

**Pediatric SLP
Insights for
Family Coaching
in Teletherapy**

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An Intro

- ❖ Clinical experience in the following settings:
 - Home-Based Early Intervention
 - Outpatient Pediatric Rehabilitation Hospital
 - Pediatric Private Practice
 - Clinical Adjunct at the university level
- ❖ My passion lies in working with children Birth - 3 with early developing language and pediatric feeding disorders. Therefore, my practice has a heavy emphasis on family involvement and caregiver coaching. This presentation will focus on those ages and domain areas.

What are your goals?

- ❖ What types of goals are you targeting for your patients in teletherapy?
- ❖ The goals you are targeting should inform the style and format of therapy in your sessions.
- ❖ What materials do you need and what materials do parents need to participate in a session, based on the goals you'll be targeting?

Therapy Materials

- ❖ Interactive websites
- ❖ Boom Cards
- ❖ Toys for the child and toys for YOU
- ❖ Zoom backgrounds

Communication Considerations

- ❖ Parent updates are important in person, but even more critical over teletherapy and in light of challenging and changing times.
- ❖ Asking direct questions that don't lend themselves to one word answers
 - Instead of “How is he doing?” or “Were there any changes this week?”
try
 - “What updates do you have for me regarding Susie this week?”
 - “We talked about trying XYZ strategy last week. Were you able to try it out? What happened when you did?”

Parent Participation

- ❖ Communicate clear expectations for participation in your sessions
 - “To confirm, who will be joining Susie for her speech session today?”
 - In your follow up email, provide positive reinforcement for helpful things that parents did in your sessions
 - “I really appreciated that you had toys ready to play show and tell with!”
 - “Your presence really supported Susie in staying on task for our session today.”
- ❖ You have the ability and arguably the ***responsibility to facilitate change*** in the format and support structure of your sessions
- ❖ Recruit parents to be partners for success in planning your sessions
 - If you need materials present for the session, email a list the day before
 - If a child benefits from a particular seating structure, communicate that at the beginning of your call, and ask the parent to make the changes at that time.

Shared Responsibility

- ❖ It's easy to fall into a dynamic in person in which parents view their role as one in which they bring their child to therapy, and we do the work, or make the magic happen
- ❖ Let's use teletherapy as an opportunity to reestablish a relationship in which we are supporting parents and families and placing responsibility on them to carryover the work we do in session, at home and in their daily lives.
- ❖ The one hour a week that a child sees you IS NOT ENOUGH.
 - The one hour should be viewed as a time to trial new strategies and make a plan for the practice that will happen all week long until your next session.

Coaching

- ❖ Ask parents to initiate or model play with their child
 - “Why don’t you start with playing cars with him to get him engaged, and I’ll jump in with some different ideas to try out!”
- ❖ Plan to focus on just one or two strategies during each session and coach the parents in implementing that strategy throughout play.
 - “It’s so great how you’re pausing after showing him the two cars you’re holding. Let’s try adding in a verbal model. So you show him the car, say “car” and THEN give him that great pause to communicate.”
- ❖ Coaching requires repetition
 - Don’t expect to give a suggestion and have parents implement it perfectly or in every opportunity that exists
 - It’s our job to repeatedly point out the opportunities to weave in use of strategies throughout play.

“Let’s try it now!”

- ❖ Many times we give parents ideas and instruction on use of strategies and are met with an “Oh ok!” or “Sounds good!” as a response.
- ❖ This doesn’t mean a parent doesn’t think your suggestion is a bad idea. It usually means they’re waiting to follow your lead.
- ❖ Have the confidence to suggest **“Great, let’s try it out now!”**
 - “Do you any books nearby that we can try this out with?”
 - “Could you grab that smaller spoon now to practice with?”
 - “Could you use the blanket next to you to practice making a swing?”
- ❖ **Facilitate action**

Asking Questions

TURN THIS	INTO THIS
“How did he do this week?”	“What updates do you have for me?”
“Have you seen any improvements?”	“How did using the strategies we talked about last week go?”
“How has everything been?”	“What happened when you implemented XYZ strategy?”
“How is he doing this week?”	“What activities has he been enjoying this week?”
“Is he saying any new words?”	“How has he been communicating with you this week?”

Time to Listen

- ❖ Be mindful of how much you're talking and sharing strategies throughout the session.
- ❖ Ask questions that facilitate conversation and open communication with parents during your session. *Assume that they have questions.*
 - “What questions do you have for me?”
 - “What challenges with communication have you run into this week?”
 - “What toys has he been enjoying playing with this week?”
- ❖ Quell the assumption that your session is for “getting work done.”
- ❖ Parents shouldn't feel as though asking questions is “interrupting” or “distracting” from a session

The Inevitable Tantrum

- ❖ If a parent has been requesting support with managing communication during tantrums, take advantage of any that take place during the session
- ❖ Seeing a tantrum take place in a natural environment during teletherapy can give you an inside look you wouldn't get in person
- ❖ Communicate to the parent that you're happy to help them navigate communication at this time
- ❖ Provide concrete strategies using concise phrases to coach the parent through managing the tantrum

I'm All Done!

- ❖ Kids are allowed to be all done or uninterested in an activity.
- ❖ Our role is to help them communicate, so we should ensure we are working on communicating these messages as well.
- ❖ Don't be afraid to spend time targeting phrases such as “all done cars” or “no puppy!” even if it is in relation to an activity that you are presenting or suggesting to a child.
 - *This type of language is communication and is necessary for independent function in the world.*

Carryover

- ❖ Be specific and concrete when giving carryover activities for the week
- ❖ Don't be afraid to ask a caregiver to continue doing the same activity you did in today's session. If you were just gaining traction with this activity, there's no need to reinvent the wheel.
- ❖ Have parents practice activities and strategies that they and the child are having success with - not something new.
- ❖ Reiterate the assigned carryover 2-3 times during the last 10 minutes of the session. Avoid a sudden end to the session and begin phasing into the end stages of the session gradually.