

CASE STUDY AKRON CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Overview

- Akron Children's Hospital wanted to expand their successful tele services
- Having a scalable system to start out made the process easy
- They were able to expand virtual services to reach more families
- Robotics are being introduced for deeper understanding and exchange
- Plans to continue expanding are in the future for their virtual program



Akron Children's Hospital has been a long-standing partner with IDS. Back in 2012, IDS helped the hospital's Family Child Learning Center implement a secure, HIPAA-compliant video conferencing system to support their tele-early intervention initiative. This program, called Tele-EI4ASD, was very successful and produced much data and positive outcomes for the families who participated.

The program served 21 families in nine counties and greatly increased access to early intervention services in areas where they might not otherwise be available. Family ratings of their own knowledge and skills in working with their child increased significantly, and 100% of the families who participated said they would recommend tele-early intervention to another family.

The initial data was so powerful that Akron Children's sought additional funding to continue and expand the tele-early intervention program. Tele-EI4ASD was broadened to include toddlers with not only Autism Spectrum Disorder but also with concerns in communication and social-emotional development. A new initiative, called Connections, was added to the options for Tele-Early Intervention. Connections is a short-term, intensive early intervention program for toddlers newly diagnosed with Autism

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MARILYN ESPE-SHERWINDT
FAMILY CHILD LEARNING CENTER
DIRECTOR

Results

Spectrum Disorder, where families work with their virtual professionals twice a week.

There are now four interventionists meeting with families in 11 counties across the entire state of Ohio. Families in both the Tele-Early Intervention and the Tele-Connections programs use a computer at home to connect with a remote FCLC early interventionist and learn strategies to help their toddlers grow and learn. Families report being very comfortable with the virtual set-up and being on camera and after an initial adjustment period, forget



the camera is there. Marilyn Espe-Sherwindt, Director of the Family Child Learning Center reports that the technology is almost flawless. There are some occasional challenges with bandwidth but those are easily overcome.

Graduate students also join some of the sessions, with permission from the family, and are able to attend and learn in real time. "Training future practitioners in a real-time live environment is very powerful and an excellent use of resources," Espe-Sherwindt said. Both Tele-Early Intervention and Tele-Connections get great feedback from families who have participated. Families feel the programs made a significant impact on their children and on themselves as parents. They learned new ways to work and interact with their children and have maintained those changes over time. Parents feel their overall quality of life has improved and their own confidence in their abilities to help their children has increased significantly.

In one study, tele-sessions included Kubi from Revolve Robotics in the home, which let the early intervention professional look around the home and control their point of view. By moving the viewing area remotely, Kubi helps capture video of the parent and child interacting without interruption and gives the coach a more holistic view of a living space. One parent says, "Now, our sessions are even better with Kubi. It frees me to be more focused on my child rather than having to stop to move the iPad or laptop. I really appreciate that this new technology allows me to devote my full attention to my son."

I REALLY APPRECIATE THAT THIS NEW TECHNOLOGY ALLOWS ME TO DEVOTE MY FULL ATTENTION TO MY SON.

ANONYMOUS PARENT

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