



Virtual Visit Tips



Virtual visits offer some unique benefits and challenges for both staff members and families seeking to connect by video or phone. To increase the likelihood of facilitating a successful connection, staff members can ensure adequate preparation for these visits, a set plan for the time together, communicate clearly with the participant, and be flexible to their real-time needs. Some parents may prefer virtual visits due to the convenience, while others may find it hard to focus, be open, or keep their kids engaged. Regardless of each family's unique needs, here are some tips that may help guide virtual visits.

Before the session

- **The day before a session**, send a picture or screenshot of the materials a parent will need for a planned parent-child activity. In some cases, staff members may drop off materials prior to a visit. Ensure that you, as the staff member, are also prepared with these materials.
- **Find an area in your environment that is private** and ensure that the participant is able to do the same. Make sure you are both comfortable speaking freely, with minimal interruption or distraction. If children will be present or involved in the meeting, assure the participant that the meeting plan will be adjusted as needed.
- **If relevant, compile resources in advance**, ideally in an online or PDF format. This will allow you to screen share or email necessary resources to the participant, so you can review them together prior to or during your meeting.
- **Practice mindful self-regulation** before logging on to a call. Take a deep breath, listen to music or use visualization or another practice to center yourself. Our appearance of being a calming presence can immediately have a comforting and reassuring effect on our participant families. If a participant is interested, this practice can also be used as a virtual visit session opener.

During the session

- **Remember to touch upon the three areas of focus:** parenting, recovery and concrete needs/care coordination, however briefly.
- **Parenting:** Watch for cues from the parent about what the child needs. If a child is fussy or overly energetic, let the participant know you will stand by if or when they tend to the child. If the parent is open to your interacting directly with their child, have an age-appropriate activity.
- **Recovery:** Check in about a parent's recovery needs, how they are feeling that week, if they've experienced any challenges or triggers, or have any successes to share. This might include checking in about recovery supports and whether more support is needed.
- **Concrete needs:** Inquire about the family's basic needs. If they are struggling, strategize ways to connect with community resources. Keep in mind Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs on [page 226](#) and recall that a participant may not be able to engage in higher-level activities if they are concerned about meeting their basic needs for food and safety.
- **Be flexible and accommodating** if the participant needs to end the call.
- **Suggest to the participant** that since routine is helpful and generally containing for both the parent and child, you would like to schedule sessions with them at the same time every week.



Virtual Visit Tips *continued*

After the session

- **Take a deep breath and engage** in any self-care activities that support your personal process.
- **Connect with your Supervisor to discuss** any outstanding or acute issues, follow up with collateral contacts or perform other next steps and complete Service Logs and home visit notes.

