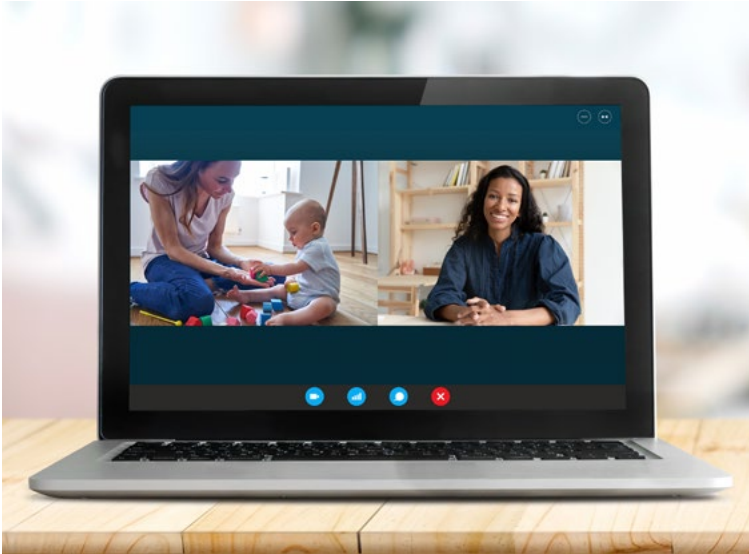


Telehealth Links ECI Children and Families to Needed Services



The Texas Health and Human Services Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) program works with children from birth to 36 months with developmental delays or disabilities and their families. ECI is now offering services through telehealth.

What is telehealth?

- Health services provided to families via videoconferencing technology.
- Telehealth allows ECI providers to:
 - Continue coaching parents and caregivers to teach their child new skills.
 - Provide skilled guidance while observing the parents and caregivers practicing the activities.

What equipment do families need?

- Families need an internet connection and a device, such as a smartphone, tablet or laptop, with video and audio capabilities.
- Additional software might be needed to maintain security.
- If families need assistance getting equipment or software, the ECI program may be able to help with resources and information.



What are the benefits of telehealth?

- Parents and caregivers gain confidence in their skills because they are able to try different “hands-on” activities with their child, with coaching from a therapist or other ECI provider.
- Telehealth services can be provided when in-person visits pose a health risk, such as when a child has a compromised immune system or travel is difficult.
- Telehealth offers more scheduling flexibility.



Is telehealth effective?

- Research has shown therapies delivered through telehealth may be as effective as those delivered in person.*
- The American Physical Therapy Association, American Occupational Therapy Association and American Speech-Language-Hearing Association all support telehealth.
- Many ECI families who receive telehealth services report they are happy with the services and feel more empowered to work with their child to build skills.



What services are offered through telehealth, and will insurance cover them?

- Each ECI program may offer different services through telehealth.
- Medicaid plans cover some services provided via telehealth. Private insurance may cover some services provided via telehealth as well.
- Check with each insurance provider and your local ECI program to learn more.

How can referral sources contact their local ECI program?

Visit citysearch.hhsc.state.tx.us or hhs.texas.gov/eci or call **877-787-8999**.

* Heimerl, S. & Rasch, N. (2009, September). Delivering developmental occupational therapy consultation services through telehealth. *Developmental Disabilities Special Interest Section Quarterly*, 32(3), 1-4.

* World Health Organization & World Bank. (2011). *World Report on Disability*.