



Tips for Managing Therapy Online

The session itself may be shorter

Expect that it may be a shorter session than you are used to face to face. One parent has shared with us that they got about 20-30 mins from their child, then she chatted with the therapist for the final 15 mins. You may want to decrease the time you spend with the therapist and allocate the rest of the session to them preparing resources for your child to use at home.

Your child doesn't need to attend

Not all sessions need to involve your child. You may get more out of a session if your child is not present. One parent shares her therapist emails her resources prior and she uses the session to talk through those resources, how to use them with her child and then does the activities outside of the session when her child is not around. For some this approach works best and may be a good place to start for those of you who are a bit sceptical or feel telehealth doesn't work for your child.

Use the session for parent upskilling or coaching

Online sessions don't need to be with your child. It can be a perfect opportunity to upskill yourself or get coaching on how to handle different situations. One parent shared that his therapist trained him in the Zones of Regulation program and how to implement it at home. Another parent shared that she takes notes during the week about tricky situations that happened between her child and his siblings and in social settings. The therapist then coaches the mum on different strategies to manage those situations.

Turn the display on so it only shows the speaker

Do you ever find your child gets distracted during the virtual therapy session with seeing themselves in the camera? One parent has shared their child kept pulling faces and they found when they changed the display settings so they could only see the speaker, this helped the child focus and they listened better. Talking distractions however, there has been feedback from many families, that they were surprised how engaged their child was and they got through more than they would in a face to face session.

Take time to reflect

The goals you are working towards for your child may now be different. Or the strategies you were using may have changed. One parent shared that the first session with each of her child's therapists was used to review the goals and make a new plan. Another parent shared how she did this with all of her child's therapists together on a group video conference. Not all goals will be appropriate or realistic right now.

Setup the room beforehand

If you're doing physical things such as with a PT or OT, set out a designated area of floor in the room where they will work in. One parent shared for example that they will be marking out masking tape squares on their floorboards and setting up their iPad screen to view the space that was marked out.





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Do a practice run through

One parent suggested it helps to go through expectations and set the scene with your child beforehand. For instance, let them know, we are sitting at the table, there is a computer in front of us, you will see the therapist. Let them know this is just like we are at a therapy session, but the therapist will be on the screen instead of sitting next to them. Another great suggestion we heard was doing a trial session via Zoom with a friend or family member beforehand, so the child can understand what video calls are. One parent shared that her child who was familiar with seeing her on Zoom meetings and was excited to be on his own zoom session.

Be flexible and patient

Be prepared that things may not progress as they would face to face. It can take a bit of time for both the therapist, you as a parent and your child to adjust to what works best. Some parents have shared that they were surprised at how well their child adjusted and got through more than they do in a face to face session. Other parents shared with us that after some initial bumpy sessions, they found their rhythm

Set up a reward or token system beforehand

This way your child is motivated to attend the sessions. This will vary from child to child but in their experience, the child responded well to this.

Turn on the 'guided access' feature

When using an iPad in your therapy sessions, to avoid them changing screens. Some children use an iPhone or iPad for online sessions with their therapist. One parent shared that during this time, to stop them from changing screens during the session, she turned on the 'guided access' feature. This kept the child focused on the session and they were not tempted to look for YouTube!

Be prepared

Set everything up beforehand. One parent shared that they had the same document as therapist, and she printed it out (even though she had it on screen) just to make things easier. Even getting things like pencils and the small items ready helps you get more out of your session.

Include others who care for your child

Doing therapy online, at home, whilst others are in the house means you have the opportunity to include them more easily. One parent shared she enjoyed doing online therapy because her partner was at home and could join and that they will continue to use this when face to face resumes, as the dad and other carers can join from wherever they are located and learn strategies too. Siblings can also join in if they can be a positive part of achieving the therapy goals, such as social skills at home. Upskilling through telehealth doesn't have to be just with the main caregiver but with anyone key person in the child's life.

