

Hi, I'm Jill Senner, owner and director of Technology and Language Center, a tele-AAC practice specializing in meeting the needs of children, teens, and young adults with complex communication needs.

Today I'll be answering your most frequently asked questions about tele-AAC. Let's get started!

Question number one - What is tele-AAC? Well tele-AAC is a form of telepractice for individuals who use AAC and telepractice involves the use of telecommunications, we use zoom, for the delivery of professional services.

Question number 2 - Why tele-AAC? Well, maybe you live in a rural area and you don't have any speech language pathologists with AAC experience nearby or maybe you live in an urban area like me in Chicago but need to drive an hour in each direction during rush hour through the snow to reach an AAC clinic. Regardless tele-AAC increases access to well trained and experienced AAC professionals. It also increases parent involvement and therapy can be done in everyday meaningful routines and activities. Skills are practiced in the natural environment and all of the above increase the likelihood of maintenance and generalization of skills.

Question number three - Does my child need to stare at a screen? Oh, goodness no. Tele-AAC is not like the zoom meetings you might be familiar with where you sit watching talking heads on a screen. During therapy we read books, play iPad games, listen to music, play with toys, we might do some cooking in the kitchen, or really anything a child enjoys doing. In fact, a child doesn't even need to be sitting in front of the computer screen to participate in tele-AAC.

Next up, number 4 - Does someone need to be with my child? The answer to that one is yes. Someone needs to be on site during Tele AAC. Sometimes this just means connecting to zoom and setting up support software that we can use to remote control many speech generating devices but other times it means someone needs to be with the individual throughout each session. At home this can be parent, sibling, personal care attendant, etc. At school this can be an aide or other staff member.

Question #5 - What technology do I need? The basics include an Internet connection, a computer with a camera and audio capabilities, and the zoom application - pretty common these days. However, your child may also benefit from use of a touch screen or switch interface to allow increased access to therapy activities. Your therapist can provide you with specific recommendations.

Question #6 - What about AAC evaluations? Yes, all of our services from our SMoRRES® parent education program to AAC assessments are available via tele-AAC. Our evaluations include observations of your child, informal probes, and sometimes testing. We have numerous tests appropriate for children with complex communication needs of all abilities. For tasks that require pointing to an answer we are able to give your child remote control so they can use a mouse or touchscreen on a tablet or computer so we can see what they're selecting we work

with local vendors and AT lending libraries to have devices sent directly to your house so your child will have a chance to try appropriate communication systems during the assessment.

Question #7 - Where is this available? Well laws, regulations, and policies regarding telehealth and Interstate practices are changing rapidly so please contact us to find out if we're available to provide services in your state. Here is our contact information. Thanks so much for watching.