



Supporting on-line contact between parents and children in care: Information for Workers

Online contact is different to face-to-face contact. There is a lot for parents and children to adjust to, which can create stress and anxiety. However, there are ways that we, as workers can support carers, parents and children to maximise the chances of meaningful online contact.

Here are some tips for workers:

- Consider any privacy and safety concerns that the carer may have using video conferencing. Be sure to discuss safety considerations with carers and parents before setting up contact
- Learning new technologies is stressful! Make sure the platform is set up before the contact begins and that everyone knows how to use it. You may need to support parents to register with, and use various on-line teleconferencing platforms, for example Zoom, Skype, WhatsApp, IMO, Viber, and Messenger
- Not all parents have suitable devices that allow easy interaction with their children. Can you offer re-purposed mobile devices, laptops or tablets with camera features to parents and children? Alternatively, could a Family Resource Worker who attends contact share a device for children to use during the session?
- The cost of data can be a major barrier for some families to connect with their children. Check that parents have access to data. If necessary help parents to access extra data; many service providers are offering free data at the moment
- Consider providing access to boxes of books from the library which include duplicates of the same book, so reading together is easier
- Art and craft activities are a great way for parents to connect with their children. Ask parents if they have access to craft supplies. If a parent doesn't have supplies, you can support meaningful contact by providing an "art and craft kit" containing basic supplies.