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## Pediatric Telehealth: Essentials for Creating a Successful Telehealth Program

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- [Fawn] Today's course is Pediatric Telehealth: Essential for Creating a Successful Telehealth Program. Our presenter today is Jessica McMurdie. She is the owner and clinical director of Stepping Stones Therapy Network, a successful pediatric OT practice in the Seattle area. She also shares her pediatric expertise on her popular blog, Play It Forward Therapy, [www.playitforwardtherapy.net](http://www.playitforwardtherapy.net). She has two decades of experience working with children and their families in hospital school, birth to three and outpatient settings. She holds dual degrees in Spanish and occupational therapy from the university of Washington and specialty certification in sensory integration from the university of Southern California. Jessica is a nationally award-winning small business owner recognized as an emerging leader by the American occupational therapy association and the US small business administration. She is a contributing author to the bestselling book, "The OT Manager". For more pediatric activities and education to inspire your practice, please visit her website. Welcome Jessica, so happy to have you.

- [Jessica] Thank you, Fawn, I'm excited to be here today. So let's jump right in to Pediatric Telehealth: Essentials for Creating a Successful Telehealth Program. The learning outcomes for today is my hope that you will be able to identify at least three benefits of telehealth as a service delivery model, and to identify at least three essential elements needed to set up a successful telehealth program. And also by the end, to be able to list at least one example of a treatment activity, that includes the use of a common household item that a client already has at home. So let's take a look at the course overview. This is an introductory level webinar. And so we're gonna cover the basics of telehealth and how it can enhance your pediatric practice. So if you're feeling skeptical, overwhelmed, or even a little bit under prepared for telehealth, I really hope that this course will boost your understanding of the central components that you'll need to set up successful teletherapy sessions and you'll learn best practices and how to fulfill your amazing role as a virtual therapist, while meeting the needs of your clients

and your families. So again, my name is Jessica McMurdie and I am the founder of Stepping Stones Therapy Network. And I'm super excited to be presenting again today. And for those of you who don't know me, I founded my practice out of the trunk of my car back in 2006. And I am the owner of Stepping Stones and I started planning for telehealth in creating a telehealth program back in 2016. So when COVID hit, we were able to transition overnight, literally overnight from brick and mortar in person office visits to online sessions. And I'm also the course creator of T-School, which stands for Telehealth School for Pediatric Therapists and this is the same program that we use at my clinic and that I use to train my team and so today I'm gonna show you highlights from this program and we'll get started. So the first off is, what is telehealth? So telehealth is defined as the application of evaluative, consultative, preventative and therapeutic services delivered through telecommunication and information technologies. And if you are currently working in outpatient practice, school-based, early intervention or a hospital, then this applies to you because telehealth is really in the future for all of these settings.

So let's take a look at a few areas of practice where research has already been conducted to highlight occupational therapies effectiveness in telehealth. Here is some evidence based literature and these are the practice settings that have already clearly defined the benefits of telehealth. So early intervention, school-based, rehabilitation, activities of daily living, adaptive equipment prescription, home modifications and ergonomic assessment. So if you want to read more, they're highlighted in this journal article, which is also listed in the reference section. Let's talk about service delivery models in pediatric OT. So the latest OT research indicates that telehealth is an effective service delivery model, which may be provided through number one; direct treatment and intervention, two, through parent and caregiver coaching, three, consultation and four hybrid models, which could be a combination of all of the above. What is occupational therapist role in telehealth? And it's important to go back to AOTA and look at their official documents. So the first one is the OTA position

statement, and this statement really outlines our role and responsibilities as telehealth practitioners. It discusses OT's role in assessment intervention and consultation and the supervision of personnel and it also provides case examples. So the second official document is the AOTA Code of Ethics. And this is really focused on best practices and our moral and our legal obligations as practitioners, because there are unique issues to telehealth that are not necessarily problems for in person sessions that you really should be aware about. And the third document is the scope of practice in telepractice, which we will review more on the next slide.

Okay, the scope of OT in telepractice. So occupational therapists can use telehealth to number one, help clients develop skills two, to incorporate assistive technology and adaptive techniques, three, to modify work home and school environments, and four, to create health promoting habits and routines. And these specialty areas are where we can show the distinct value of the OT profession. And this is really our chance to let our unique talents and skills as occupational therapists shine. Telehealth is another chance and it's another opportunity for you to highlight your unique skillset and your expertise. And this is a crowded online world of coaching and I believe that it is really important for our profession to put a stake in the ground and to claim our territory. OTs are some of the most qualified professionals to step into the role as teletherapists. And I think as a profession, if we are all do this together, it will really strengthen our online presence. Let's talk about the benefits of adding teletherapy to your OT practice. So what are those benefits? Why would I do this? The first thing is they can be a complimentary service to onsite sessions. And this is especially important during the reintegration phase of COVID-19.

