Tele-Intervention Resources

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Abstract

The pandemic presented challenges and opportunities to grow as early intervention providers. This document provides a compilation of resources specific to providing tele-intervention for children in early intervention who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Keywords: EI = early intervention; EHDI = Early Hearing Detection and Intervention; TI = tele-intervention

Acronyms: ASHA = American-Speech-Language-Hearing Association; ATA = American Tele-medicine Association; DHH = deaf or hard of hearing; ECI = Early Childhood Intervention; ECTA = Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center; EHDI = Early Hearing Detection and Intervention; EPB = evidence based practice; FIPP = Family Infant and Preschool Program; HRSA = Health Resources and Services Administration; NCHAM = National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management; TI = tele-intervention

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The restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic forced many early intervention (EI) providers and families to adopt an emergency virtual service delivery model. The exigent nature of the pandemic necessitated the rapid transition to virtual early intervention, often without the benefit of training and guidance for both providers and caregivers regarding the use of virtual platforms, objectives, procedures, and the overall dynamics of the virtual session. As restrictions begin to ease and in-person home visits once again become possible, many providers and caregivers may be wondering how tele-intervention (TI) services might be a part of ongoing early intervention for children who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH). Reviewing desired family outcomes and the components of high-quality TI services will be necessary as caregivers and providers determine their intervention plan forward together. The purpose of this article is to highlight resources pertaining to the provision of high-quality TI services in keeping with recommended family-centered early intervention practices. Thorough descriptions of each resource are provided followed by a table summarizing the resources offered for tele-intervention for children who are DHH (see Tables 1–4).

Overview of Resources

The National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management (NCHAM) works to support access to appropriate EI services for families of children who are diagnosed as DHH. In the spirit of this mission, NCHAM has been promoting the role of telehealth in providing timely, family-centered services and has supported a Tele-Intervention Learning Community since 2010. Defined broadly, telehealth is the use of electronic information and telecommunications technologies to support long-distance clinical health care, patient and professional health-related education, public health and health administration (see Table 2, HRSA: Telehealth Programs). The term *tele-intervention* (TI) is a term coined by NCHAM to refer to the application of telehealth technologies to providing EI services. The resources listed in Tables 1–4 and throughout the article may also use the terms telepractice, telehealth, teletherapy, and telehabilitation to describe a multitude of practices delivered through distance technologies.

NCHAM has developed a Tele-Intervention Resource Guide that highlights recommended practices for conducting TI sessions along with important information about technology considerations, licensure and reimbursement, privacy, and security. The Tele-Intervention Guide is one part of a larger Telehealth Resource Guide that also includes training in providing early intervention services to families of infants and toddlers who are DHH via distance technologies. An additional Tele-Audiology Guide is also available. There is more information about the Resource Guide in the sections below.

The resources included in this article are organized from the most general to the most specific for providing virtual early intervention services to children who are DHH and their families. The list is not meant to be comprehensive, but rather a compilation of some of the available opportunities to learn more about: (a) general telehealth, (b) telehealth in early intervention, and (c) tele-intervention for children who are DHH.

Table 1
Overview of Resources

Resource Name	Summary

The National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management (NCHAM)	• National Technical Resource Center
	• Provides:
	  o Technical assistance
	  o Training
	  o Evidence-based practice information
	  o Partnership opportunities

HRSA: Telehealth Programs	• Telehealth program topics include:
	  o Evidence Based Network
	  o Licensure Portability Grant
	  o Broadband Pilot
	  o Centers of Excellence
	  o Rural Health Research Centers
	  o Network Grant
	  o Resource Center
	  o Technology-Enabled Learning

NCHAM Tele-Intervention Resource Guide	• Practical information for Tele-Intervention (TI) application with additional links in sidebar • Three 101 learning courses for families, providers, and administrators • Overview of supportive technology • Information on privacy/security, licensing, and reimbursement • Guidance on TI outcome evaluation • Models of group TI options • Video examples of TI services
Telehealth Resource Guide	• Information on telehealth and EHDI systems • Links to resources • List of resource centers by region
Tele-Audiology Guide	• Recommendations for the practice of remote audiology with children from birth to 5 years old • Information on licensure reimbursement, legislation, standards, protocols, equipment, technology, privacy, family consent, professional approaches, model for improvement, and additional resources • Training options and guides • Evaluation procedures • Video examples

