

Access to Special Education Services Through Teletherapy

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Presenters

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Presence in Texas

3,700+
Texas students
served across **60**
organizations in
2021-22 SY

2021-22 School Year	Speech- Language Pathology	School Psychology	Mental Health	Occupational Therapy
TX Schools & Educations Served	33	12	12	6
TX Students Served	2,733	701	283	68

Teletherapy Services for Special Education

- 14% of all public school students receive services under IDEA
- 600,000+ TX students in special education programs
- Teletherapy is:
 - Used to deliver a wide range of therapy services, including speech language pathology, occupational therapy, behavioral and mental health counseling, and assessments and evaluations.
 - Recommended by professional organizations.
 - Offered to students no matter where they live or attend school



Presence At a Glance

Presence is the leading provider of virtual special education related services and behavioral and mental health counseling in PreK-12 schools.

5 million

therapy sessions
delivered

2,300+

clinicians

13

years in
business

Teletherapy Extends Access to Underserved Populations

66%

Presence's school district clients are serving a high percentage of low-income families (median 66% low income families served).

62%

Presence's school district clients are serving racially diverse student populations (median 62% racially diverse students served).

55%

of Presence's school district clients are serving families located in rural areas.

Workforce Shortages

Clinician shortages – particularly in rural and heavily populated districts – leave students without access to effective speech-language therapy, behavioral and mental health counseling, and occupational therapy.

- Only 14% of schools met the ratio of one school counselor to 250 students, as recommended by the American School Counselor Association.
- According to the National Association of School Psychologists, we need to add approximately 63,000 school psychologists to the existing workforce in order to meet the recommended ratio of no more than 1 school psychologist per 500 students.
- In a survey by the American Speech-Language Hearing Association, 54% of school-based language pathologists reported unfilled clinical job openings in their districts.

Teletherapy Careers Retain Therapists

Remote work preferences

Remote work opportunities and flexibility give therapists a career option that accommodates their family and caregiver obligations.

- Over **95%** of school therapists are women
- More than **80%** of Presence's network of clinicians are caregivers
- **2/3** of people working remotely would like to continue to do so. (*Gallup*)
- **71%** of working moms said flexibility was the key factor in deciding to return to work. Of moms who did not return, **80%** say they would have returned to work if they had a remote work option. (*FlexJobs*)
- **15%** of teachers said having the ability to decide where they work would reduce the likelihood they leave the profession in the next two years. (*EducationWeek*)

“

Working remotely has provided me with more flexibility to do what I love to do in an environment that doesn't add on to the stress of the job. I'm also more productive since there is no time wasted on driving and there are no unplanned interruptions during my work day.”

Jessica Gonzalez
School Psychologist in TX and IL

Clinician Spotlight: Bonnie

“ *Benefits of remote work*

I sought a remote employment opportunity to increase my time engaging with and supporting students. The transition from a traditional Licensed Specialist in School Psychology role to a virtual placement allowed for use of my specific training and skill set at a **significantly higher rate** and gave me the ability to **meet with more students**. Removing typical constraints of a physical school environment and the many tasks not tied my role **opened my schedule** for direct counseling and assessment completion and allowed for a **focus in my specialty**.

When my family relocated from Texas due to my husband's retirement from the military, we purchased a small farm in Kentucky. I was able to **continue my work supporting Texas schools and students** from my new home **without interruption**.”



**Bonnie Contreras, Ed.S., NCSP, LSSP,
Certified School Counselor**
Clinical Partnership Director, Presence

“ *Benefits to students*

I continue to see tremendous benefits of teletherapy related to **continuity of service delivery**. Regardless of the student's location, services are available. Remote providers are ready to **attend to student needs without distraction**. Students speak to the **confidentiality** aspect with regularity and how much they appreciate speaking with a counselor they will not see in their physical environment.

As a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology, I had an incredible opportunity to support a student who began services at his high school and was then moved to an alternate placement. When he realized I would continue to provide services regardless of his location, **he expressed tremendous relief and my ability to support his progress accelerated**.

Teletherapy Careers Retain Therapists

Increased job satisfaction

The Challenge:

School-based speech therapists report lower job satisfaction versus speech therapists working in medical environments.

