



Parent Tip Sheet For Video Visits

Even though you may not be able to see your child during this time, it is very important to continue visiting with your child for many reasons. It allows you to continue to bond with your child, allows your child to continue to connect with you, and it will be important to your legal case.

While we know it is important, we also know it comes with new challenges. Here are some tips and ideas that can help you make your video visitation more meaningful – for kids of all ages.

YOUNG CHILDREN (0-4)

Research has shown that young children up to about age 3 have what researchers call a “video deficit.” It means they have a hard time learning from something on a screen¹. There is a way to help work around this though, as some research has shown that back-and-forth conversations with a known person is key to helping kids interact and learn from video². Games are a great way to do that! Here are some games/ activities you can do with the even a young child on a video chat:

- Singing songs to your baby! They can be lullabies you know, songs your like, or simple songs like “The ABC Song”.
- Peekaboo is a game that young children love and you can recreate this over a video chat.
- Sing songs that have hand motions, as they will help engage young ones. If your child is over the age of one, you can encourage them to listen and watch you first, and then for them to join in with you. Songs like “The Itsy Bitsy Spider” or “The Wheels on the Bus” are oldies, but goodies. Can’t remember any songs like that? Youtube has lots of examples that you can learn quickly!
- Read a book! Hold the pages up to the screen or, depending on the video chat platform, you may be able to download a book you both can see. Be sure to the time to talk about the pictures to make the experience as interactive as possible.
- Draw pictures together! Both of you drawing the same item and talking about it as you go engages your child’s verbal skills and gives you something to praise your child for doing. Tell your child: “What a great bunny! Good job!”

OLDER CHILDREN (5-18)

While this group has a wide age range, most of these activities can be simplified and geared towards younger kids or you can adapt them to be more interactive for older kids. Some of these activities can also be played in a group if you have a video visit with more than one child.

- Simple games – such as:
 - Simon Says
 - Red light, green light, 1,2,3
 - Hangman
 - Charades
 - I Spy (with my little eye)
 - Alphabet Game (one person gives a letter, the other one finds an item that starts with it)
 - Ask your child to tell you about their favorite toy, game, or stuffed animal – see if you can guess what it is
- Read a book together! Either you reading to them or them reading to you. You could read 1-2 chapters out of a book and then they’ll look forward to the next visit. Chat after you read about what happened in the story!
- Musical / Physical Activities
 - Talent shows (Karaoke)
 - Yoga
 - Dance battle
 - Tik-Tok /Renegade dance
- Some other fun ideas, great for older kids:
 - Trivia
 - Shared picture creation: Where you draw a picture and ask them what to add to the picture to make it a shared creation. Or do the reverse: Ask the kids to make you a picture and ask them to add elements of the picture.
 - Mad Libs: An old classic! If you come across a Mad Libs book, they are a sure way to generate some silliness and laughs and to create new memories together.

Resources

- 1 Anderson, D. R., & Pempek, T. A. (2005). Television and very young children. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 48(5), 505–522.
- 2 Burnson, C. (2020). Successful Video Visits With Young Children. *National Council on Crime & Delinquency*, <https://www.nccglobal.org/blog/successful-video-visits-young-children>

