

A Protective Factors Framework for Virtual Visits

RESOURCE GUIDE



Challenges and Opportunities in Family Engagement During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Challenges:

- Technology limitations
 - See virtual visit readiness webinar
- New way of working together
- Increased stress
- Increased resource needs
- Perceived lack of access to materials for play
- Increased risk for child abuse and neglect, depression, anxiety and interpersonal violence
- Social distancing can lead to social isolation for families



Opportunities:

- Increased desire for connection during isolation may increase motivation for change
- Increased time/availability of family members who aren't typically available for home visits
 - Video conferencing may be opportunity to include family members who are separated from each other during this time in all or part of the visit.
- Coaching parent-child interactions may be more effective since FSP is not physically present in the home, so the parent is better positioned to be the one interacting with the child.
- Empower families to use tools and resources readily available (such as using pots and pans as drums or an empty toilet paper tube to put objects through for fine motor activities).
- Leverage families' experience with technology to empower them as leaders and decision makers.
- Emphasize routine over schedule. Build on social emotional development of children and attachment between parents and children.
- Empower parents to become stronger observers of children's development and support their children's growth and learning



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A Protective Factors Framework for Addressing Challenges and Opportunities Virtually During Increased Stress and Isolation

Parental Resilience – Ask and Offer:

“How can we best stay connected?” Consider mailing materials with a self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE) for return correspondence; texting; texting apps such as What’s App, Wi-Fi mobile hotspots; phone calls; video conferences; and resource/activity kit drop-offs.

See readiness reflection professional resource for determining readiness for video virtual visits.

“What parenting challenges are you experiencing?” “How have you overcome parenting challenges in the past?” Build off past experiences to support families to overcome challenges

“How can I best support you to stay connected?” Consider offering virtual dance parties, family yoga, stretching or other activities.

Social Connection – Ask and Offer:

“Would you be interested in participating in a social media group, virtual parenting group, or virtual self-care group?” (if available)

“What creative approaches can you and your family use to stay connected with extended family?” Consider writing letters or online video chats.

“How are you connecting with people during this time? Family? Friends? Kids’ teachers? Kids’ friends?”

“Who are you still seeing in person?”

“Who are you connecting with virtually?”

“How has your typical circle of support shifted during this time?”

“How might the quality of relationships be changing?”

“What are you noticing about who you are connecting with?”

“What type of technology is working best for you to stay connected?”



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Strategies from the field

Opportunities for caregivers to be connected to other adults and to focus on own well-being:

1. Texting and Texting Apps (What's App)
2. Phone calls, FaceTime, Google Hangouts, and other video conferencing
3. Virtual social activities (FB peer support groups, online exercise classes, online games with friends)

Opportunities for families and children to stay connected:

1. Apps for children to stay connected (Such as MessengerKids, Marco Polo)
2. Call of video conference with family members
3. Look at photo albums or pictures of family and share memories/stories together
4. Write letters to/create cards for relatives and friends
5. Cook a meal together from a family recipe
6. Share family traditions (songs, dances, stories, or crafts)
7. Text old pictures of favorite memories to family and friends

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development – Ask and Offer:

- **“What are you noticing about your child’s development?”** Consider providing child development materials and activity ideas by mail, email or drop off if your program allows. Provide links to child development apps such as the CDC’s Milestones app. Offer resources such as Brain Pop and PBS Kids, listed on page 2 of this resource guide. Offer anticipatory guidance on changes they may notice.
- **“How are you maintaining a predictable routine while allowing adjustments for changes?”**
“How is the routine supporting your relationship with your child?” Provide suggestions for building parent-child interaction times into daily routines.

Concrete Support in Times of Need – Ask and Offer:

- **“What resources might you need?”** **“Is there anything you’re having trouble finding or getting?”** Research and plan how to assist families with concrete needs prior to virtual home visits. Share community resources for cleaning supplies, medicines, tissues, toilet paper and food. Partner with community agencies such as WIC, diaper banks, food banks, school lunch programs and offer to drop off needed supplies at the family’s doorstep. Include child development materials in all drop offs made by you or other community agencies if possible
- **“What health and safety needs might you or your family members have?”** Connect families with resources for telehealth for medical, mental health, substance use, or domestic violence concerns. Prior to offering these resources, try them yourself to learn the process so you can support families to navigate unfamiliar territory.



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Social and Emotional Competence of Children – Ask and Offer:

“How is your child reacting to the changes in routines and caregivers as a result of the pandemic?”

Offer anticipatory guidance on changes and behaviors they may notice.

“What signs might you see that your child is experiencing stress?” Emphasize the importance of creating routines and structures to the extent possible during this time (a “new normal”).

“How are you balancing your stress with your child’s emotional needs during this difficult time?”

Offer resources for parental self-care and for supporting children’s social and emotional needs during times of trauma (see resource guide for links).

Emphasize the importance of play and the relationships with primary caregivers to help children manage stress. Offer ideas for simple play activities parents can do with children that require no materials or those typically available in the homes you visit. Examples include blanket forts, peek-a-boo or obstacle courses using sofa cushions.