Secondly, it increases your service offerings for particular clients or students who have to travel long distances or if they have limited access local clinics or for immunocompromised patients. It also helps to keep your schedule full by mitigating cancellations and patient schedule changes. So another example when I use telehealth

is when Seattle had this huge snow storm and actually nobody in Seattle really knows how to drive in the snow. So everything was pretty much shut down, but clients were able to stay safe at home while continuing their OT program and the therapists, they could continue working from home and get paid, even though most of the city was shut down. So telehealth really came to the rescue then from my practice. The next one is it really has a significant financial impact. So I have observed that it seems to me that the COVID crisis has meant that many schools and clinics are no longer able to provide in person sessions and this has a significant financial impact upon not only practices, but also individual therapists financial situations. So if they're laid off or have a reduction in hours.

So in summary, big picture benefit is if you a telehealth program as a complimentary program, or even as a backup in the case of emergencies, it really makes good financial sense, especially if it makes a difference between your clinic closing or staying in business or keeping your job and keeping you employed. The next slide talks a little bit more about other benefits. So consulting opportunities with other practitioners and caregiver training. You can also perform functional assessments and really get a chance to observe the child in their natural environment. Some examples include positioning and ergonomics and providing home health assessments to observe the child's activities of daily living and their daily routines. It's also an additional option for discharge followup sessions. And finally it is convenient because telehealth allows therapists and clients with less travel time and it really can help some people overcome transportation challenges.

So let's talk about the benefits for your clients, your students and your families? So the first benefit is it provides continuity of care. So this is a time of great upheaval in children's lives. And can you imagine all the kids who are not getting OT because the workplace does not have a telehealth program in place. The second is generalization of skills because telehealth, it provides us really awesome opportunity to help kids

generalize the skills and strategies that we've taught them in OT at home. And it also helps parents integrate the OT strategies into their daily routines. And this is especially important in the world of early intervention for example, where embedding OT into family routines is a really core principle of best practice. And the third one is convenience. So many of the parents at our clinic have appreciated spending less time in the car and one of our parents even shared that her child's telehealth session, it literally gave her back the gift of time. And number four is makeup sessions. So if your clinic has an attendance policy, telehealth is another option to offer for a makeup session. So the treatment plan, it could be a hybrid of an in person and an online visit and this really helps kids to maintain their progress over time with that type of consistency. And it's ironic, but actually our clinic has had the best attendance rates during the pandemic with only a 5% cancellation rate. Number five is booster sessions. So some parents might want to add booster sessions to supplement their in person visits and number six has parent coaching.

So telehealth really gives parents opportunities to speak privately with their therapists and not in front of the child, because ultimately as an OT or a pediatric therapist, you have two clients, you have the parent or caregiver, and you also have the child and your conversations will definitely differ depending on which one of those clients you're talking with. And number seven is parent meetings. So telehealth is great for scheduling follow up parent meetings to discuss a child OT evaluation, or check in with goals or a child's progress. And lastly, number eight is collaboration and caregiver training. So with virtual meetings like IEP or meetings at other schools, it's much easier to consult with other professionals and to attend onsite meetings virtually. So let's talk more about the nuts and bolts of telehealth as a service delivery model. The first thing you need to know in terms of terms is originating site. So this is where the client or your student is located, or other qualified professionals are located and the distance site is where the provider is located. In terms of the model of delivery, we have two words. The first one is synchronous and synchronous is live secure, real time, face to

face communications, and is often referred to as video conferencing and the patient or student or client is present. The second is asynchronous, and this is store and forward types of information such as medical images, video captures, chat, instant messaging or email, and the patient or client or your student is not present. Here's an example of a video that this parent sent from home prior to their scheduled session. So while you're watching this video, I'd like you to think what is the model of telehealth service delivery in this example from early intervention. So let's go ahead and watch this video.

- I want to go to bed.

- Okay, now let's go back to the presentation. So if you answered asynchronous, then you are correct. So this is an asynchronous example of store and forward my question to you, if you got this video is what is your clinical assessment of this toddler's behavior at home? And what questions could you ask the parent at the next telehealth session? And also think about what type of activities could you recommend for a home program and the services in this particular situation, they could be considered a hybrid model to discuss the video at the next face-to-face online session.

