

Emerging Minds Families

FACT SHEET

How to get the most out of telehealth

ANTONY GATES AND SARA ABDI,
PARENTING RESEARCH CENTRE

Definition

Emerging Minds acknowledges that families come in many forms. For the purposes of easy reading, the term 'parent' encompasses the biological, adoptive, foster and kinship carers of a child, as well as individuals who have chosen to take up primary or shared responsibility in raising that child. We also appreciate that every child is unique and has different strengths and experiences that shape their health and development.

Telehealth can be a great way to connect with professionals without having to leave your home. The following tips will help you and your child to get the most out of your telehealth sessions, ensuring you receive the support you need to navigate life's challenges.



Be proactive in communicating with your professional

You can help telehealth work well for your child by letting the professional know any information you think might be helpful. Some examples include:

- Give them feedback about how well telehealth is working for you and your child.
- Let them know if there's something going on in your local environment that might impact the telehealth session, such as visiting relatives or attending from a different location than usual.
- With your child's permission, share anything relevant that has been going on for your child.
- Tell them about any challenges with scheduling – for example, if you notice your child has trouble concentrating straight after they've arrived home from school.
- Notify them of any changes to your family circumstances such as financial strain, changes in relationships or moving schools.

Ask questions

It's also important that you and your child feel comfortable to ask lots of questions. This can be especially important if you're not involved in the sessions. You might ask questions via a separate phone call, via email or text message, or at the start or end of a session. If you're participating in the session yourself, you should be able to ask questions during the session. It may sometimes be difficult for your professional to notice whether what is being done in the session is making sense to you and/or your child, so they are likely to appreciate you asking questions to clarify. Remember, there are no silly questions!

In particular, make sure you understand how technology is being used. For example, if you're being sent text messages and you're not sure of how you're meant to respond, you can clarify the purpose with your professional.

Reception staff can also be a great source of information. Consider asking them any questions you have outside of your telehealth sessions.

If English is your second language, or you're just not confident about being able to understand, ask

if there are language support options. The service may be able to organise for an interpreter to join your sessions. It may also be possible to turn on live captions during a telehealth session, depending on the technology being used. You could also ask to be sent written information as a follow-up to your telehealth session, which you can then process in your own time.

Privacy when using telehealth

Consider how to protect your and your child's privacy when using telehealth. The following are some examples of things to keep in mind:

- Devices will often show indications of when telehealth has been used, such as calendar appointments or in the browser history. Be mindful of who else might see these when using shared devices. A quick Google search of 'how to clear browser history' can help you do this if it's a concern for you.
- Be mindful that when joining telehealth sessions from home or other settings it may be possible for others to overhear you, your child, or the professional. Or, it may be possible for the professional to overhear things in the background of your home, such as other family members talking. You could shut the door to the room where you're using your device, or ask other family members to move to another part of the house or outside while your appointment is taking place.
- Ensure your devices are up-to-date and that you know how to avoid viruses and online scams that might compromise your personal data. The eSafety Commissioner's website offers [more information on internet safety](#).

Advocate for your child's needs

Telehealth supports have the same expected standard of care as in-person services. There may be times where you feel the telehealth services your child is receiving could better meet your child's needs. In these cases, it's important to advocate for your child to help them get the care they need.

Some examples include:

- Let the professional know if you or your child can't see or hear them clearly. The professional may need to change their setup (such as using a different microphone or finding a better camera position), or there may be an issue with the internet connection at either end.
- Be open with your professional about what would help make the telehealth appointment more beneficial for you or your child. For example, if it's hard for your child to sit still for a long telehealth session, ask for shorter sessions. If you or your child are having trouble following what's being said, ask the professional to take more time explaining concepts, or to use more visuals when communicating.
- If you feel the telehealth services being provided aren't meeting your child's needs, ask if something else can be offered.

Privacy is especially important when joining a telehealth group. Think about what others might see or hear of your home space when you or your child joins a telehealth session. Move away items like photos and documents that might be visible on camera, or position your camera so they're not visible. Be mindful of people in your space who might not want to be seen or heard by others in your telehealth session.

Respect the privacy of other participants by using a private space where they can't be overheard. Never record telehealth sessions yourself. Recordings can be valuable, but you should ask the facilitator to make and provide these with the consent of the group if you feel you could benefit from them.

Check out our other fact sheets for simple strategies you and your child can use to make the most out of your telehealth appointments.

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