School-based SLPs listed their top 5 greatest challenges as follows:

1. Large amount of paperwork
2. High workload/caseload size
3. Volume of meetings
4. Limited time for collaboration
5. Limited family/caregiver support

Teletherapy as a Solution:

Improvements to quality of life with teletherapy:

- Saves time by eliminating commute
- Reduces manual paperwork by connecting notes and calendar entries to session documentation
- Facilitates therapy preparation and planning through creation of session playlists
- Simplifies resource gathering by providing easy to access library of activities and recommendations
- Reduces on-site caseloads by distributing work to contracted teletherapy workforce.

Parents on Teletherapy

“

Your OT has really brought our son out of his shell. She came through a computer and engaged him, where others have failed for two years in person. She has touched our whole family.”

Virtual school parent

“

I think the online service was such a benefit because he was able to slow down his speech. When he would feel uncomfortable or stressed, he would use some of the skills he had learned to calm down and get his words out, and he felt so good about himself—and we just noticed, personally and academically, he was gaining so much. It was amazing.”

Parent of child receiving virtual SLP services
Oregon

“

Nate is very engaged in what [his therapist] was having him do. What surprised me the most was his progress. People in his school, our friends, and our church have really noticed a big difference in his speech.”

Parent of child receiving virtual SLP services
Georgia

Appendix: Data, Research, & More

District Spotlight: Tomball ISD

Challenge

After seeing an increase in the number of at-risk students in both the general and special education populations, Tomball ISD sought to provide six-week long counseling services as part of the district's whole child initiative designed to support students' mental well-being.

Solution

Using federal Title IV funding, Tomball ISD partnered with Presence starting in the 2018-19 school year to provide online counseling services to students the district identified as being in need of Tier 2 interventions.

Results

Presence has provided students with access to needed behavioral and mental supports. The use of online counseling, is one component of the district's comprehensive Behavioral Health System of Care, which supported over 3,000 students in the 2021-22 school year. The program has contributed to a significant decrease in the percentage of in- and out-of-school suspensions, among other important benefits.



What is Teletherapy?

- Teletherapy in schools is used to deliver a wide range of therapy services, including speech language pathology (SLP), occupational therapy (OT), behavioral and mental health counseling (BMH), and assessments and evaluations (PA).
- Teletherapy serves students across different types of schools, offering the ability for students to participate in therapy sessions, no matter where they live or attend school.
- Teletherapy provides a solution to students in rural areas and urban centers that face challenges in attracting, hiring, and retaining qualified clinicians.
- Recommended by professional organizations such as the American Speech Hearing Association, American Occupational Therapy Association, and the American Psychological Association as an appropriate model for service delivery for speech-language therapy, occupational therapy, and behavioral and mental health therapy for many students.

Student Spotlight: Emma

Twelve years ago we served our very first student, six-year-old Emma. Her school was located in a remote area of Michigan. Her onsite team didn't have the experience needed to help Emma with her stutter, which was at risk of becoming a lifelong condition.

Emma's school brought in Presence. Pulling from our network of quality, experienced providers, we were able to match Emma with an SLP who could give her the help she needed.

Within three months of online speech therapy, Emma went from stuttering 36% of the time to stuttering 3% of the time.



Research on the Effectiveness of Teletherapy

Major professional associations including the **American Occupational Therapy Association**, **American Speech-Language-Hearing Association**, and **American Psychological Association** and children's health organizations including the **American Academy of Pediatrics** and the **Children's Hospital Association** have all endorsed the use of teletherapy and telehealth as a way to provide services to children.

- Wales, D., Skinner, L., et al (2017) The Efficacy of Telehealth-Delivered Speech and Language Intervention for Primary School-Age Children: A Systematic Review. *International Journal of Telerehabilitation*, 9(1), 55-70. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5546562/>
- Is Telepractice an Effective Solution for Increased Demand and Shrinking Budgets? By Julie Erdmann Speech-Language Pathologist & Clinical Program Assistant, The Hanen Centre. <https://www.hanen.org/SiteAssets/Articles---Printer-Friendly/Clinical---Program-Support/Is-Telepractice-an-Effective-Solution-for-Increase.aspx>
- Boisvert, M. (2014). No Student Left Unserved. Yes, telepractice can work with our most behaviorally challenged students in schools. Here's how. *The ASHA Leader*, 19(12), 48-52. <https://leader.pubs.asha.org/doi/10.1044/leader.FTR2.19122014.48>

Research on the Use of Teletherapy During & After COVID-19

The broadened use of teletherapy during the COVID-19 pandemic allowed for new research on both the efficacy of the modality and the impact on the clinical workforce.