Okay, so this example is a little boy and he could be a student, he could be a client from private practice. And so I want you to think about what is a model of telehealth service delivery in this example. So let's go to the video now. ♪ Do you know what I mean? ♪ Okay and let's go back to the presentation. So if you answered synchronous or direct intervention, you are correct. So a typical session structure could be checking in with the kid and the parent and asking questions and getting a sense of their current situation and then setting up a schedule, but also being flexible with that schedule and having a plan B and then followed by activities, and then a wrap up at the end for parent coaching. And you can see in this example that the little boy could see himself and he could also see me. So here's an example of using video in your session. This next section is essentials for success. So I'll be giving you some tips for the best

telehealth experience for you, your clients and your students. This is what I call a visual checklist, and it goes over all the components that you're going to need. So starting with row one, you'll need a computer and a video conference platform. Right now there are over 275 telehealth platforms. So if you need help narrowing it down T-School can give you more details on what features to look for. You'll also need a webcam. It helps to have a headset, good internet speed, and really know the fine print of legal issues. And the second row you wanna consider home considerations and family circumstances, it's really important to have a support person, a facilitator, or a hands on helper with the child, and to have a communication plan.

So with your families and how are you gonna communicate with other people on your team to have a system for scheduling appointments and knowing the frequency and the timing of your sessions. And the third row is email communication for invites and other types of communication, being able to track goal progress, documentation, knowing what needs to be in the documentation and also having all the required forms that are required for telehealth. So informed consent, proof of a HIPAA compliant platform. And then you'll also need to bill with correct codes, and it's really important to have good audio and sound quality. And then on the last row, you wanna have a process in place for assessment and treatment. Safety is high priority and it'll also be helpful for you to have lots of digital content in your toolbox. So my question for you is, can you check all of these things off your list? And if you can, then you're ready. If not, you do have some more learning to do. And I spent a significant amount of time putting together a checklist for setting up my team for success and we really use these checklists to send to the families as well.

Here are some non-negotiables for HIPAA Compliance. The first one is encryption of real time video in transit. The second one will actually, so the first one is so nobody can intercept it, that's what that means. And the second one video transmissions are not recorded or stored by the telehealth platform in any capacity. And you'll also need

assigned BAA, which stands for Business Associate's Agreement for any third party video conferencing system. And good communication is essential for both onscreen and also what happens off screen. So part of being an excellent communicator in telehealth, it involves, I think these two things, the first one is to prepare and the second one is to practice. So if you're not really feeling comfortable or as confident as you like, I strongly consider, I strongly recommend that you consider enrolling in additional training, such as a continuing education course on telehealth to show you how to set things up successfully and to really give you more peace of mind that you're practicing within best practices.

Let's talk about your bedside manner. In other words, your bedside manner and the seven Es of engagement. So one frequently asked question that I get is, how can I keep my kids engaged in a telehealth session? Well, it's actually not only your kids, it's actually the parents and the caregivers as well. So I'm gonna share with you my seven Es for engagement. So number one is engaged. Well, what does that mean? So that means being fully present and being sure to make eye contact into the camera. So your client sees you looking at them. Otherwise it's distracting, if it looks like you're looking around. You wanna include the child's favorite activities or things that they like. So you can incorporate their pets. You can incorporate your pets if you're at home or their favorite stuffed animals, and you just wanna make it fun. And you also wanna really use the technology to your advantage to make it more engaging. So things like screen sharing and video modeling and screen capture and mirroring and mouse control, so these are all ways you can use the technology to help engage your clients.

The second one is empathy, but before I start talking about empathy, something has to happen first. You have to make sure that parents are onboard first. And so it's really important to communicate the value of your services with parents and caregivers, because they need to recognize how OT can not only help their child, but also how it can help their lives as well. So in private practice, we are fortunate because our clients

come to us because they want services. However, in other settings, some parents might be less involved. And so I think in those situations, it's really important to start the relationship way in advance, introducing yourself in advance and also to think about other ways to reach out to them. So one school-based therapist, I know when the pandemic hit and their schools stopped seeing kids in person, she sent letters to each of her kids as an introductory letter to them and a personal letter like, "Hi, I hope things are going well, how are you doing? I miss working with you." And that is super special because little kids love getting mail. And when parent opens up the mailbox, it's attention grabbing like, "Oh, what is this?" And so along with that letter, she sent a checklist to the parents with a self addressed envelope. And it was her low tech way of engaging parents before the high tech use of telehealth. So I thought it was just really ingenious and she said, she got about a quarter of her kids to start telehealth with her, just from sending out those letters.

So empathy, this is when you wanna check in with a parent. So you wanna check in the beginning and just ask some open ended questions to get more information. And it's really important to understand the family's current situation so you can be more understanding as well and also, so you can adjust your expectations. So if parents are in survival mode, you definitely don't wanna give them 10 home program ideas. So basically having a good website manner means you really meet the parents and the child with where they're at in that moment of time. So that means you might have to be flexible. And the third one is setting expectations and really helping parents and kids know what they can expect from you. And also the flip side is what are your expectations for the child and for the parent? Number four is educate. So educating why OT is important and how it can help the child and how it can make the overall family's life easier. So that's part of our job as educators and therapists. Number five is expertise. So your job is to share your expertise as an occupational therapist and your unique skillset, but also considering and keeping in mind that the parent is the expert in their child. Number six is equip. Equip and provide the family with tools and resources.

