

## Creating a Nurturing Environment for Your Child's Telehealth Visit

Telehealth offers a way for children and families to access a variety of healthcare services from the convenience of their home. There are many benefits to telehealth including improved access to services, decreased delays in care, and elimination of transportation barriers. We are also aware of unique issues that arise with telehealth since you will be receiving care in your home instead of an office setting. We would like to share a few tips that will improve your telehealth experience.

- **Test out your technology.** Make sure your device is compatible with the telehealth platform. Visit the telehealth website or app given by your provider so you know what to expect at the time of your appointment. If possible, use a computer or tablet with a larger screen for your visit.
- **Talk to your child about their upcoming visit.** In age appropriate language, explain that you are “visiting” with your provider over the phone/tablet/computer just like you would in the provider’s office.
- **Set ground rules before the visit and identify a reward you can provide at home for compliance with these rules** (e.g., play a board/card game with mom/dad, earn a piece of candy, get an extra 10-15 minutes of electronics time). You might suggest some rules such as:
  - Stay seated (you can offer to let them sit on your lap or sit in a chair)
  - Pay attention
  - Answer questions
- **Create an environment conducive to telehealth.** We have found that it is best to set up for your telehealth visit in a room with a door that you can keep shut (e.g., a bedroom instead of the living room). This helps keep your young child in the relative area of your device.
- **Decrease distractions.** Noises and other distractions should be prevented as much as possible. Turn off other electronics (TV/tablets/video games) and minimize disruptions from other family members and pets. If you have other young children in your home, it is a good idea to find an older child or an adult who can tend to the other children while you participate in your child’s telehealth visit. Some young children are focused on making faces in the camera or staring at themselves. It may be helpful to set your screen so you only see the provider and not your own face.
- **Have a few quiet toys or activities available for your child.** Just like we have books or quiet toys in our office, it is okay to let your young child play quietly during portions of the visit where we are not directly working with them.
- **Communicate with your provider.** Your provider may request your child have access to specific items during the visit such as crayons and paper, their favorite stuffed animal, puppets, etc. Email may be used to provide you with handouts or other relevant information. However, email is not an appropriate method of communication to schedule appointments or discuss concerns about your child’s healthcare. Please continue to contact the office via phone or patient portal (e.g., MyChart) as your primary means of communication.

While these are general guidelines, we know each child and family are unique so please reach out to your child’s provider for additional ideas to set you and your child up for a successful telehealth visit.