

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to you from the position of a mother of a child who is currently receiving teletherapy in the form of Speech Therapy. I am also coming from the position of an advocate for children and adults with special needs through both my personal life, and my husband's company [Planning Across the Spectrum](#). I also hold a bachelor's degree of Psychology, with a specialisation in child psychology.

From the position of a mother - Telehealth and Teletherapy have been astronomically impactful on keeping forward momentum on my daughter's developing speech. My daughter will be 3 in October and experiences a delay in speech development due to a struggle with pronouncing certain consonants. With practice and the help of speech therapy, she has been able to nearly overcome these obstacles in the last year. For the last few months due to Covid-19, my daughter has received her services through teletherapy from home and in this time has continued to improve with rapid momentum in speech skill success. At this time, it would be ill-advised for her or her peers to go back to doing these services in-person. Not only would the safety of it be difficult to navigate due to the age of children receiving these services and their ability to be compliant with current guidelines, but Speech Therapy would be downright impossible to do behind masks. Treatment for speech therapy relies on watching words being formed and watching lip and tongue movements. Current guidelines for distancing appropriately and masks will inhibit this therapy's effectiveness. With video therapy, we have been able to keep to "business as usual" as well as we can.

From my position with Planning Across the Spectrum - I develop presentations and write blog and article content for my husband's company, which offers a wide array of services in helping families affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder and similar conditions. As my husband is not only the founder of this company, but is also on the spectrum himself, I am privy to lots of conversation around the various therapies for those affected. I can say without question that this underserved community is holding onto it's sense of self by threads due to online resources currently provided, largely - telehealth and teletherapy. Children and adults alike have been able to navigate this currently uncertain world by keeping the tiniest semblance of their routine the same - seeing and working with their therapists and doctors. Taking this away from them could have the power to set back these individual's lives by not just a few lessons, a few doctor's visits, a few therapy sessions -- but by years of progress. Years of work into developing and working through strategies that work for each individual. That's truly what therapy is and how therapy works - treating every unique individual for their unique needs. Right now, going back to in-person therapy is just not an option for so many. Taking away their alternative would be devastating to this community.

I appreciate your time, and your reading of this long narrative. I hope that you will do the right thing.

Sincerely,

Jessica Komarow