differently than planned, especially in telehealth.
 - For example, there may be a poor internet connection, distractions, and a child's tantrums.
- You and the occupational therapist will work together to improve the session and help the child meet their goals.



What happens after a session?

The occupational therapist may ask you to complete home activities and exercises to help your child practice and improve their skills.



What do I do if I have questions?

Reach out to your occupational therapist with all your questions. Open communication and collaboration are key to helping your child.



References

- Allen, D T., Caldwell, P., Komersaroff, P. A., Loh, P. K., Mozer, R., Sabesan, S., Shaheen, N., Talman, P., Williams, M., & Grabinski, O. (2013). Practical aspects of telehealth: Set-up and preparation for video consultations. *Internal Medicine Journal*, 43(10), 1133–1136. <https://doi.org/10.1111/imj.12264>
- Bingham, J. M., Rossi, M. A., & Truong, H. A. (2022). Addressing the need for a telehealth readiness assessment tool as a digital health strategy. *Journal of the American Pharmacists Association*, 62(5), 1524–1527. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.japh.2022.04.016>
- Glueckauf, R. L., Pickett, T. C., Ketterson, T. U., Loomis, J. S., & Rozensky, R. H. (2003). Preparation for the delivery of telehealth services; A self-study framework for expansion of practice. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 34(2), 159–163. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0735-7028.34.2.159>
- Prasad, A., Brewster, R., Rajasekaran, D., & Rajasekaran, K. (2020). Preparing for telemedicine visits: Guidelines and setup. *Frontiers in Medicine*, 7(600794), 1–3. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmed.2020.600794>