In my team we have specific strategies and we even have some scripts that the therapist can use to support them when dealing with challenging behaviors or situations and they're not always gonna depend on that script, but sometimes in the beginning, it's just good to precinct how you might handle something if something comes up on the other side of the screen, and how do you handle that?

Number seven is empower. So you can really serve as a consistent support for families and kids during this time. And it's super important to be sure to praise parents and really reinforce their efforts. And at my clinic, when therapists are just starting out, we have example scripts and magic phrases, so to speak that they can just keep in their back pocket. And I think it really helps them feel more empowered and it can help you feel more prepared before you go into a telehealth session and it can also help you prepare if you're anticipating having a somewhat difficult conversation. So those are the seven Es of engagement. The next thing we'll talk about our therapy materials, and there are tons of online resources out there, and it's just sort of like your therapy closet at work. So they're probably lots of different activities to choose from you, open up the cupboard and you think, "Oh, what can I use today?" So it's the same thing when you open your telehealth folder on your computer, you should have a variety of resources at your fingertips.

The next is using the materials that the child already has at home and even considering sending a starter supply kit with activities that the child could use for their OT sessions. This is home inventory checklist and it's a tool that I created and you wanna make sure to get your copy and I'll give you a link to access it at the end of the webinar. The first thing to keep in mind is to start with the basics and to avoid overwhelming families and to really be sensitive to the family's current situation, whether it's their mental state or their financial situation. And this is just a beginning starter checklist, it's not a listed, has a hundred things. This checklist is really narrowed down to what most people have in their homes and I think it's really doable and not overwhelming. The other thing you

can use with this in the beginning, is you can turn it into a scavenger hunt where the child has to look for these things and in the back of your mind, you're gonna know how you're gonna wanna use those. So my challenge to you is can you think of some treatment activities using common household items like paper, a muffin pan, tongs, rubber bands. I mean, OTs, we are super creative. So I think this is actually where it can get pretty fun. So now I wanna shift gears to touch on best practices around telehealth. Some fine print. So the laws and the regulations change very rapidly and they vary from state to state. And it's super important that you check for updates on AOTA and your state associations and their websites for the most current and up to date information regarding policy changes and guidelines. During the pandemic things could change weekly. That's how quickly things could change.

Let's talk about payment parity. So payment parity is variable from state to state to state. And what this means is some states they enacted a parity law during COVID-19, and this allows providers to be reimbursed for telehealth at the same rate as an in person office visit. And so these laws they can really make or break your practice. And so we all need to be really aware of how they will affect our profession. And do you know who will advocate the best for you? So it's you. It's really you. So and it's really us as a collective. So I encourage all of you to join your state associations and AOTA because when the lawmakers make these laws, these really impact us in big ways. Let's talk about payers and reimbursement. So the first is commercial and private insurance. Medicare and AOTA had a really big win by getting OT provided and included as a covered service for telehealth. Medicaid is another payer and there's also been states of emergencies. And again, these vary by state and they vary by insurance plan and coding. So the coding, the use of modifiers and place of service codes, those also vary between payers.

Let's talk about your role and responsibilities as the online OT. So in other words, what is best practice? And are you wondering, am I doing this right? I'm not so sure about

this. So I'm here to help share what you need to know and what is considered best practice for our profession when it comes to telehealth. Number one is ensuring safety, security, and privacy. So that includes through technology and privacy when it comes to HIPAA and FERPA, as well as just your students' wellbeing. You need to understand and comply with all the state federal regulations and also code of ethics and provide high quality, skilled, synchronous or asynchronous therapy services for evaluation, assessment and treatment. So for virtual sessions, you really need to consider what type of evaluations are appropriate for your setting. So some settings like outpatient pediatrics, that for commercial insurance are going to need tests with standardized testing and school districts will also typically need testing to include scores for eligibility. So in T-School, the online training program, there was a module that's dedicated entirely to evaluation and assessment.

