

Stay in Touch

Parenting from a distance

**Simple tips to help
you stay connected**

The **A**rea **B**ased **C**hildhood Programme

TUSLA

An Ombudsmanacht um
Leanaí agus na Toghthaí
Child and Family Agency



From Blue Skies Initiative

What is this about?

In response to the current situation we at Blue Skies initiative have put together a series of tip sheets for parents and grandparents.

This tip sheet is for those who are parenting from a distance.

They come from our own programmes, our research on the internet and from people in the community.

These are simple easy ways that you can stay connected and involved in your child's development.

This was made with the help of One Family and From Lads to Dads

Considerations

We are very aware that some co parenting situations can be filled with conflict, hurt and anger, with this in mind we advise adapting the communications to the situation that you are in so that quality communication with your child can occur . We want to minimise additional stress for children and let them know they are loved and supported.

- Establish an agreed time and way of communicating that both parents can agree on.
- Be mindful that children may be able to engage for any varied amount of time, follow their lead.
- In situations of high tension between parents try to avoid using what is said between the child and each parent as a source or cause of conflict.
- Children love to get post and parcels. If communicating with your child is not possible you can use this as an alternative way to maintain the connection.

all about the

Connection

"By far, the most powerful force in life for development, joy, confidence, health; is the force of connection. I think that bond between parent and child is the single strongest emotion in all of human existence. Then it spreads out into what I call, a connected childhood. It is the greatest gift you can give your child"

Dr Edward Hallowell, MD.

**We are having to adapt our
ways to maintain quality
connections.**



Virtual Connection

- EMAIL
- PHONE CALLS
- TEXT MESSAGING VIA WHATS APP, VIBER ETC
- FACEBOOK
- PHONE CALLS
- VIDEO CALL
- VOICE CALLS
- FACE TIME
- POST
- TEXTS

Children can find it difficult to engage over technology so playing games, watching movies, having dinner together can be a great way to make it work.

We are aware that co parenting situations can have many stressfull and external issues.

Our tips are simply to give you ideas as to how to make the most of whatever contact you have in the hope that it can be fun and valuable to you and your children.

Its the connecting that matters.

Virtual Connection Tips from Zero to Three

SCREEN
SENSE

FIVE TIPS

to Make the Most
of **Video Chats**



Video chat using apps such as FaceTime and Skype is a great way for young children to stay in touch with long-distance family and friends. Through video chat, children have an opportunity to build a relationship, communicate with, and learn from a loved one on the screen.

Here are five ways to help your child get the max from screen-time conversations:



1. Make it a social, interactive experience.

Try rhymes, songs, dancing, finger plays, and games like peek-a-boo and hide-and-seek that young children can participate in and enjoy with their screen partner.

2. Use props.

Encourage the screen partner to read one of the child's favorite books, as the child follows along with his own copy. Or, the video partner can play with a toy car while the child rolls her toy car. Puppets and stuffed animals also are great props for playing together virtually. Also, sharing a snack together is a favorite of young children.



3. Be the "hands and heart" of the the person on-screen.

When the screen partner "tickles" your baby's tummy, give your child's tummy a tickle, too. When a grandparent leans toward the screen to "kiss" your toddler, you can give him a kiss on the cheek. By taking this role, you help nurture the relationship between the child and their on-screen friend.

4. Explain any technical difficulties.

Tell the child why the call dropped, or why the video partner may appear to "freeze" on the screen or not be looking directly at her. Explaining these experiences in simple terms helps children better understand both the technology and the interaction. It can also help screen partners adjust factors on their side (like the angle of their webcam) to improve the video chat.



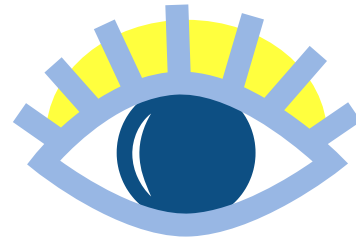
5. Let children take the lead with the technology as they grow.

For example, toddlers can learn how to touch the green button to call or red button to hang up.

MIND

Cognitive learning & mental health

EYE SPY



For older kids : spell out something with the EYE SPY game
For example: their name, an animal, another family name,
get them to guess it.

For younger kids: help them with their colours or recognising
things, cushion, red jumper, blue chair.

RIDDLES & DECEPTIONS

Describe something to the child, if there is more than one
child, take turns. They have to guess what you are
describing.

For example : What do you throw out when you want to use
it, but take in when you don't want to use it? **Answer:** Anchor

For younger children: you can describe things like fruit, cars,
a bed in a more obvious way.

BODY

Physical learning & being active

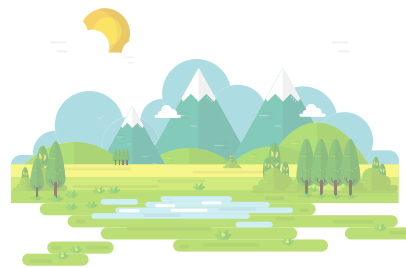
EXERCISE:



Some families have been doing a group video call and doing an online exercise class together.

