

Informed Consent for Telehealth

Consent for the Provision of Speech Pathology Services through Telehealth

What is the purpose of this form?

The purpose of this form is to provide you with information about, and to obtain your consent to participate in, a Telehealth consultation with your speech pathologist.

What is Telehealth?

Telehealth is the use of telecommunication to provide speech pathology services to clients (e.g. phone, video-call). In addition, Babble & Munch Speech Pathology clinicians may also utilise other formats, such as email, for related communication in conjunction with videoconferencing to administer client sessions. Telehealth is sometimes referred to as telepractice, telerehabilitation, or telespeech.

What does a Telehealth consultation involve?

A Telehealth consultation usually involves some or all of the following:

- Your speech pathologist will discuss your child's feeding, communication, health and progress with you and, where appropriate, offer information and advice (*parent/caregiver-coaching, with or without child present in the consultation*);
- Your speech pathologist may model various assessment tasks or therapy techniques to be completed by the child, or by you or your support person interacting with the child;
- Your speech pathologist may observe a usual mealtime or therapy tasks via video-link or pre-recorded video taken by the parent/caregiver and, where appropriate, provide feedback and further advice;

In addition:

- You may bring a support person with you, as you might in a face-to-face consultation;
- If you attend a health service to participate in a Telehealth consultation or have a health professional attend the session with you, the health professional(s) may need to work with your child according to your speech pathologist's instructions;
- A technical support person might be present for part of the consultation to assist with technical issues; and
- You are not permitted to record the consultation by video or audio unless your speech pathologist gives you permission to do so.

What are the potential benefits of Telehealth?

Telehealth *may*:

- Improve access to speech pathology services;
- Allow the clinician an increased understanding of the child's skills and participation in the home setting and assist your child to carry-over skills learned in therapy to the home environment (e.g. mealtimes)
- Reduce your need for travel;
- Provide access to services not available in your local community;
- Decrease exposure to infectious disease.

What are the potential risks of Telehealth?

Telehealth *may*:

- Be negatively impacted by technical problems, such as delays due to technology failures;
- Not offer the same visual and sound quality for observations and modelling;
- Require someone onsite with you to support you in carrying out the Telehealth session;
- Not feel the same as an face-to-face session;
- Not achieve everything that is required and may therefore require another Telehealth consultation or a face-to-face consultation;
- Include practices and procedures that are not as well understood in a Telehealth setting as they are in a face-to-face session; and/or
- Increase exposure to privacy and digital security risks (see next section).

Will my privacy be protected?

This practice is subject to the Privacy Act 1988 and must comply with obligations related to the collection, use and disclosure of personal information, including through Telehealth. The speech pathologist must maintain confidentiality and privacy standards during sessions, and in creating, keeping and transmitting records, according to our Privacy Policy and the Australian Privacy Principles.

At times, audio and video recordings of sessions may be taken to support the speech pathologist's work, as might occur in a face-to-face consultation. You will be informed before a recording takes place and can refuse to be recorded for any reason. The speech pathologist will inform you of the reason for the recording and it will be stored on a password protected computer system.

While the speech pathologist is obligated to meet standards to protect your privacy and security, the use of telecommunication, including videoconference, may increase exposure to hacking and other online risks. As with all online activities, there is no guarantee of complete privacy and security protection. You may decrease the risk by using a private internet connection and meeting with the speech pathologist from a private location. Your speech pathologist will use a secure, encrypted videoconferencing method when using this medium.

What do I do if there is a medical emergency during the appointment?

In the event of a medical emergency (e.g. choking episode) you are responsible for contacting emergency services (calling 000) and commencing first aid (e.g. back blows, CPR). The speech pathologist will stay on the line with you.

What does 'informed consent' mean?

There are a few important principles related to informed consent:

- **You must be given relevant information.** Ask the speech pathologist if you have questions about Telehealth and the services offered.
- **You have the right to understand the information.** Ask the speech pathologist if you do not understand.
- **You have the right to choose.** If you do not agree to Telehealth, you may refuse to participate. You may agree to or refuse specific activities and procedures.
- **You have the right to stop using Telehealth anytime.** You can change your mind about Telehealth or a specific activity or procedure, even in the middle of a session.
- **You can agree or refuse in writing or verbally.** You may give your consent using the form below. You may also give consent or change your mind by telling the speech pathologist. Consent and refusal that you give verbally will be documented by the speech pathologist.
- **You can ask about alternatives to Telehealth.** If you refuse or change your mind about Telehealth services, your speech pathologist will discuss any other options with you. The speech pathologist may or may not be able to offer alternative services.

Written Consent for the provision of service via Telehealth:

As an alternative method in the delivery of speech pathology services, Babble & Munch Speech Pathology requests your permission to provide services via a third party Telehealth platform. Babble & Munch Speech Pathology's Telehealth services reflect Speech Pathology Australia's Position Statement titled, *Telehealth in Speech Pathology*.

By signing the consent below, you:

- acknowledge that this consent is in addition to Babble & Munch Speech Pathology's Terms of Service signed at the start of your service with us. It does not replace Babble & Munch Speech Pathology's Terms of Service consent form;
- understand that some practise areas of speech pathology have limited evidence with respect to Telehealth service delivery; that Telehealth at times may not deliver the same outcomes as face-to-face consultations;
- permit to the use and/or transfer of information for speech pathology services via Telehealth as outlined above;
- will not hold Babble & Munch Speech Pathology liable for any error(s) incurred by third party Telehealth platforms (including errors relating but not limited to transmissions, privacy, connectivity etc.);
- understand that it is your sole responsibility to determine eligibility of any rebates through funders for Telehealth services (i.e. Medicare, private insurers, NDIS, school funding etc.);

- take full responsibility for the payment of consultation fees to Babble & Munch Speech Pathology as per our Terms of Service, should funders refuse/reject rebates for Telehealth services rendered;
- will not record or reproduce any Telehealth session without prior written consent from Babble & Munch Speech Pathology;
- will ensure internet connectivity is sufficiently available and stable to conduct the session. Babble & Munch Speech Pathology takes no responsibility for internet connection disruptions during the allocated consultation;
- will ensure availability of sufficient technologies (internet connectivity, computer hardware and software, microphone and speakers, etc.) to participate in Telehealth;
- will notify representatives from Babble & Munch Speech Pathology of all persons within your room and/or listening to the speech pathology session prior to the session or at any time should additional people enter the room;
- take responsibility for the health, safety and behaviour management of children during the session, where applicable;
- ensure that the room that you are working in is free from distraction and background noise as much as is possible; and
- will be present at all times with your child during the Telehealth consultation.

Consent for speech pathology services via Telehealth:

I consent to Babble & Munch Speech Pathology undertaking speech pathology services via Telehealth for my child as outlined in this Informed Consent for Telehealth Form.

Please tick/select:

- I agree to receive speech pathology services via Telehealth.
- I understand that I may agree or refuse any service or part of a service at any time. I can agree or refuse in writing or verbally.

Client Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Parent/Legal Guardian's Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____