

Early Intervention and Teletherapy during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Authors : Stephen Hernandez, Nikita Sharma

Abstract : The Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) emerged as a worldwide pandemic at the beginning of 2020. The pandemic and its impact reached the shores of the United States by the second week of March. Once infections started to grow in numbers, early intervention programs, including those providing home-based services, recognized that to reduce the spread of the virus, many traditional in-person therapeutic interventions were going to be impossible due to social distancing and self-quarantine requirements. Initially, infants, toddlers, and their families were left without any services from their educators and therapists, but within a few weeks of the public health emergency, various states, including New York, approved the use of teletherapy/virtual visits for early intervention service provision. This paper will detail the results of a survey from over 400 E.I. service providers about their experiences utilizing teletherapy to deliver services to children in early intervention programs. The survey questions focused on how did COVID-19 stay-at-home orders impact E.I. services for young children with special needs? Sub-questions included topics such as availability of the parents, the amount of time that babies remained engaged, as well as the perceived success of teletherapy as a viable option to provide service by both parent and professional. The results of this study found that therapists found teletherapy to be a viable manner of providing services and could be very effective on a case by case basis.

Keywords : early intervention, teletherapy, telehealth, COVID-19

Conference Title : ICISE 2022 : International Conference on Inclusive and Special Education

Conference Location : Vancouver, Canada

Conference Dates : August 08-09, 2022