And as a clinic owner, it took me several weeks to come up with an online evaluation process to work smoothly because it takes a huge amount of coordination and communication between you and the parents and the caregivers. The other factors are knowing which tests are the most compatible with telehealth. So some tests are better and some are easier to administer than others, and you'll definitely need a streamlined process to be the most effective and efficient for online assessment. There are some questionnaires for parents or teachers. Those are really great options for getting the data than you need. However, as an online therapist, you can't just rely on the questions and the surveys. You really need to know how to actually administer some of the motor tests online. So some examples that my clinic uses are administering the mFund which is the miller function and participation skills or the bot, which is the . Other considerations for treatment are just number one, being comfortable and then number two, feeling confident with the technology and this just takes time and it takes preparation and it takes some practice, but it's very doable even if you feel somewhat intimidated by the tech aspects. And I personally do not consider myself to have any special tech skills, just the basics. However, I've done a lot of research and I'm

constantly looking for new treatment ideas, and I've really learned how to use telehealth features to really enhance my sessions. And I absolutely love it.

So you'll see some examples in the two upcoming videos, but we're gonna continue talking about some other roles and responsibilities. The other one is documentation. So you need to know how to document and you need to know what are those requirements that are unique to telehealth and secondly, having strategic scheduling. So there are several scheduling considerations that you'll really have to account for when scheduling your students. So for example, if your student receives services from more than one discipline, like OT, PT, speech, and has some online distance learning with a regular teacher, how will your team coordinate schedules? And will you be able to provide a push and model on the online classroom? Will you be providing one-to-one direct intervention through telehealth, will you be providing group telehealth sessions? So those are a lot of logistics to consider. The other question is really how does that fit in with the greater schedule? So it is potentially a logistical nightmare if you don't have a strategy, and if you don't have the right kind of software to help you with your planning. The last one is really knowing how to convey the distinct value of your services. So you have to believe in what you're doing. If you want buy in from your kids and your families, you need to believe that you can do it, and that you can help kids this way.

So let's talk about the seven essentials for a successful telehealth program. So the first is clinician qualifications, your clinical role and your scope of practice for providing skilled OT intervention it is the same for teletherapy and in person sessions. Number two, having knowledge of telehealth laws, billing, compliance, ethical and liability considerations, and making sure that you have all of these checked off before you start. The third is having good internet access, a telehealth platform and basic technology skills, and you'll need an onsite facilitator to assist the child and you'll also need to incorporate client and family goals into the treatment plan. And have some

strategic treatment planning and strategic process for online evaluations. And you need to prepare and practice, of course. And again, this just comes with time. I'm gonna go over quickly some tips for writing telehealth goals. And these are more questions in terms of what to think about as you're writing goals or thinking about goals. So the first is, how can I help the child to be the most functional as possible at home or in their natural environment? So as OTs, we are all about function, function, function. So how can I help this child be functional, given their current circumstances? And number two, how can I adapt the activity online and how can I modify the environment? You'll also wanna ask three, do the goals need to be adjusted or reprioritized? Are there too many goals? Are there goals that aren't really pertinent given the current situation? And number four, what are the parents' priorities and what are their OT goals? It's really important for us to really reflect on principles of family-centered and relationship-centered care.

So what is the most meaningful occupation for the child and family right now at home. If you have a school goal for handwriting and you've observed the child is truly struggling with something at home, then it's really important to address those immediate needs of the child. So if they are having increased anxiety during the pandemic, you might need to change gears and shift a little bit and get back to our OT roots in mental health and meet that child where they are first, because if they're anxious, worried, stressed, they can't learn. And so we know this and so we just really wanna meet clients where they're at. And number five is what type of resources and treatment ideas and techniques can I use that are compatible with an online model of service delivery to help the child achieve their goals. So the amazing thing about us as a profession is that we're very creative thinkers. And so just harness that creativity like you do in the clinic and use it to think outside of the box, okay, this is what I would do in the clinic. Well, what can I find that's compatible or that similar that I could adapt to doing it online. So use technology, technology is your friend, and you can really use it to enhance your sessions. And it's super important to have lots of ideas, just a click

away on your computer to have everything lined up. Okay, so this is an example of a Pre-K session, and I have some treatment examples, and there's a little bit of caregiver coaching in here.

So let's go ahead and play this video. Okay, all right. The first thing we're gonna do is we're gonna listen to some music and you can dance to it and you can do the motions if you like. Hey, tell me when you're ready. Give me a thumbs up when you're ready. Okay, here we go. ♪ walking walking walking walking ♪ ♪ hop hop hop hop ♪ ♪ running running running running ♪ ♪ now we stop now ♪ ♪ now ♪ How about to heart? Screen, okay. I'm gonna trace my line and then I'm gonna make a little line . Now when you have your paper, then you can do the same thing and go across. And what's the next shape? What's the next shape?

- [Female] What's that shape called?

- A circle.

- A circle, that's right. Nice job. Okay, one more shape. What's picture of?

- Apple.

- It's an apple, that's right. So you can pick a color, you wanna color the apple

- [Female] Actually, Jess, I've never seen her state in the lines on something as carefully as she did on that. So she's really working hard for you.

