

# Considerations for Making a Virtual Home Visit

During this time of school closures, families in communities everywhere are facing additional stressors related to increased isolation and economic challenges. Make every effort to connect with families, using whatever modalities are available to the families (including phone calls, texts and even notes and letters).

As school staff moved forward with phone and video connections with families, they may have found that it can be challenging to distinguish a remote home visit from other phone or video calls. There are many similarities between a regular phone or video contact with a parent and a virtual home visit. Both are friendly and comfortable, both involve checking in on the well being of the family, both create opportunities for social connection.

## Considerations for Making a Virtual Home Visit:

Schedule it and call it a visit- Make sure the family knows your intention to make this a visit. Avoid unscheduled virtual visits when possible. Scheduling visits allow school staff and the family to come to agreement about a time when the parent is likely to be available for an extended call and it sets some expectations about what the call will be about.

Be prepared- Hold the family and the student in your mind ahead of the visit. Think about what you know about them, about the student's individual goals and needs. Be flexible and follow the family's lead but have a plan in mind as you prepare to start your visit.

Act with intentionality- Bring awareness to yourself and your intentions each time you speak or interact with a family during a virtual visit. Many times, this is what is missing from an informal check-in phone call. Consider a trauma-informed approach.

Be fully present- School staff may need to be strategic regarding where they are in their own home during virtual visits with families. While on the call or connecting through video, create space in the same way you would do in person: allow for quiet moments, notice feelings, be an active listener in order to fully connect with the family.

If possible, observe the parent/caregiver interact with the child. When conversation veers away from the child, their progress and status, be intentional by asking questions.