Where only one person has access to two screens they become the class teacher.

Classes such as [Joe Wicks live PE session on youtube](#)



NATURE WALKS

If you are meeting with your children & still maintaining social distance this can be a fun & educational way to do it.

- Ask the children to find 4 different types of leaves/animals/birds/, name them if they or you can.
- Give them your phone to take pictures of themselves beside
 - A bush
 - A tree
 - With a flower, etc





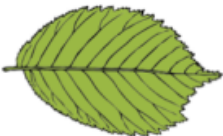



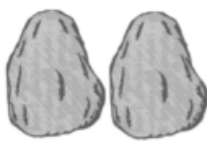











This is a lovely way to connect with the world outside the home, to look up, we are having to use technology a lot, it is great and it is great to take a break from it.

From Blue Skies Initiative

NATURE WALK

Scavenger Hunt- Nature Walk

Can you find all 20?

 <p>bird</p>	 <p>tree roots</p>	 <p>ant</p>	 <p>spiderweb</p>
 <p>green leaf</p>	 <p>acorn</p>	 <p>flower</p>	 <p>log</p>
 <p>two similar rocks</p>	 <p>mushroom</p>	 <p>squirrel</p>	 <p>tall grass</p>
 <p>stick that looks like a letter 'y'</p>	 <p>flying bug</p>	 <p>brown leaf</p>	 <p>cloud</p>
 <p>dandelion</p>	 <p>animal footprints</p>	 <p>wild berries</p>	 <p>pine cone</p>

www.thebirdfeednyc.com

From Blue Skies Initiative

SPIRIT

Social, emotional & general feel good things

CELEBRATE YOUR CHILD'S ACHIEVEMENTS NO MATTER HOW BIG OR SMALL

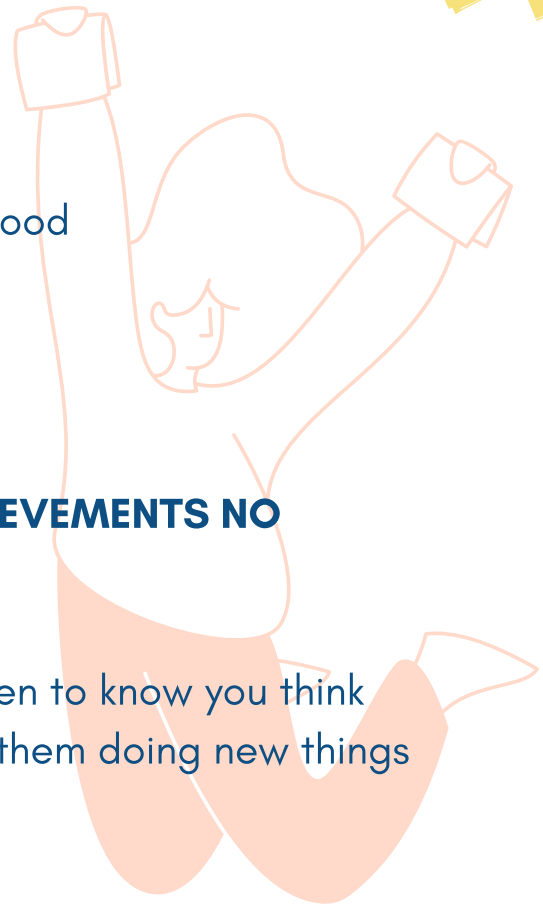
It's important for your child/children to know you think highly of them and for you to see them doing new things that they have learned.

When they learn something new, ask them to tell you about it over the phone or to show via webcam/videocall. That way, you have the opportunity to experience it with them, help them or offer praise or encouragement.

[This tip comes from <https://distanceparent.org/how-to/ideas-for-long-distance-parents-to-build-togetherness-with-your-kids/>](https://distanceparent.org/how-to/ideas-for-long-distance-parents-to-build-togetherness-with-your-kids/)

LAUGH OUT LOUD TOGETHER!!

From Blue Skies Initiative



Restorative practices is a big part of what we do in Blue Skies, at its essence it is about building and maintaining relationships

We have found it to be so useful personally as well as professionally.

Here is a simple restorative tip.

Calm is a super power

Being calm will help children feel calm and feel that you are in control,
during a time of uncertainty this can make a huge difference.

Mind yourself, like they say on aeroplanes, you have to look after yourself so that you can look after your child.

From Blue Skies Initiative



We hope you find our resource useful to you at this strange time.

Blue Skies Initiative is an Area-Based Childhood (ABC) programme that aims to improve outcomes for children and their families in the Clondalkin and Adamstown areas. The programme has a particular emphasis on improving health, educational and social outcomes for children and on improving the effectiveness of existing services for them.

We are now working remotely and collaboratively with other agencies and teams in the community to respond to the needs of our area. Our team will continue to link in with parents and the wider community during this difficult time and bring you as much information and support as possible.

If you have any questions or queries please contact us. visit <https://blueskiesinitiative.ie/who-we-are/meet-the-team/>

Please keep an eye on our Facebook page, Instagram and Twitter for updates.

You can find us here!

