

Communicating Remotely with Children and Teens

Technology Tips

General technology tips for virtual meetings to help parents, care givers, foster care families, and Department of Community Services staff when they're meeting with children and teens.

Connecting through technology takes effort. It takes more planning than face-to-face meetings. But technology makes it possible to connect in these difficult times. With extra effort and planning, everyone can get the most out of virtual meetings.

Technology Checklist

Charged device: Make sure that the device is charged before the call, or plugged in.

Internet connection: Join the call a few minutes early to make sure you don't have connection issues.

Meeting link: Join online meetings using the link provided in the meeting invitation.

Audio: When prompted, join with your computer or device audio if possible.

Headset: Use a headset for the best audio quality. Using a headset adds to privacy as well.

Microphone: If your device has a built-in microphone, use a headset to prevent echo. Without a built-in microphone, you will need either a microphone in a headset or one that is plugged in separately.

Use the best communication tool for the circumstances

- Select a secure tool for your communication. Use Microsoft Teams if you are a case aide or social worker. Facetime or Facetime Messenger may be used by families and caregivers. Zoom is not secure and not recommended.
- Consider what will work best for the age of a child.
- Use a mix of tools to increase communication. For example, you might send daily emails in between weekly phone or Skype calls.

- Use a tool that allows you to see one another if you can. This allows you to pick up on visible cues.
- Set up in a quiet place to limit distractions and background noise.
- Remember that phone and email are available to most people if the technology is a challenge.

Using Skype

- Both parties need a Skype enabled device and a Microsoft account.
- Both parties need a microphone.
- A video camera is ideal but not necessary – you can Skype with just a microphone.

Using Microsoft Teams

- Only one party needs Microsoft Teams. The other party needs email to accept the appointment and join.
- Both parties need a microphone.
- A video camera is ideal but not necessary – you can join with just a microphone.

Using email

- Both parties need a device that can access emails.
- Both parties need an email account or access to an account.
- Both parties need to know how to read and write, or someone who can help them do so