



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

EDUCATION

STRONG START DC EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM (DC EIP)

GUIDELINES FOR EARLY INTERVENTIONISTS CONDUCTING VIRTUAL EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

Before the visit:

- ✓ Watch this brief video that shows how to plan a visit, the three parts of a virtual visit, and what conducting a virtual visit looks like in action: <https://www.assurethefuture.org/tele-intervention.html>.
- ✓ Schedule the virtual visit. Consider scheduling the visit during the routine the family needs support with (e.g., mealtime, getting dressed, etc.).
- ✓ Determine the technology platform you will be using and the family's capability to use it during the visit.
- ✓ If this is your first visit, test the technology with the family. Ensure that you have clear/quality video and audio.
- ✓ Make sure your environment is free of distractions, particularly noises that can interfere with communicating with the family. Ensure that other people cannot hear or observe your visit.
- ✓ Talk to the family about how much time they can dedicate to the virtual visit.
- ✓ If this is the first virtual visit, you need to obtain consent using the Informed Consent for Virtual Early Intervention Services form.

During the visit:

- ✓ When coaching families, use the questions that you use during your in-person visits. This way, we coach families the same way when we do in-person visits.
- ✓ Below are some guiding questions that will assist you through the virtual visit. A virtual visit by phone should only differ with the inability to observe visually and interact with the child and the parent/caregiver.

Keep the **five characteristics of coaching** in mind and practice during your visit: *Joint plan, observation, action/practice, feedback and reflection.*

- ✓ Review the **joint plan** from the previous visit.
- ✓ The family's routines most likely have changed. Ask questions to find out where they need help.
 - How has being home impacted your family's typical routines?
 - How have you been managing to work from home with the child/children present?
 - What new routine can we work on together? What routine is most challenging?
 - Can you show me/do you have a video?
 - What strategies have you tried?
 - What do you think would happen if you tried X?
- ✓ Support the family using a coaching interaction style. Remember to observe, intentionally model and practice (**action/practice**).
- ✓ Give **feedback**. Remember that feedback should be purposeful, helpful and, most of all, kind.
- ✓ Guide the family time to **reflect** on what they have accomplished, what they understand and what they learned during the visit.

- ✓ End the visit with your **joint plan**.
 - What can you practice this week? What would that look like in your routine?
 - What should our joint plan be for next time? What would you like to focus on this upcoming week?

After the visit:

- ✓ Schedule your next visit with the family.
- ✓ Document your visit in the Strong Start Child and Family Database System (SSCFDS).
- ✓ Your intervention note should reflect a coaching visit.

Frequently Asked Questions?

What method of video conferencing am I allowed to use for a virtual visit?

Check with your agency to learn the platform that you should use as they might already have business associate agreements with specific technology vendors. During this time of public health emergency, you may use popular applications that allow for video chats, including but not limited to Apple FaceTime, Facebook Messenger video chat, Google Hangouts video, Zoom or Skype. Under no circumstances should you use Facebook Live, Twitch, TikTok and similar video communication applications that are public-facing.

Can I use my smartphone/tablet to do a virtual visit with a family?

Yes. Most video conferencing platforms have mobile capability.

What do I do if the family does not have the option for video?

Phone consults are permitted if the family does not have video capabilities. You must clearly document in the SSCFDS the method you used and the exact time spent with the family in the SSCFDS.

How long should a virtual visit last?

The virtual visit should last as long as the family requires coaching and reflection during that visit, not to exceed the frequency in the IFSP. The units should be billed accurately in the SSCFDS.

What if the family does not want to have a virtual visit at that time?

Early interventionists should check in with families to see what times work best for virtual visits. Keep in mind that the typical visit appointment time may be very different now that the family is home.

What if the family opts out of a virtual visit?

It is the family's right if they would like to forgo early intervention services while in-person visits are not permitted due to COVID-19. Providers should notify the service coordinator and document this request in the correspondence notes.

The use of virtual visits is only allowable at this time due to COVID-19 and is not a permanent method to provide early intervention services.