- Hao, Y., Zhang, S., Conner, A., & Lee, N. Y. (2021). The Evolution of Telepractice Use During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Perspectives of Pediatric Speech-Language Pathologists. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 18(22), 12197. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph182212197>
- ASHA 2020 Schools Survey: SLP Workforce and Work Conditions <https://www.asha.org/siteassets/surveys/2020-schools-survey-slp-workforce.pdf>
- Topics in Language Disorders Volume 42, Issue 2 (April -June 2022): Pediatric Language Assessment and Intervention using a Telepractice Service Delivery Model. Editor: Sue Grogan-Johnson, PhD, CCC-SLP. <https://journals.lww.com/topicsinlanguagedisorders/pages/default.aspx>

Research on the Use of Teletherapy During & After COVID-19 Continued

- Language, Speech and Hearing Services in Schools April 2022. Research Abstract: Is Bilingual Receptive Vocabulary Assessment via Telepractice Comparable to Face-to-Face? https://pubs.asha.org/doi/epdf/10.1044/2021_LSHSS-21-00054
Findings: Spanish-English bilingual students progressed equally across telepractice and in-person modalities.
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, SIG 1 Language Learning and Education, Research Article, April 14, 2022. Voices From the Field: Strategies for Effective Telepractice for Children With Autism Who Use Augmentative and Alternative Communication.
https://pubs.asha.org/doi/pdf/10.1044/2021_PERSP-21-00229
Findings: Telepractice can be an advantageous service delivery option for SLPs serving children with autism who use aided AAC.
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, SIG 1 Language Learning and Education, Research Article, April 14, 2022. Tips for Implementing Telepractice Interventions With Family Members of Young Children With Autism Spectrum Disorder
https://pubs.asha.org/doi/pdf/10.1044/2021_PERSP-21-00221

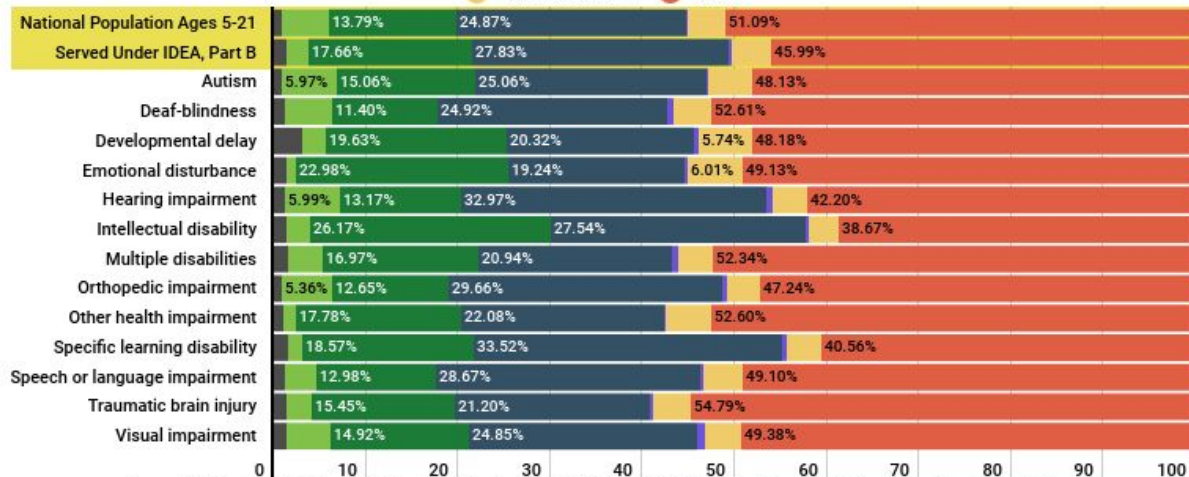


OSEP Fast Facts: Race and Ethnicity of Children with Disabilities Served under IDEA Part B