- Yeah, I can tell I'm so impressed with your coloring Adam. Fit in beautiful job with those. Oh, and you look happy. And so I'm gonna show you how to make a pretend pizza. So let's watch this together. a yellow piece of playdough on there. Okay, here

we go. I'm squeezing it, I'm rolling over the table to make it smooth. Roll it around between your hands.

- All right, so.

- Okay.

- I got box and it has little barnacles in it.

- Barnacles?

- Yeah, barnacles and I can use barnacles to stick I got green.

- The first thing that is a lot of plato so.

- Mine has a sort of kind of .

- Yeah, if it's .

- Mine smells like candy.

- That looks pretty

- [Female] Grammy could make a plato pizza too.

- Yeah, why don't you both make one, roll our pizza and dough into a ball.

- [Female] Perfect.

- Yeah, I think we got everything done on our list and I wanna give you another stamp. How about on a star and heart? What do you want?

- I will like a check mark.

- A check mark, okay. There you go. Wow, you got all of your work done today. This is such a special class we could have together. Yeah, high five.

- I am all done?

- May I have high five too, thanks. You are all done and I was gonna show, you can stick around with grammy or I can show Grammy some other things too, that we can think about for our next session.

- That was really fun Jessica

- I'm glad it was especially like for the first session, we just kind of want to make it fun. And that's sort of a new, I guess, not so much during the pandemic. I mean, kids might be a little bit more used to Zoom. You know she held her attention really well ' cause her mom said that she was worried .

- Well, I think her mom will be really surprised, but it's also the engagement that you provided. You knew how to keep her motivated.

- I got a lot of tricks.

- You got a lot of tricks.

- So when I have tried to correct that finger position, it's just met with great resistance and then a total shutdown of, "I'm just not gonna write because you're critiquing me too much basically."

- I wanted to show you one more thing. So Shelly, I will send this to you, but this is called a home inventory checklist.

- Okay. I will share my screen so you can see it. But the idea is to really try to use the materials and things that you already have at home. So there's like some things I can already think of. Like I know you guys have crayons and markers and pencils and so kind of what blank paper, but like stickers are great too for her.

- I can get those together .

- I will give you a copy.

- Well, thank you.

- Yeah, you're welcome.

- The concern really was just about the technology, just being a grandma, wondering how it would work and then being concerned because I was using my phone, how I would be able to capture that video data that you needed, but then afterwards having done it, it seems like it worked really smoothly and that it was pretty easy.

- You were a great camera woman.

- Thank you.

- Okay, so let's go back to the presentation. A couple of things that I wanted to mention is I use Zoom as the telehealth platform because we already have our own EMR system set up. And so Zoom was just a really easy way to integrate a telehealth platform with what we already have. And some of the things that you saw in that video are using the white board, planning a schedule. I was doing an informal assessment. We actually had a little plastic container with the cut slit in it for doing a penny bank game. I use some YouTube videos in there for movement by sharing my screen. The pre-kindergarten readiness check, this is something that I created and so I just pull it up as a PDF on my computer and I share it and I emailed the family the sheet beforehand. However, I did not realize that they did not have a printer. So again, if I had done the home inventory checklist first, for example, that would have helped me prepare 'cause then I would have realized, Oh gosh, they don't have a printer. And so that was something where the grandma improvised last minute and she actually drew the shapes on a piece of paper. So that was one lesson that I learned from this session.

In terms of video modeling, you saw some therapy exercises. So this is a video that I created and it's like therapy patting and we're playing restaurant. And so the child can either watch it first and then do it or for example, we say, let's make a pizza. Let's roll out the dough and then I can pause the video and then they can do theirs and then they can show me. So I really just depends on how you wanna introduce videos. If a child has trouble staying engaged, then I would probably play the video. Say, let me see yours, pause, and then play it again, pause it, let the child do it. Let me see, what did you make? So that way you're keeping kind of that constant flow of engagement throughout. The other thing is a checklist. This is another checklist that I use as sort of a secondary checklist. It has a lot on it, but I do have a starter session checklist that I will give to you in a link at the end of the session. So those were some of the things that I wanted to highlight in that video. And we're gonna go on to the next video. And this video is a little bit more technical in nature, and let's go ahead and play the video.

So we're gonna talk about tech tips. So screen sharing, whiteboard function and annotating.

So next thing I'm gonna show you a really easy way to use the whiteboard. So you think of how you might use a chalkboard or a whiteboard during your therapy session, it's the same thing during your online therapy session and it replaces pencil and paper. So I'll show you what you can do for that. So I'm gonna go to share screen, and I'm gonna have the option of this whiteboard. So I'm gonna click on whiteboard and share and my virtual whiteboard pops up. So what I often like to do first with kids is I like to create a visual schedule. So for example, I'm gonna start with writing the child's name or typing the child's name. If wanna start over and write the child's name then I would use the annotate button. So say the child's name was Joe. So this is Joe's schedule, okay. And then what do you want to do first? So first we're going to play ball for example, second, we're going to color. So you can use these as examples. And then sometimes to show just task completion, I will come back to the whiteboard after the activity, and then I will cross it out like that or maybe for example, you want to give them a little stamp. So I'll pick a stamp and use a stamp function and give them a heart.

