



Therapeutic Animal-Assisted Groundwork (TAAG) Session FAQ

1. **What kinds of activities will my child do during TAAG sessions?**
 - Every single activity will be tailored specifically to your child's functional goals.
 - For example, a child with a goal to work on self-regulation may complete "heavy work". This means they may push a broom, scoop up hay, push hay bales, move the hose, or give the horses blankets to regulate their sensory system.
 - Another example may include that your child has a goal for grasping objects, they may hold the lead rope to guide the horse, hold a grooming brush, or hold a rake or broom.

2. **Will insurance cover TAAG sessions?**
 - Yes! TAAG is skilled physical, occupational, and speech therapy. The therapists will be working on functional goals just as they would during clinic time.

3. **Can I watch a TAAG session?**
 - Yes! Please let your therapist know you would like to observe. Safety is our number one concern in the barn. We just need to be aware of the surroundings and ensure the child, therapist, and you are in a safe location without too much horse traffic.

4. **Is it safe for my child to be in the barn?**
 - Yes! All employees have completed barn safety training. Furthermore, a trained professional horse handler is present for every session, ensuring the highest safety standards are met. Our trained equine professionals will monitor behaviors of the horse and the environment in the barn to proactively.

5. **What if my child cannot complete the TAAG activities?**
 - All children can participate in TAAG! We will tailor your child's needs and goals specifically to them. This means we will ensure all activities completed in the barn are skilled therapy activities, just as would be completed in the clinic. We have therapy materials in the barn to ensure all children can participate safely. The environment will be modified to ensure your child is safe and completing functional skilled therapy activities to work towards their goals.
 - For example, if your child is working on side sitting, the therapist and your child would sit on a mat and can do interactive activities with the horse such as rolling a ball back and forth with the horse.

6. **What if my child elopes (escapes)?**
 - We have a lot of safety protocols to ensure your child is safe as possible. We will continuously be working towards goals for understanding commands such as "stop, wait, look, etc." to work on functional safety in all environments. Each child will wear a gait belt, which ensures the therapist can easily redirect your child as necessary. All staff have been trained on barn safety techniques and a horse handler is present during your child's session to ensure additional safety techniques are being implemented.



7. **What if my child has allergies to the environment in the barn?**
 - Please let us know! We will modify your child's session to ensure your child is safe and healthy.

8. **What if my child is scared of the barn and activities that occur in the barn?**
 - Meet our clinic dog, AJ! AJ is our CCI dog. He is trained in over 40 commands and helping children with their functional goals. We will utilize his skills and companionship to utilize animal assisted therapies and work towards your child's functional goals. We can continue to work with your child to make the barn a safe and fun therapeutic environment.

9. **What if my child is only seen every other week? Will they have one TAAG session per month?**
 - No. We have modified our schedule in a way that ensures your child will only have a TAAG session every other month and will participate in a traditional hippotherapy session on all other appointments.

10. **Please note, all TAAG sessions will only work on functional goals tailored specifically to your child, just as they are in the clinic, but now using animal assisted therapies. The benefits of TAAG are incorporating the use of animal assisted therapies which research demonstrates significant improvements in motivation, engagement, and interactions. More examples of TAAG activities include but are not limited to:**
 - Goal: Improving variety of textures and varieties of foods tolerated
 - i. Use the horses to "try" the foods first using learned therapy techniques
 - Goal: Improving standing balance
 - i. "Show" the horses how to do exercises! Kids love visiting each horse and showing off their exercise skills
 - Goal: Improving fine motor coordination for tying, zipping, and completing activities of daily living
 - i. Braid the horses hair and add bows and clips to make the horse look dazzling
 - Goal: Improving seated balance
 - i. The therapist would be completing handling techniques with your child while the child tells the horse handler what to make the horse do with the horse
 - Goal: Improving range of motion in upper extremities
 - i. The child could paint the horse or place stickers on the horse
 - Goal: Improving expressive language skills
 - i. The child could give commands such as "go" if they want the horse to move
 - Goal: Improving attention and focus
 - i. The child could take the horse on a scavenger hunt to find their favorite objects