For the purposes of this fact sheet, racial ethnic groups are defined in the IDEA Part B Child Count and Educational Environments for School Year 2019-2020, OSEP Data Documentation. <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/osepidea/618-data/collection-documentation/data-documentation-files/part-b/child-count-and-educational-environment/idea-partb-childcountandedenvironment-2019-20.pdf>

Percentage of Students with Disabilities, Ages 5 (in kindergarten) through 21, by Race and Ethnicity and Disability Category, in the US, Outlying Areas, and Freely Associated States: SY 2019-20

● American Indian or Alaska Native
 ● Asian
 ● Black or African American
 ● Hispanic/Latino
 ● Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 ● Two or more races
 ● White



Source: U.S. Department of Education, ED Facts Data Warehouse (EDW): "IDEA Part B Child Count and Educational Environments Collection," 2019-20.

<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/osepidea/618-data/state-level-data-files/part-b-data/child-count-and-educational-environments/bchildcountandedenvironments2019-20.csv>. All data for Wisconsin were suppressed due to data quality concerns.

U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau. Intercensal Estimates of the Resident Population by Single Year of Age and Sex for States and the United States: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2018, 2009-18. The State pie chart for population does not include the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE); Puerto Rico (PR); the outlying areas of American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Virgin Islands; and the three freely associated states of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding and/or data being suppressed.

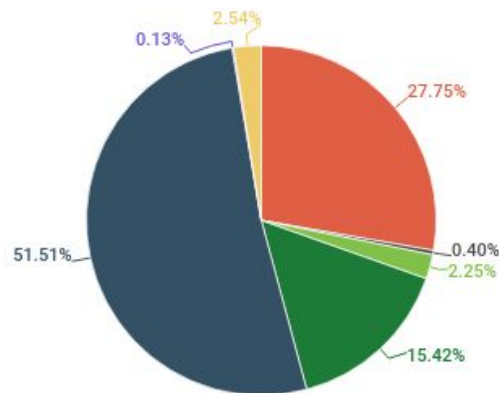
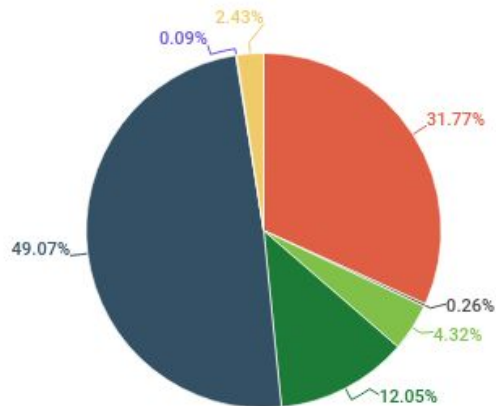
Percentage of Students with Disabilities and Percentage of the Population, Ages 5 (in kindergarten) through 21 by Race and Ethnicity, in the US, Outlying Areas, and Freely Associated States: SY 2019-20

● White
 ● American Indian or Alaska Native
 ● Asian
 ● Black or African American
 ● Hispanic/Latino
● Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 ● Two or More Races

By States and the United States, Resident Population, Ages 5-21

By State and the US, Outlying Areas, and Freely Associated States, Ages 5 (in kindergarten) -21, Served Under IDEA, Part B

< Texas >
 < Texas >



Source: U.S. Department of Education, ED Facts Data Warehouse (EDW): "IDEA Part B Child Count and Educational Environments Collection," 2019-20.
<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/osepidea/618-data/state-level-data-files/part-b-data/child-count-and-educational-environments/bchildcountandedenvironments2019-20.csv> All data for Wisconsin were suppressed due to data quality concerns. Data for Iowa was not available.

U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau. Intercensal Estimates of the Resident Population by Single Year of Age and Sex for States and the United States: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2018, 2009-18. The State pie chart for population does not include the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE); Puerto Rico (PR); the outlying areas of American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Virgin Islands; and the three freely associated states of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding and/or data being suppressed.

Thank You!

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