Coach families using the 3 R’s: Reassurance, Routines, and Regulation (Bartlett, 2020)

- Adults should reassure children that they are safe and loved, maintain routines and support children as they develop regulation

Setting expectations for the visit

1. Check-in*

- Will be done prior to every visit via phone, text, or email
- See Professional Resource: IVC Virtual Service Delivery Checklist for further guidance.

2. Core components of every visit

- Parent-child interaction
- Parenting and child development education and discussion
- Overall family health and wellness
- Start and end visit at agreed on time.

3. Ending

- Focus on next visit preparations
- Reflection on what is working and what may need to be changed

**The check-in is more important than ever before. This is where you’ll clarify the technology and type of visit (video, phone, etc.), share materials needed for the visit (handouts, materials for play, etc.), ask about any pressing needs or wants the parent has for topics to be discussed (parenting challenges, new behaviors, development questions, etc.).*



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Resources

Resources for children on COVID-19 and staying healthy

BrainPOP: [Coronavirus](#) (4-minute video, activities, and games)

National Public Radio: [Just for Kids: A Comic Exploring the New Coronavirus](#)

PBS Kids: [How to Talk to Your Kids About Coronavirus](#) (includes a list of videos, games, and activities about handwashing and staying healthy)

Johns Hopkins Medicine: [Handwashing and Coronavirus Prevention for Children Infographic](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Wash Your Hands: Follow these steps for proper handwashing to prevent the spread of germs. [English](#) [Spanish](#) [French](#) [Arabic](#) [Bengali](#) [Chinese](#) [Portuguese](#) [Urdu](#) [Haitian Creole](#)

Resources for parents and other caregivers on COVID-19 and staying healthy

American Academy of Pediatrics: [2019 Novel Coronavirus](#) (online article; [en español!](#))

CDC: [Frequently Asked Questions](#), includes section on COVID-19 and children

CDC: [Pregnancy and Breastfeeding: Information about Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)

Generations United: [COVID-19 Fact Sheet for Grandfamilies and Multigenerational Families](#)

National Child Traumatic Stress Network: [Parent/Caregiver Guide to Helping Families Cope with the Coronavirus Disease 2019](#) (PDF; [en español!](#))

Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health: [COVID-19 Resources for Children with Special Health Care Needs](#)

American Academy of Pediatrics: [Telehealth Services for Children](#)

Children's National Primary Care: [FAQs About Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and CNPA Primary Care Practices](#)

Talking to children about COVID-19

Boston Children's Hospital: [How to Talk to Your Children About Coronavirus](#) (video)

CDC: [Talking with Children about the Coronavirus Disease 2019: Messages for parents, school staff, and others working with children](#)

Zero to Three: [Tips for Families: Talking About the Coronavirus](#)

Child Mind Institute: [Talking to Your Children about the Coronavirus](#) (4-minute video; [en español!](#))

LSU Health New Orleans: [Supporting Young Children Isolated Due to Coronavirus](#)

Keeping kids busy and socially connected

The Atlantic: [How Parents Can Keep Kids Busy \(and Learning\) in Quarantine](#)

Louisiana State University: [Supporting Young Children Isolated Due to Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

Zero to Three: [Five Tips to Make the Most of Video Chats](#)

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Acorn Dreams: Growing Children’s Skills for Life: [Website](#) is filled with practical tips and ideas to strengthen children’s social-emotional skills at home.

- Easy-to-use, short tips from “In a Nutshell” on the home page that build social skills, self-control, cooperation, independence, brainpower, and healthy habits. A sample tip: Be sure to comment when children interact in socially positive ways. *“Nice job sharing the trains!”* or *“Thanks for telling me you’re feeling sad. It helps me to know what’s going on inside.”*
- Downloadable tip sheets for parents on topics like helping their children to stop and think and to use words to express feelings. The tip sheet [“A Quiet Place”](#) provides simple steps on how to set up and use a Quiet Place at home to help children manage big feelings. There’s even a tip sheet on [“Calm Down for Parents!”](#)

Self-care for adults

CDC: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): [Stress and Coping](#)

Zero to Three: [Young Children at Home during the COVID-19 Outbreak: The Importance of Self-Care](#)

Resources for family support professionals

Study Parents as Teachers, Virtual Service Delivery Readiness

https://parentsasteachers.zoom.us/rec/share/2-lcMJHXzWVJJerfI6InfZrwjQYC5T6a81ShPr6EKzk6FKT_cDu1RTHwtAddHRTFH

Center for the Study of Social Policy’s Strengthening Families™. A Protective Factors Framework: [About Strengthening Families™ and the Protective Factors Framework](#)

Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center: [Coronavirus Prevention and Response](#)

Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center: [Supporting Children and Families During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

Parents as Teachers National Center: [IVC Virtual Service Delivery Checklist](#)

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network: [Psychological First Aid](#) is an evidence-informed approach to help children, adolescents, adults and families in the immediate aftermath of disaster.

National Alliance to End Homelessness: [COVID-19: What state and local leaders can do for homeless populations](#)

NTEN: [Digital Divide Resources During the Pandemic](#)

Resources for immigrant families

National Immigration Law Center: [Update on Access to Health Care for Immigrants and Their Families](#)

Protecting Immigrant Families: [Factsheet: Know Your Rights, Protect Your Health](#)

Protecting Immigrant Families: Talking Points: Coronavirus

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