

#292 Nicole Savino, Valentina Cacciatore, Krista Denaro and Nicolette Mallios

Advisor(s): Beth Elenko

Analyzing Current Practice of Telehealth in Early Intervention Occupational Therapy

Background: In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, telehealth has become the universal method of service delivery for young children and their families in order to comply with the stay-at-home and public safety guidelines for early intervention (EI). This online transition has raised questions within occupational therapy (OT) about methods utilized to provide EI services.

Objective: This quantitative study examined the perspectives of occupational therapy practitioners (OTPs) to serve as an educational platform collecting common strategies and techniques used to deliver EI services through telehealth. Building upon this body of knowledge fosters guidance for delivering EI OT services in the telehealth setting.

Methods: This survey design evaluated the perceptions of OTPs regarding their experiences using telehealth within EI. One hundred and fifty-one responses were received and analyzed through REDCap and Microsoft Excel using descriptive statistics.

Results: Participants reported similarities and differences in strategies and techniques used to deliver EI OT services such as, Parent Teaching Methods (31.84% of responses), Preparing in Advance (29.85%), Family Accommodations (13.93%), Reference Materials (9.95%), Multi-Sensory Supports (5.97%), Multiple Delivery Options (5.47%), and Flexibility (2.99%).

Conclusion: This study found that OTPs relied primarily on coaching and modelling techniques during telehealth sessions. Other strategies included planning sessions in advance, communicating with the family, and providing reference materials. Many advantages and disadvantages of using telehealth were noted, therefore the use of telehealth should depend on the individual needs of the child and their family.

Additional contributors to this project:

Valentina Cacciatore, OTS

Krista Denaro, OTS

Nicolette Mallios, OTS