Virtual Service Delivery 103: Engaging Families

Family engagement in the virtual environment is an intentional, ongoing partnership to which all partners contribute. It is strength-based, individualized, collaborative, ongoing and dynamic.

Challenges

technology issues, distractions, communication issues, limited view of the family's environment, screen fatigue

Opportunities

greater attention and increased focus on observing and listening, seeing different parts of the home, including multiple caregivers and those living outside the home, flexibility of scheduling, availability of technology features such as screen-sharing, chat and reaction buttons

Strategies to support engagement

Before

- Plan and practice technology
- Reflect on your attitudes
- Support virtual vitality
- Provide materials
- Check-in

During

- Establish rapport and build relationships
- Help family with device placement so device is a window, not a barrier
- Observe and listen, coach family to provide verbal video
- Reflect together
- Be flexible when issues come up
- Check-in with family at end
- Summarize visit and make plans for next visit

After

- Follow-up between visits with anything you've promised to do or share
- Reflect on visit and adjust plans for next visit as needed

Strategies for engaging families in phone visits

- Share handouts and activities before visit
- Invite family to share photos and videos,
- Be intentional about greeting
- Listen for voice tone and intensity
- Encourage parents to provide self-talk, parallel talk, and verbal video
- Check in throughout the visit
- Share virtual vitality practices with families – share handouts and videos prior to call then guide them verbally through the practice during the call

Resources

- Family Engagement Part One: Partnering with Parents, Institute for the Advancement of Family Support Professionals – Training Module
- Family Engagement Part Two: Strategies for Partnering with Parents, Institute for the Advancement of Family Support Professionals – Training Module
- A Protective Factors Framework for Virtual Visits, Rapid Response Virtual Home Visiting - Infographic
- Observing in the Virtual Environment Tip Sheet, Rapid Response Virtual Home Visiting – Tip Sheet
- Module Resources
  - Learning Guide - Handout
  - Virtual Vitality
    - Centering Practice – Video and Handout
    - Roller Coaster Breathing – Video and Handout