

Supporting Mental Health Needs of Very Young Children via Telehealth

August 20, 2020

Resources:

- [Link to webinar recording](#)
- [COVID-19 Resources for Children's Services](#)
- [UCLA Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Assessment Tools](#)
- [Association for Play Therapy](#)
- [HIPAA-Compliant Technology During COVID-19](#)
- [The Observation of Child Behavior During Parent-Child Interaction: The Psychometric Properties of the Crowell Procedure](#)
- [Infant-Early Childhood Mental Health Parenting Resource](#)
- [Addressing Early Childhood Emotional and Behavioral Problems](#)
- [Policy and Advocacy Resources](#)

Chat organized by themes:

Keeping children and families engaged during telehealth visits

Would you be willing to share the written directions you give parents before their first telehealth visit?

I have attended multiple workshops from the Association for Play Therapy – a4pt.org – offering nuts and bolts of engaging children in telehealth if there is interest.

I have created multiple Popsicle stick puppets with feeling faces, using books, etc.

I love the Mr. Potato Head idea!

Something we have used through telehealth is scavenger hunts.

Zoom has training but super easy to use just explore share screen, you should see the whiteboard

Denise Torres: Yes, I agree. [Parent Child Interaction Therapy] PCIT is wonderful for telehealth services.

UCSF Child Trauma Research Program (the Child-Parent Psychotherapy "mothership") has done some great online trainings on using telehealth since COVID. Many CPP clinicians (as well as my colleagues in an early childhood-focused setting) report focusing more on supporting parents than on direct therapist interaction with children since transitioning to telehealth. And therapist-supporting-parent-to-support-child is a core principle of CPP even in person.

At our clinic, we mail little items that we will plan to use in the next session and then engage child and parent in the activity.

In NJ foster care visits with birth parents, etc. are all done on Zoom

In the school or preschool, you can see the child face to face, and then telehealth with the parent at home or at work to include in treatment

I am really doing well more often than not with teletherapy. My age group is 12 mo to 16 years and their caregivers.

What is the best way to get a child to be interactive during an hour sessions? I tend to use videos with them but then they become distracted by the video.

I have asked the children to give me a tour of their home and they show me it.

There is such a thing as zoom fatigue. It's very important to schedule breaks in between sessions

Maintaining confidentiality/virtual tools to use for document completion

For information on HIPAA compliant platforms, including Zoom, see our resource here:
<https://theinstitute.umaryland.edu/media/ssw/institute/national-center-documents/HIPAA-compliance-and-Platforms-COVID-19.pdf>

How would you recommend handling things like basic registration/signatures, confidentiality conversations. Might this be handled with an advance mailing? I am thinking about the problem of

not knowing who is in the home with information that might be sensitive. Also, how do you monitor/assess for any on-going dv or parental mental health concerns or needs.

We use DocuSign. Also they can come to office to "enroll", with paperwork completed, but then sessions are virtual.

Adobe fill & sign is a free app that is user friendly

My agency use DocuSign to get forms filled out

Code words are good so the parent can tell you they don't to speak on something

Another suggestion that I've heard – "Maybe we could talk while you and the children take a walk?"

Challenges with telehealth

Yes... TF-CBT is so difficult with a screen in between us

The families we meet with technology is strained or burnt out with continued virtual sessions

For my families is that they don't have the social supports so they miss that in face one-on-one attention that they expect from the in-person program.

Most of mine don't like teletherapy either...ADHD or foster family with 4 young children that have trauma and ADHD have all struggled with teletherapy

Many of the families I work with- especially the children, do not like telemed

Staff is burning out as well.

Will you touch on the challenge of providing teletherapy by speech therapists, OT, PT and Play therapists to 3 and 4 years old with developmental delays as part of nursery school online learning and their IEP mandate?

Impact of COVID-19

It will be interesting to see the long-term effects of Covid on our children's development.

Excellent point on how COVID may have had neurological effects on children! This is not being discussed enough in the mainstream media, but providers are beginning to explore this more as more COVID 19 patients (including myself) are reporting things such as fine motor skill issues, psychomotor impairments, memory changes, and issues with auditory processing.

Please check out this UCLA Brief COVID-19 Screen for Child/Adolescent PTSD

<https://istss.org/clinical-resources/assessing-trauma/ucla-ptsd-assessment-tools>

Symptoms that could present as a possible Developmental Delay could actually be COVID. Consider differential diagnosis before diagnosing.

I suppose we should be monitoring for both. Both are very important.

Have a mother of 2 year old twins who must keep the children quiet at all times so that dad can work from home due to COVID 19. Mom reports that behaviors have become concerning that the children know if they "fuss" in the smallest amount that they get whatever they want. Language has regressed in that child "grunts" or "fusses" instead of attempting a sign or word. Mom also feels like she doesn't encourage language because it might create a "tantrum"

<https://theinstitute.umaryland.edu/covid-19/>

The Crowell Procedure

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10826-016-0625-0>

Is anyone writing anything up on the Crowell with video? I've advised against calling it Crowell especially in court reports because of a lack of research base.

I've used the model just not called it a Crowell

But not research on the telehealth/video aspect, right? I wonder how the change in methodology changes outcomes.

Questions related to the mental health of young children

This is a broad topic with an organizing framework of promotion, prevention and intervention or treatment outlined here: <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/110-infant-early-childhood-mental-health>

When families are seeking psychiatric diagnosis, would you strongly recommend for families to have current therapist provide treatment information and developmental scores to better service your efforts to make diagnosis? Especially, for ASD concerns?

Certainly given the complexities to consider in early childhood diagnosis a multidisciplinary team with experts in MH, development are advised with a throughout review of health, educational and mental health records. This article from the American Academy of Pediatrics outlines best practices <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/138/6/e20163025>

How can I get involved in policy/advocacy/research for infant-toddler mental health initiatives? As a practitioner, am specifically interested in initiatives that recognize or examine the link between mental health, cognition, and language development.

ZERO to THREE coordinates both federal and state specific advocacy campaigns and information is available here: <https://www.zerotothree.org/policy-and-advocacy/advocacy>