So those are some examples as well that you can use. And if I want to save that, then I can also save it for later and it'll save as a file. So those are just some examples of how to use that. I've also used it for games. So you would have the option of giving your child mouse control as well, so they could play with their mouse. So for example, tic tac toe would be a great example of using that. So I put another heart in there, but let's go back to my draw function. So they dropped the tic tac toe board or maybe instead of drawing, you wanna use stamps. So pretend I'm hearts. And then if the other child is stars, then we could play a game of tic tac toe or you could also play a game if you wanna practice letter formations, by going back to the drawing function and we have our Xs and let's pretend that the other letter we're working on is A. So it doesn't always

have to be Xs and Os just to make it more fun and more practical for the actual letters that they to work on. So that is how you would use the screen sharing for the whiteboard. let's go back to the slide.

So that video was tech tips. And again, I talked about screen sharing the whiteboard function and annotating, and I do use Zoom. I use the paid version of Zoom because it is HIPAA compliant and this is really important. You definitely need to be HIPAA compliant when you're doing these sessions. And then some of the features that you saw, they're not necessarily unique to Zoom. So when you're shopping around and researching other platforms, you kind of wanna know how you wanna use it and how many people can be on the platform, for example, and all the different bells and whistles. So not so many that it will overwhelm you, but enough that you can really use a technology to your advantage. And this is again, something that I've also researched in really trying to figure out which platforms do what, and every practice setting has different needs. And some platforms might be more specialized on one discipline or maybe you need to have a platform that is compatible with all the different disciplines or platform that does scheduling or just telehealth. So these are so many different factors that you have to consider with platforms, but once you pick the right one and you make it work for you, it can be pretty awesome.

Okay. So the big question of the day, is telehealth here to stay? So when I was a kid, I had a magic eight ball. So I thought, you know what, let's bring that magic eight ball out and ask the question, is the telehealth here to stay? And the response was as I see it, yes. So it's definitely here to stay regardless of what practice setting you're in. If you wanna be leveling up your skills and if you want to be able to stay on track with the direction that the profession and medicine is going, it's important to get on board now. And the reason I'm saying this is because it really impacts the future of your clinical practice. At this time, it can really make the difference whether you use telehealth or not, or have a program in place of your practice perishing, or being at the risk of

closing. The second situation I've seen is plateauing. So things are holding steady, but there isn't really any growth and there's definitely the risk of attrition over time. In other words, losing clients or patients over time. So you start off strong, but over time they discharge or graduate, or it just doesn't work for them. So that's another situation that you need to be able to continue to develop your practice and continue to develop your processes and strategies so you don't slowly close. And the third alternative which is the best is really the road to telehealth success. And that is being able to pivot. So being able to change your mindset, being able to pivot with how you normally do things which leads to progress in to prospering.

So if you are willing to put the work in, if you have an open mind, if you're flexible and you make wise business decisions, if you're open to learning from your mistakes, then you will find yourself on the path to making progress and to prospering really against all odds. And I have to share that my practice has definitely been and all of these phases at one point in time or another. And there were definitely moments when I felt like giving up and there were definitely moments of really great success but it's really all part of the journey. And I've learned that if your practice can survive the pandemic, it really can survive anything. And if it hasn't, it's time to reinvent yourself and it's time to help your organization find training and resources to help implement a telehealth program. And since I've walked this journey for 20 years, I'd really like to be able to help guide other therapists, to be successful with telehealth as another model of service delivery that you can use to deliver your OT services. So adding a telehealth program, can really enhance your current brick and mortar practice, whether it's outpatient or early intervention or school-based, and it will really help your practice in your own job security survive, but also thrive in really difficult circumstances. So what else is in your therapy toolbox and what do you need in your teletherapy toolbox? I have two things. The first is I have the free home inventory checklist, which has a starter checklist, and you can get that on my website. It's [www.playitforwardtherapy.net/home-inventory](http://www.playitforwardtherapy.net/home-inventory). And if you're feeling like you're at the

