

Emerging Minds Families

FACT SHEET

How to make the most of telehealth sessions

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.

A focus on video calls

In this resource, we'll mostly focus on video calls, which are the most common form of telehealth.



Telehealth can be a convenient and practical way to receive support for your family. Below are a few guidelines to help you and your child get the most out of your telehealth sessions.

- **Give the telehealth session your full attention.** If your child is attending, make sure they have limited distractions around them. Turn off the TV and remove sources of background noise. Make sure siblings and other family members know not to interrupt, and set other young children up with activities to keep them occupied such as a book or game. You could also enlist the help of trusted family or friends to keep siblings occupied so you're not interrupted.
- If you're attending the session yourself, with or without your child, **make sure you're not trying to multitask.** Mobile phones can make it easy to do a few things at once – for example, chatting to a family member while washing the dishes. But to get the most out of a telehealth session, it's important to sit down and give your full attention to the session.
- **Be ready on time.** For some people, because they're attending from home or another familiar place, telehealth sessions can feel a bit more casual than attending a clinic or office. However, these sessions are just as important as face-to-face sessions, so it's important not to run late and risk missing out on valuable time with your professional.

- **Make some notes of what you or your child would like to talk about before the telehealth session.** Because the experience might be a bit different to what you're used to, you might forget what you had wanted to talk about during the session. Writing down a few notes about what you've noticed or questions you'd like to ask can make a big difference. Ask your child if they have particular topics or questions they'd like to talk about.
- **If the technology isn't working well for you, let your professional know.** For example, if you or your child cannot hear clearly what the professional is saying, let them know. They may or may not be able to fix it, but you can also reschedule if need be or find a time to attend the clinic instead (if possible). For telehealth to be effective, it's important that your internet, computer and/or phone is working. If you're having technical issues, you might like to brainstorm with your professional about how to deal with them in the future (i.e., going to a friend or family member's house where the internet connection is better).
- **Try a practice session.** You might set up a video call with a friend or relative ahead of your telehealth session. This will give your child an opportunity to get used to talking to someone via phone or video and will help you to get familiar with the technology.

Group telehealth sessions

Some telehealth providers may offer group telehealth sessions. These could be for children, for parents and carers, or both. These can be a great way for you and/or your child to connect with other families. Telehealth can help you to connect with families from different areas who are going through similar things to you.

It can be a good idea to check with the group facilitator beforehand about etiquette and expectations for the group. Then, have a conversation with your child about what to expect in the group. If you and your child will be attending together, talk about how they'd like that to work.

By keeping these tips in mind, you and your child can make the most of your telehealth sessions, ensuring you receive the support you need from your health care professional to manage life's challenges.

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

AVAILABLE HERE

Telehealth resources



FOLLOW US



This resource was co-produced with:



Emerging Minds leads the National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health (NWC). The NWC is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health under the National Support for Child and Youth Mental Health Program.

Visit our web hub today!

**emerging
minds.
com.au**