

## Experience with Teletherapy from a Mom That Has Been There and Done That

My son did a year and a half of Teletherapy when he was young. Fast forward 5 years and I have worked as a Spanish interpreter for a Teletherapy platform for the last 16 months. I believe it works, I believe it benefits the families and the children that are served through this delivery method and I believe it has great advantages for the family.

In times when face-to-face therapy sessions are not possible, we need to adapt and be open to new things all for the sake and progress of our children.

Recommendations to make it a great experience:

- ❖ TRY IT, the mind, like a parachute, works better when it's open.
- ❖ Be prepared to:
  - Have a few glitches and stumbles when you are connecting the first few times. You are working with a new type of technology and like all technology, it takes a few trials until we learn how to use it.
  - Chase your kid around! Kids at this age like to move and explore and be curious! All that is great.... If you are using a laptop, make sure it has enough battery to be unplugged and be able to move it around. If you are using a phone, make sure your phone is charged, too!
- ❖ This type of therapy is geared towards the "Parent coaching model", where the therapist teaches the Parent what to do, how to do it, when to do it... and the Parents implements the strategies and knowledge in real time.
  - The benefit of this approach: THE PARENT LEARNS HOW TO DO IT AND GAINS CONFIDENCE TO DO IT EVERYDAY, IN THE CHILD'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND IT CAN BE A NORMAL PART OF THEIR DAILY ROUTINES.
- ❖ Something that might help is to have your child seat in his/her high chair, with the tray on. This will keep him in one place for a portion of the session and makes some activities easier. Have toys, books or activities prepared and next to you but not reachable by your child as you must be in control of the situation. Place them on a box under the high chair or next to you.
- ❖ The therapist NEEDS to see you in the screen too. Seating next or behind the child works. If your baby or toddler has Unilateral Hearing Loss, make sure you position yourself on the side that the hearing is better.
- ❖ Prepare for the session before you start.
  - What are his/her favorite toys
  - What is a new book that catches his/her interest?

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- Is playing with water an option? (a container with a little bit of water and bathtub toys are always a hit)
- A ramp for cars made from cardboard will keep boys and girls playing in the same spot for a good while
- Cooking something simple (peanut butter and jelly, sliced banana, cake mixes) is a great activity, too
- ❖ This type of therapy is best when we follow the child's lead. A little baby or toddler will not hold his/her attention for long periods of time, so be prepared to change activities often and follow your child's interest. The therapist will be prepared to work on different skills based on the interest of the child at that moment.
- ❖ If you feel that a whole hour session is not working for you, request to have half hour sessions instead.
- ❖ If you are using an interpreter, it's very easy and user friendly. The interpreter will have part of the screen and access to audio. You can make the interpreter screen smaller or bigger, depending on your preference.
- ❖ Your Therapist should send you a Face to Face sheet (or activity report) for the session you had that day, this should come via email. Ask your therapist to explain clearly what activities you need to work on during the week. Ask for "homework" as this will work as a reminder for yourself.
- ❖ Make sure you write questions or concerns as they come to mind during the week. Communication is a bit less fluid when you use an online platform. Email them to your therapist the day before your next session.

### **DON'T WORRY ABOUT...**

- ❖ How your house looks... they do not care... they have seen worse = )
- ❖ How you look... you are at home, wear comfortable clothes.
- ❖ If the session doesn't run perfectly. We are working with young children, being flexible and having some humor goes a long way!
- ❖ If the therapist had a plan and that did not work. IT IS OK. Following the child's lead will bring much better results in the long term.