

BEST PRACTICES FOR TECHNOLOGY USE

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORTS

There are so many ways that technology is necessary right now, and we also know some people may have trouble with access or services. Here are some tips for accessing and using technology:

- If you don't have wifi access, it is often available in parking lots of Starbucks, McDonalds, and Dennys. Some libraries and colleges are also extending wifi to parking lots. If you need help finding access, ask your caseworker.
- Most health providers are now providing telephone and web-based treatment. This includes health and mental health treatment. These services are covered for people who have state health coverage plans like Medicaid and Medicare. If you don't already have a provider, call the number on your health card.
- Many people have extra stress and anxiety right now. Most states have set up special hotlines so people can have someone to talk to. If you need help finding local resources for support right now, ask your case worker.
- Many 12-step groups are offered online every day. If you want help finding substance abuse treatment, you can [click here](#) or call 1-800-662-HELP.
- The number for the Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 1-800-273-TALK. Or to talk to a crisis counselor by text, even if you are just anxious, text the word HOME to 741741 for 24/7 access.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

How do you support a child when you can't be there? The best thing you can do is take good care of yourself. What would you want them to know about how to take care of themselves? How can you be a good role model for those things? Remember that kids are always watching and learning.

Another thing you can do is be a good advocate for yourself. You may need to talk to lawyers, caseworkers, therapists, and others to be sure you get available services, including court hearings, video or phone visits, unemployment, and your stimulus check. Ask for help getting what you need.



VIDEO VISITS

TIPS FOR MAKING VIDEO VISITS WORK

Families need their visits and your kids need you. Keeping in contact will help everyone through this hard time. Do what you can to stay in touch. Here are some tips for improving video visitation.

- Make plans with the foster parent or visit staff about your shared hopes for the length and content of the visit. Remember that regular visit rules about who can have contact still apply. Keep in mind foster parents are stressed right now too. Do your best to be patient.
- Don't make promises about when you'll be together, but do let kids know your plans to be there when visits can be face to face again.
- It's important for kids to know you are ok during scary times. Be honest and also reassuring whenever you can. Focus on positive news when possible.

- Reduce distractions and noise as much as you can when you are on calls.
- Ask foster parents if you can use an app like [Marco Polo](#) to send videos: you can read stories or say goodnight and kids can watch and return messages later.
- Kids have short attention spans by video. Having planned activities, like a book to read or photos to share to help them focus, but also expect visits to be shorter than in-person ones.
- See if you can arrange for more frequent video or phone visits and short check-ins.
- More tips for supporting kids during COVID-19 are [here](#).