General Telehealth Resources

Center for Connected Health Policy

Center for Connected Health Policy (CCHP) is a National Tele-Health Policy Resource Center that serves as an independent center of excellence in telehealth policy. CCHP provides technical assistance to 12 regional Telehealth Resource Centers (TRCs), state and federal policy makers, national organizations, health systems, providers, and the public. CCHP also maintains an online report on current Tele-Health State Laws and Reimbursement Policies.

HRSA Tele-Health Regional Technical Assistance Centers

The United States Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Telehealth Regional Technical Assistance Centers assist organizations, providers, and communities in implementing cost effective and sustainable telehealth programs.

American Tele-medicine Association (ATA)

Although focused primarily on clinical practice, the ATA also offers resources to accelerate telehealth program implementation and performance, including curated business tools, resources, and research and analysis to support telehealth initiatives.

American Speech Language and Hearing Association (ASHA)

ASHA maintains an extensive tele-practice portal for speech pathologists and audiologists. Resources include key issues, ethical considerations, licensure and certification, reimbursement, and tele-practice technology. There is also a Tele-practice Special Interest Group available to members. ASHA also provides telepractice resources related to COVID-19.

Table 2
General Telehealth Resources

Resource Name	Summary
Center for Connected Health Policy	• Specific information about telehealth policies by state • Medicaid webinars • Expert advice • Information on pending legislation
HRSA Tele-Health Regional Technical Assistance Centers	• Technical assistance and resources based on region • Individual consultations, trainings, webinars, and conferences availability depending on location
American Tele-medicine Association (ATA)	• An association focused on tele-health and increasing medical access • Virtual events scheduled regularly on various aspects of tele-health for members only • Resource page with practice guidelines, quick-start guide, research, webinars, podcasts, and recorded conferences
American Speech-Language-Hearing Associations (ASHA) Tele-practice portal	• ASHA tele-practice page including an overview, key issues, resources, and references • Sidebar with access to ASHA evidence maps on the topic, special interest groups, and related products and articles
ASHA Tele-practice Special Interest Group	• ASHA special interest group 18 focused on tele-practice • Information on current research, and articles related to tele-practice are linked and can be sorted by "most recent," "most read," and "most cited"

ASHA Telepractice resources	• Resources for additional information on:
	   ○ telepractice basics
	   ○ state regulations
	   ○ reimbursement
	   ○ current research
	   ○ the telepractice community
	• Specific issues

Telehealth Resources Specific to Early Intervention

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an abundance of guidance, training, and research available regarding the delivery of virtual, family-centered early intervention to young children and their families. The pandemic necessitated a rapid transition to emergency virtual services for many early intervention providers. Many of the resources below were initially created to support EI providers during that transition. Some have been updated and expanded to include more in-depth guidance and training on the appropriate use of tele-intervention as a service delivery model.

Division for Early Childhood

Division for Early Childhood began providing resources to support virtual Early Intervention during the COVID-19 pandemic, including routines-based intervention, assessments, dealing with challenging behaviors, and finding ways to engage parents.

Family, Infant and Preschool Program (FIPP)

As a National Center of Excellence, FIPP has designed a series of tele-intervention infographics on intervention practices, teaming practices, provider roles, and supporting practitioners virtually.

American Speech Language and Hearing Association (ASHA) - COVID-19 Web Event Series on Early Intervention

ASHA developed a series of recorded web chats to address the specific needs of those who operate or work in Part C EI programs or other EI practices during the COVID-19 pandemic. The web event series can be found on their website under COVID-19 Web Event Series on Early Intervention. Topics include:

• Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Guidance for Part C services

• Telepractice Assessment and Evaluation

• Empowering Families and Professionals

Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA)

The ECTA website provides remote service delivery and distance learning resources for states' early intervention Part C and early childhood special education IDEA Part B Section 619 programs including technology and privacy, reimbursement, provider and educator use of technology, family resources, state guidance and resources, and research.

