

Distributed to juvenile partners on 3/30/20

Strategies to make remote parenting time visits meaningful

For younger children or those with developmental delays

- Be mindful of facial gestures and vocal tone. Keep your face cheery and happy and slightly exaggerated
- Make eye contact with the camera as often as you can
- Maintain slow speech to allow babies to “respond”
- Start/end with a song or ritual that is the same at each visit. There is a great Spotify playlist called Kindermusic that could be played during a visit.
- “I love you Rituals” I Love You Rituals are structured connecting activities that include eye contact, touch, presence and playfulness. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C3PtrlnUm4U> here is an example of “I love you rituals” parent could sing and point to their own face or to the face of the kiddo on the screen. Help parents remember that symbolic touch is nearly as effective as actual touch in releasing oxytocin and building attachment.
- Play peek-a-boo
- Draw a picture while you talk and show it to your child if kids are verbal they can tell you what to draw.
- Play with puppets/stuffed animals and have them talk with you both
- Show them pictures of you together if you have them
- Have kiddos play with blocks/toys and reflect character praise (“you are so good at building blocks)” narrate what you see them doing
- Sing to them
- Read to them
- Set computer or video device in an area that will allow for children to play and be seen.
- Engage all children in visit multiple times.
- Play eye spy
- Show children toys and ask for shapes, sizes, colors
- Use flash cards and describe what the card is about
- Have parents read children books & engage children in conversation throughout book.
- Have parents and children sign songs together or learn new songs (new children songs (lyrics or singalong videos) can be found on the internet)
- Sesame Street has interactive readings, games, videos, activities
 - [Sesame Strong | Sesame Street in Communities](#)

This document was created by Brooke Bjorneberg of the El Paso County Department of Human Services, along with personnel from Kid's Crossing Colorado Springs, Palome Child and Family Specialists in Colorado Springs, Griffith Centers Colorado Springs, Maple Star Colorado Springs, and the Family Visitation Center in Colorado Springs.

For all ages of children

- Ask for the high and low of the day.
- Have parents & children color a special memory and then take turns sharing the picture and memory.
- Coloring & prompts on coloring (i.e.: If you had one wish what would you wish for, if you could go anywhere in the world where would you go, if you could have any animal what animal would it be, etc)
- Silly coloring prompts: [100 Silly Drawing Prompts to Engage Your Students](#)
- 31 awesome creative drawing prompts: [Awesome Creative Drawing Ideas for Kids](#)
- Have a visit during meal times.
- Free online read-along books:
 - [Stories for Kids](#)
 - [Storyline Online](#)
 - [BookSpring](#)
- Have parents and children sign songs together or learn new songs (new children songs (lyrics or singalong videos) can be found on the internet)
- Mindfulness activities, worksheets, videos to view and practice together
 - [25 Fun Mindfulness Activities for Children and Teens \(+Tips!\)](#)
 - [51 Mindfulness Exercises for Kids in the Classroom](#)
- Deep Breathing exercise (Google : deep breathing exercises for kids and select “video” option)
- Yoga online for children:
 - [Free Kids' Yoga Videos](#)
- Family online exercise activities: especially helpful to expel excess energy. (<https://members.thefamilyfitclub.co.uk/>)
- Sesame Street has interactive readings, games, videos, activities
 - [Sesame Strong | Sesame Street in Communities](#)
- Screen share a scavenger hunt and have them find things around the house or yard
- Sing or have a dance party
- Have youth teach you how to draw something (i.e. step-by-step guidance/instruction to draw a pig)
- Participating in other arts and crafts activities that offer encouragement, guiding, attachment and modeling for parent-child interactions. (Free resources can be found here: <https://www.kitchentableclassroom.com/category/for-kids/>)
- White Board apps can be used for tic-tac-toe, written dialogue, dot game, etc. www.webwhiteboard.com)
- Educational engagement activities, journaling together, creating a book of “About me and my family” to identify connections and offer supportive dialogue to strengths and goals.

General guidelines while on a video visit, in addition to normal guidelines:

- Visitation supervisor will start meeting at least 5 min prior to allow all parties to join and this will allow for ample time to get video and audio issues under control. A 15 min grace period is allowed for parents to access the video platform used for the visit. Visitation supervisor will make attempts to contact visiting parties to troubleshoot any technical difficulties. If after 15 minutes there is no response from visiting parties, the visit will be cancelled.
- If the team feels that regularly scheduled multi-hour visits are too long, the team, in coordination with the visit supervisor/provider, can agree to have several short visits throughout the week. For example: one 3-hour visit could be split into 6 30-minute visits or 3 1-hour visits.
- Visitation supervisor will keep themselves muted and hidden to allow for more privacy. Most video platforms have a chat feature. The chat feature can be used to send message if needed or Visitation supervisor can unmute when needed to communicate with families.
- Only approved participants can be on video visits, Parents and caregivers will need to make sure all other NON-case related individuals are not being seen or participating in visit unless otherwise approved by Case worker prior to visit.
- Caregiver and parents can ask in chat to end visit early if they feel that children are not engaging any longer. Visitation supervisor will attempt to keep visit for as long scheduled, however children's attention spans vary and can be limited without direct physical contact.
- Visitation supervisor will document the time in visit and attention span for children.
- Parents and Children are expected to be fully present and engaged in video visit not in other activities. This includes but not limited to Driving, shopping, talking to others around them not in visit, playing video games, or texting on other devices.
- Please refrain from using substances during visits. This includes but not limited to smoking e-cigarettes/cigarettes, marijuana, vaping, chewing tobacco and/or drinking alcohol.
- We do expect for buffering moments on video/audio quality. Please do not leave meeting. Be patient and wait for video to commence again.

Additional Resources for Video Visits:

- <https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/tips-video-chatting-young-children>
- <https://www.nccdglobal.org/blog/successful-video-visits-young-children>

Thank you Kid's Crossing for this last part:

This time is not normal. Allow your child to relate to you on how all of this feels and help to normalize feeling out of control.

That being said we do not want to create fear in our children either. So be careful not to put your feelings onto your child and to be mindful of how adult words come across to children. We all "know" something weird is happening and denying that will only teach our children not to acknowledge their feelings about this. Help show your child that hard things happen and here (see list above) are a few ways we can "stick together" and make it through this stronger.

Remember allowing choices will help children in these times so instead of instructing them on what you are going to do in the visit allow them to pick. This will allow for more engagement over the video.

