



# Activities for online contact visits with school aged children

## Some things to think about when video-conferencing with school children:

- Choose a good time of the day so the child is able to focus and is not hungry or tired
- Move close to the camera so that your face fills the screen, and position the camera at eye level
- To increase connection through eye contact, focus directly on the camera as you speak. As you listen, look at your child on the screen
- Minimise noises and other distractions in the room. When you are not talking, mute your microphone. Turn your phone on silent, and close other windows on your screen to avoid sounds and notifications
- At first, keep the video chats short; several short video chats may work better than one long one
- Plan your contact! Have items that you need close by. This will avoid losing precious time while you search for things, and will help maintain your child's concentration
- Structure each session: begin with some open conversation where you can check in with how each other is feeling and talk about what has happened since last you saw each other; in the middle have time for your child to guide you in an activity they would like to do, and end with an opportunity to share what will be happening in each other's life between now and your next contact

## Endurance Tests

Have competitions to see who can do these for the longest time:

- Stand on one leg
- Balance a book on your head
- Keep a silly expression on your face without smiling or laughing
- Staring contest

## Read a Story

Pick your child's favourite book. If possible send them a copy of the same book in advance to follow along with you.



## Craft Activities

Gather some craft supplies and try to both make the same creation; Pinterest has lots of ideas for craft using paper, textas, glue, scissors.

Draw pictures for each other or copy each others drawings.

Ask your Case Worker for supplies if you don't have them.



## Games

Card games such as:

Snap, Top Trumps, or Pokemon Trading Game

Charades: act out or mime a range of TV shows, movies or books

Pictionary: set the camera of your device to show a visual of a piece of paper and draw a range of people, places, objects for your child to guess

Set a timer and try to complete some 'minute to win it' games

You might think of some other ideas such as Connect 4, Dress-ups, etc.



## Build Models Together

Build models together using lego, blocks, pipe cleaners, washing line pegs, etc.

Choose a theme; build something with the same theme.

Let your child create any model and try to copy it yourself.

## **Conversation starters to increase communication and connection**

- Ask your child to tell you what they think is good about being a grown-up
- Talk about what you think is good about being a child
- Talk about your favourite memories
- Complete the sentence: "I feel especially close to you when ..."
- Talk about an imaginary gift that you would give to each member of your family
- Use the first letter of each person's name to come up with a positive word to describe them; e.g. Terrifically Talented Trevor
- Talk about some special detail or feeling you remember about the day your child was born
- Talk about your favourite time of the day, day of the week and time of the year
- Talk about someone special in your family or community. What do you like about this person?
- If you could be any animal for the day, what would you be, and why?
- What super power would you like and why?
- Ask your child to tell you about the funniest things they have heard this week?