TRANSITIONING TO SCHOOL BASED TELETHERAPY/DISTANCE LEARNING: TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED

*This packet can be used as whole or in parts, individually or to share with your Regional/Lead dependent on your district guidance, procedures, and your needs.*

Prior to Providing Teletherapy/Distance Learning Services:

- Check out the school’s website and emails:
  - District’s plan to transition to online distance learning and teletherapy services
  - Dates for implementation (i.e. soft launch, grading, etc.)
- Verify you still have access to your district email and IEP/documentation computerized systems.
- Attend any remote learning professional development provided by your district and school sites.
- Determine if any new district documentation procedures:
  - What’s covered/reimbursable?
  - Platform: __________
    (Become familiar and utilize the same platform district is using when possible; In many districts this changes frequently, keep track of emails to be aware of the most recent information.)
- Have appropriate equipment and technology:
  - If possible or required, HIPAA Compliant
  - Computer/laptop with camera and microphone
  - High speed internet (www.speedtest.net; minimum 5 mg)
  - Not necessary: Headphones, external microphone, document camera
- Checklist for comfort level with online platform? Sharing screen; Practice run
- Refer to EBS sheet for additional webinars and resources (Sheet #2)

Preparing/Setting Up Your Caseload:

- Review each student’s current IEP: Determine and share the recommendations as to the appropriateness of teletherapy/distance learning (Sheet #3)
  - Are updated IEPs (Addendums/Supplementals) or new intervention plans required for your district?
  - What’s the best teletherapy/distance learning service delivery model for the student (i.e. direct, integrated into online classroom, co-teaching, coaching, collaboration, consultation)
    - Is your district allowing teletherapy group sessions?
  - Is your district holding IEP meetings within the timeline?
  - Is your district continuing with initial and 3-year Re-assessments?
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**Collaborate with teacher and team members**
- Everyone’s routines have changed. Ask how team members prefer receiving communications (email, phone call, text), best times of day, etc.
- Provide team members with your preferred contact info in writing
- What is the teacher’s remote learning plan?
  - Ask the teacher: Does the class have a specific daily class schedule?
    - This will help determine convenient intervention times and optimal teletherapy service delivery model for the student.
- Determine with current school teams who will be contacting family to arrange services – What is your role in this?
  - Is the district requiring a phone call and/or email?
  - Examples: Teletherapy parent contact form (Sheet #4); Scripts for calling families (Sheet #5); Email to families (Sheet #6)

**Create an organizational system to contact family/caregiver and receive consent for this service delivery model.** i.e. Teletherapy Caseload Review Form (Sheet #7)
- Communicate with families
- Consent form (Sheet #8)
- Student Teletherapy Readiness Checklist (Sheet #9)

**Build schedule and share with appropriate team members, district supervisor, etc.**
- Including obtain class lists and individual students’ teletherapy schedules

**Preparing for Teletherapy Session:**

**Review goals you are responsible to take data on (discipline specific and/or team goals)**
- Determine how the goals will relate to distance learning and stay at home

**Note any adaptive equipment and accommodations for the student** (e.g. use of move-n-sit cushion, sensory schedule implementation, access to pencil grip and/or adaptive paper, AAC devices, picture schedules, first/then boards, etc.)
- Check availability of equipment for use at home
- Think of alternatives for equipment

**Preplan and overplan**
- Think about how you would implement therapeutic activities/session onsite and then adapt to online: Treatment planning/Lesson Plan (Sheet #10)
- Use a variety of activities i.e. computer-based, movement, sensory, toys, stories, games, manipulatives from home, etc.
- Materials can include: Digital worksheets and handouts, Apps, Tool kits, Online resources, YouTube Videos
  - What’s in the family’s home i.e. toy tour (Sheet #11) or scavenger hunt
  - Request materials ahead of session

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- Outline of a School Based Teletherapy Session (Sheet #12)
  - Establish a good working relationship with family/caregiver facilitator
    - Encourage families/caregivers to be a part of the session when needed or possible.
    - Discuss reason for and mutual goals for buy-in and encourage carry-over throughout the week.

Follow Up After Teletherapy Session:
- Recap session
- Verify day/time for next session
- Send email (Sheet #13) with plan for next session, homework resources (worksheets, weblinks, videos, recommended activities and toys to have on hand, activity calendars (Example Sheet #14), caregiver informational resources, etc.
- Complete documentation and billing of session based on district procedures

Documentation: Organize Your Work Space
- Documentation needs to occur for each session, and include how the session was provided: video conferencing, phone, email for shared materials etc.
- Create folder for each child on your computer (i.e. google doc or google classroom)
- Add “toy tour” to folder so you know what materials each home has on-hand
- Include student’s goals
- Create table, calendar, google form or spreadsheet to track what activities you do each time, plan for next session, and track student progress (Session #15)

Verify You’re Ready to Start Teletherapy/Distant Learning Services
- I have all the equipment needed
- I’ve become acquainted with/learned the platform
- I’ve gathered materials
- I have done a practice session with a friend/relative/Lead
- Plan for initial session/Readiness checklist
- Make a plan for checking in with teachers (don’t try to do it all at once)
- Refer to your IEP timelines to be aware of upcoming meetings
- Know what documentation system will be needed
- Determine expectations for billing
- Provider Teletherapy Readiness Checklist (Sheet #16)
- Send reminder text or email reminder to family prior to session (i.e. Google Meet can send out reminders 10 min prior)

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What happens if the family doesn’t have a computer?

- Consider a distance learning model!
- Many aspects of an online session can be done using a smartphone - the screen will be smaller but can still be effective
- You can record your activities and upload them to your Google drive account, then share the link with the family
- You can also do a phone call to check in to see how the student is doing by talking directly to the student or a family/caregiver
- Coaching the parent can also be done via a phone call to help address questions the parent might have about activities you sent for the student to complete.

Remember:

- This is new for all of us!
- Be prepared.....have back-up activities
- Have a simple plan, don’t make it too complex
- Be gentle with yourself....not EVERY session will be perfect, glitches expected!
- Learn from your successes and your mishaps
- Reach out for support from your EBS Regionals/Leads
- Have fun with your students, families, and teams!