

Tips for remote visits with children and young people

Ensure you are prepared, carry out a test run with a colleague to ensure your sound and audio are working well.

Check to make sure there is no confidential information visible behind you before making the call.

If you are still in an office, set aside one room for video home visits so that everyone knows if that room is occupied, a visit is being conducted and knows not to interrupt.

Talk with their parents or carers first. Explain what you will need to do, for example, seeing the child by themselves, ensuring the phone or computer is charged, talk through any concerns they may have.

Acknowledge with the child/young person that it can feel odd meeting on video call.

Be clear in your recording if you were able to speak with the child on their own and record if you are unsure if this was the case.

Sometimes your best intentions will not work. If the child/young person is not engaging with the video call and is uncomfortable, try again another time. You can ask them if you can call another time and if relevant, give them some questions to think about or let them know what you will be talking about next time. This gives them time to prepare for your next call.

Remote direct work activities

Ask the child to show you their favourite toy and talk about why they chose it

Hold up a feeling card to the camera. Ask the child/young person to identify what feeling it is and talk about a time when they felt that feeling.

Show them a selection of feelings cards and ask them to pick which feeling best matches how they feel about various people, situations or things.

Use a chatterbox over video, you can hold this up and have the child/young person pick the colours and numbers. You can take it in turns and show them how to make their own chatterbox which you can use over video with you as well.

Draw a rainbow on some paper. On each colour of the rainbow, have the child or young person write down a wish or goal they have.

Lay out sentence completion or feelings cards and assign them numbers from 1-6. Explain to the child/young person that you will take it in turns rolling a dice and then you pick a card which corresponds to the number rolled. If you are seeking to explore a particular topic, include cards relevant to this, combined with some other general questions. Make sure you are prepared to answer the questions yourself!

Explore how a child is feeling, talk through the physical sensation of a feeling, for example, anxious or worried if felt in your belly. Undertake some child's meditation or mindfulness exercises over the video call.

Ask the child/young person to give you a tour of their home.

If the child/young person has their own phone, ask them to make a photo diary of their week which they can share with you on your next video call (discuss this with their parents so they are aware).