Early Intervention Colorado (EI Colorado) - Online Tele-Intervention Training for Early Intervention Professionals

The online tele-intervention training for early intervention professionals is offered through the Office of Early Childhood, this four-module training discusses considerations for platforms to use, provides examples of what telehealth sessions look like, and suggests ways to troubleshoot issues. The last module is more interactive in showing short clips, then asking learners to reflect on scenarios they see that reflect good telehealth practice and things that could be improved. This training is free to anyone wanting to take it.

Table 3
Early Intervention Resources

Resource Name	Summary

Division for Early Childhood	• Information sources for early intervention and early childhood telehealth:
	  o Articles and blog posts
	  o Resource lists
	  o Individual resources
	  o Networking information
	  o Audio interviews and podcasts
	  o Children's stories
	  o Videos
	  o Webinars

Family, Infant and Preschool Program (FIPP)	• Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) video • Infographics on ECI practices, teaming, roles, and practitioner support o A ECI guide for practitioners

American Speech Language and Hearing Association (ASHA) - COVID-19 Web Event Series on Early Intervention	• Topic focuses:
	  o The Big Picture
	  o Telepractice Evaluation and Assessment for evaluation and assessment
	• Empowering Families and Professionals

Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA)	• Video on remote service delivery • Breakdown of terminology • Links to professional associations including ASHA • Additional resources on telehealth o Equity information
Early Intervention Colorado (EI Colorado) - Online Tele-Intervention Training for Early Intervention Professionals	• Telehealth training with certificate • Information on becoming an Early Intervention Assistive Technology Consultant in Colorado

Telehealth Resources Specific to Early Intervention for Children who are DHH

Hearing First: Learning LSL through Telepractice

Hearing First is an online professional community that includes free learning experiences, resources and forums. Their primary focus is on Listening and Spoken Language. Their website includes printable handouts, parent perspective videos, and access to the "Time for Telepractice" recorded webinar.

NCHAM Recorded Webinars

NCHAM also has recorded webinars to help providers who want to improve the telehealth experience. They continue to add resources, but three webinars are:

Ensuring Ongoing Access to High Quality Early Intervention Services through Telepractice

Tips and Tools to Support Effective Tele-practice Sessions

Transitioning for Emergency Tele-intervention to Ongoing Tele-intervention Sessions

National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management (NCHAM) Tele-Intervention (TI) Introductory Courses

NCHAM provides online tele-intervention training. The TI 101 Training Courses are recommended resources for those seeking to understand key components to implementing TI. These free courses contain real-life scenarios, video clips, and implementation tools for EI direct service providers, families interested in TI, and EI program administrators. Three courses are available:

- For Administrators—How to create a tele-intervention component for EI services
- For Providers—How to implement TI and engage families
- For Families—How to partner with providers for successful TI sessions.

Table 4
Early Intervention Resources for Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Resource Name	Summary

National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management (NCHAM) Tele-Intervention (TI) Introductory Courses	• Tele-Intervention (TI) training videos for:
	   o Families—Focus on being successful with TI
	   o Providers—Focus on implementation of TI components
	   o Administrators—Focus on creating a TI component

Hearing First: Learning LSL through Telepractice	• Information on listening and spoken language intervention • Handouts on Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) intervention via telepractice • Additional handouts with LSL strategies • Video resources • Additional Resources • Course catalog for telepractice with LSL
NCHAM Recorded Webinars	
Ensuring Ongoing Access to High Quality Early Intervention Services through Telepractice	• Hour long video recording of webinar by Dr. Blaiser about telepractice access
Tips and Tools to Support Effective Tele-practice Sessions	• Hour long video recording of webinar by Dr. Houston on tips and tools for effective tele-practice sessions
Transitioning from Emergency Tele-intervention to Ongoing Tele-intervention Sessions	• 30 minute video recording of webinar by Lauren Smith, MEd, on transitioning from emergency tele-intervention to ongoing tele-intervention