



# Translating Reach Out and Read to Telehealth

Setting up your telehealth visit: keeping the personal connection

This tip sheet is designed to provide guidance for pediatric primary care clinicians on:

- How to deliver Reach Out and Read via telehealth
- How to address stress and anxiety through Reach Out and Read

## Preparing for a Telehealth Visit – suggestions to improve the experience:

- Arrange for clinic admin to call ahead of the appointment to help the family with technology – and ask if the child can have a favorite book or toy ready to show you
- Use high-quality technology, where possible:
  - Increase internet speed
  - Use an external camera and microphone (Logitech 920 as camera with built-in mike (under \$100) or Podcast mike by fifine (under \$100)
- Positioning:
  - Locate the camera at eye level so you are not looking down at the screen
  - Frame your face and upper body so that you fill the screen naturally
  - Encourage the family to sit near the camera lens
  - Look at or just below the camera to connect
  - It may seem that the patient is not making eye contact because they are looking at your image on the screen
- Lighting and Background:
  - Sit so that the main source of light is in front of you
  - Use a non-distracting background
- Practice a couple of times before your first telehealth visit



## Delivering a Telehealth Visit – focusing on stress and anxiety

- Telehealth visits separate the behavioral/developmental elements from the physical exam. This provides an opportunity to focus on anticipatory guidance and promote positive parenting. You become a guest in a patient's home and learn about their home environment.
- Start the visit by asking the parent/caregiver how it's going.
- Model a positive relationship – validate any concerns, meet the family where they are, provide encouragement and positive reinforcement.
- If you feel comfortable, you can model sharing a book with a child – some clinicians use finger puppets
- Some clinicians find that modeling reading aloud virtually can be difficult, instead:
  - Ask in an open-ended way about whether they have any books in the home; sometimes families will spontaneously take you on a “tour,” others may have no books at all. Be prepared for either.
  - Ask the child to show you their favorite book and hold it up to the camera (if there are no books in the home, maybe the child has a favorite toy)
  - Model dialogic reading by asking questions about the book - what is it about, what is your favorite part, tell me about the picture on the cover, what happens on this page?
  - Remember to expand on the child's answers and ask open-ended questions
  - Maybe suggest that the parent read with their child and offer positive reinforcement and guidance “Your child loves to hear your voice”
- Discuss how shared reading is even more important given the current stressors – reading and routines create a sense of security and normalcy
- Ask about screen time and reinforce the need to relax standards a little when we are in times of stress and anxiety. Suggest keeping a rule of no screens before bedtime, having some parent-child time be screen-free, parents co-view media with their children and use screens to connect with family and friends.
- Recommend resources – free e-books to read together and parent resource page [www.reachoutandread.org/resources](http://www.reachoutandread.org/resources)