point in your career where you're ready to level up your telehealth skills, I have more information about T-School, it's [www.playitfortherapy.net/tschool-info](http://www.playitfortherapy.net/tschool-info). So feel free to jot down those links and you can write also connect with me. I'm happy to answer any questions that you might have if we're not able to get to all of them during this presentation, and you can get a hold of me through email [Jessica@playitfortherapy.net](mailto:Jessica@playitfortherapy.net), and you can also get a hold of me through my websites. My clinic website is [steppingstoneswa.com](http://steppingstoneswa.com) and my continuing ed and blog to really inspire your practice and give you practical ideas and treatment activities, as well as continuing ed and moral support. That's on [playitforwardtherapy.net](http://playitforwardtherapy.net), or you can find me on social media as well. So I just wanted to thank all of you for being here. I commend you for the work that you're doing, and please don't hesitate to reach out to me. And I really wish you all the best in your telehealth journey And hope you have a wonderful week. Okay, thanks and I'm gonna turn it over to Fawn. And if anybody has any questions, I'm happy to answer those.

- [Fawn] Hi Jessica, great talk today. We do have a few questions coming in and we'll take a few here. How is the billing differentiated for synchronous versus asynchronous teletherapy?

- [Jessica] So I typically don't give out specific billing advice just because I only know what we do really in Washington state and that even depends on the payer. So I think the most important thing is to call that particular insurer and have a set of questions to ask them when you do your normal benefit verification, but then also have a specific set of questions that you can ask them to help know what modifier you need to use, what codes you should be using and how you should be documenting. So that's something that I also have in T-School in terms of a list of questions to ask your insurance. So I wish I could answer it more specifically, but that's what makes it super tricky about telehealth is all the payers are on different pages of how they want you to do the billing.

- [Fawn] There are several questions coming in and you might just be able to answer it based on your website. Some people are asking different things like are the symbols like your checklist somewhere? Like, is that written out? Are you able to share your checklist? Things like that. So if you wanna talk just a little bit about your website, what resources are available?

- [Jessica] Oh, sure. So the checklist, if you were interested in the home inventory checklist, that is definitely available through that link that I sent you. So you'll enter your email and then you'll get an email sent to your inbox and you'll be able to download the PDF checklist there. Some of the things that you saw in the video, those are things that are part of T-School with a bunch of collection of different treatment activities and checklists and questions to ask. As far as resources, I would say, yeah, most of them would be in T-School, but you can get more information from that from my website, sometimes emails do go to spam. So just make sure you white list my email address, Jessica@playitfortherapy.net. And then that way you're more likely to get the stuff that I wanna share with you.

- [Fawn] Okay, someone is asking what standardized tests can you administer over telehealth?

- [Jessica] There's a host of standardized tests that you can use. It depends on your practice setting. So if I knew more about your practice setting, there's definitely certain ones in early intervention that you can use. It also depends on which publisher you use. Well, I think I can say this, but I like Pearson assessments. They actually have this letter of no objection, which means they're a little bit more flexible in letting you use their assessments for telehealth. And so they have a list, a great list of online compatible assessments. So first I would go to the publishers of the assessments you're currently using 'cause then you don't need to try to relearn a whole nother

assessment and just see if they have a version for telehealth. But there's so many out there. It's hard to list off all the different assessments and it really depends on your practice setting. Any other questions?

- [Fawn] Sorry about that. Yeah, I'm gonna do one more here. This is a really good one. How much time do you leave at the end of your session for parent education and/or things that you need to prepare for the next session?

- [Jessica] So it depends, that's a great question. It really kind of depends on the parent. I have some parents that they pretty much just set their kid up and they make sure everything's working and then they leave and they have to work. They don't only understand that because during this particular time, like parents have to work from home and their kids are at home, so I get that. But then there are some parents that you really need to be there, the whole session. So if they're a parent that's kind of there throughout the whole session or caregiver, then they're gonna be learning and you can have a conversation at the same time or say the child is not able to sit. And you actually sitting in front of the screen all the time anyways. But if the child needs a movement break, then maybe the child can do that. And then you can check in with the parent throughout the session. But generally saying I would leave maybe about five minutes, kind of the same that I do in clinic. Like when I walk the kid out to the waiting room, I talk with the parent, but it is helpful to kind of give them their OT homework or give them something that they can take away and work on during the week. If I feel like a session is going in a direction of, "Gosh, this is a giant question I really don't have time to answer this parent's question." Then I might offer another telehealth session. That's just with the parent. So rather than getting an a 10-page email, you can say, "You know what, I would love to talk with you, but let's set up another telehealth session and we can talk about it more then." So it really just depends on the parent, but that's a great question.

- [Fawn] Okay, I think we're going to wrap for today. I wanna be mindful of everyone's time today, but she has graciously provided her email address as well as her website. So please reach out if you have more questions. And thanks again, Jessica for a great talk today.

- [Jessica] Yeah, thank you. I was really excited to be here. Thanks again, everybody.

- [Fawn] Have a great day everyone, stay safe.