



CLARECARE

What helps Parental Participation in the Care Process?

Jacinta Swann

Clarecare Family Support Services



clarecare.ie



Clarecare Advocacy Service for Parents of Children in Care

We offer:

- One to one support
- Parents' support group
- Information sessions

We can help you:

- Prepare for child in care meetings and accompany you, if you wish
- Put your point of view across
- Be involved In your child's care plan
- Link into other support services

IASW Presentation

The Child and Family Special Interest Group Webinar



We did this by exploring these questions

- What image comes to mind when we think of parents of children in care?
- What feelings do they evoke in us?
- Do we actually believe they have a role to play in children's lives? What role?
- Why do we want parents to participate and in what?
- How can we support parental participation? Who can help us do that?



Supporting positive contact with children through technology

A new way to connect with your child

Clarecare Advocacy Service provides support to parents of children in care. It is a support service for parents of children in the care of Tusla in the Clare area, be it foster care, relative care or residential care.

Parents we work with have adapted to video calls as a new way of connecting with their children. These parents have contributed to the development of this booklet. Their ideas and tips are very useful and may help you to make the contact with your child in care as positive as possible.

We hope that by supporting positive contact with your child through technology, this will help maintain a real connection for both of you.

Technology offers a chance for your two worlds to connect. This booklet has lots of ideas on how to prepare for a call and how to make the most of the time you have with your child.

WHAT PARENTS SAY
"Lovely to see him on his birthday. Great to be part of his day."

Creating Positive contact for you and your child

Using technology is a positive way of feeling connected to your child/children.

Advantages

- A chance to share moments in about the school day or birthday build into shared memories
- Children get to see their parents forward to these important moments
- A chance for you to see your child for children to see you
- No travel.

Challenges

- No hugs or kisses your child is missing
- Technology signal may be poor
- Not everyone has a mobile phone or the internet
- It can be expensive


CLARECARE
CLARECARE ADVOCACY
SERVICE FOR PARENTS
OF CHILDREN IN CARE



USING
TECHNOLOGY
TO CREATE POSITIVE
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WITH YOUR
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WHAT PARENTS SAY

"Lovely to see him on his birthday. Great to be part of his day."

Creating Positive contact for you and your child

Using technology is a positive way of feeling connected to your child/children.

Advantages

- A chance to share moments in life, such as talking about the school day or birthdays. These moments build into shared memories of time spent together.
- Children get to see their parent and start looking forward to these important times with their parents.
- A chance for you to see where your child is living and for children to see where their parents live.
- No travel.

Challenges

- No hugs or kisses but you do get to see and hear how your child is doing.
- Technology can sometimes let you down. The signal might be bad but don't be hard on yourself if technology fails, it happens to all of us.
- Not everyone has a smart phone, internet connections or the relevant apps downloaded, so maybe check this out ahead of time.
- It can be hard to engage with your child if you, or your child, are having a bad day or just aren't in the mood for a chat. This is very normal and, on these days, just let them know you are there for them - maybe send a text instead. The important thing is they know you called and are thinking about them.
- Sometimes calls can be short but that's ok as you are still letting your child know you are there and that you care. Don't forget there will be other days to create a closer relationship with your child.



During the phone call

Sometimes it can be hard to know where to start. Saying 'hi, it's great to see you' is always a nice way to start a chat.

- Ask your child what they would like to do, talk about, or show you.

Be the best listener. Children know when you're really listening. Try 'Tell me the best part of your day' or 'Tell me more about that'. Try not to give any advice or ask too many questions.

Talk about things you know your child is interested in such as sport, TV or books.

- Use anything your child shows you as a way to start a conversation such as, their favourite toy or a drawing.
- Silence is sometimes okay on the phone. Some activities such as colouring together may involve some silence.
- Praise your child as often as you can.
- Be positive about what your child shows you.
- If there are any special occasions such as your child's birthday think about making a birthday card, or a banner, to show to your child.
- Have photographs of your child in your home, which you can show them during the call.
- If you have pets, you can talk about them.
- If you can, let them know when you will next talk to them before ending the call.
- End the call on a positive note - kisses and hugs over the phone can be fun! Making a heart sign with your hands is always a nice gesture.



WHAT PARENTS SAY

"They were excited to show me their school work."

Afterwards

- Recognise your feelings and give yourself some time to think.
- Think about what went really well and what you might change next time. Write down any ideas that come to you.
- Contact your child's Social Worker if you have any questions about your child.
- Start planning for the next call.



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Some ideas to help the chat go well

Good questions to ask

- What new thing did you learn today?
- What was your favourite part of today?
- What was the hardest part of today?
- What are you good at doing?
- Did you do anything kind for someone today? What?
- Where is the coolest place you have ever been?
- If you could be invisible for a day what would you do?

Good questions to ask young children

- What did you eat for lunch today?
- What was the best thing that happened today?
- What was the funniest thing that happened today?
- What made you feel happy today?
- Did anything make you feel sad today? What?
- Did anyone do something nice for you today?



Sing your child's favourite nursery song.

If your child is a toddler

Time your chat. Mornings are always better for young children. Use eye contact to connect and sit close to your screen so they can see your whole face. Eye contact keeps attention and interest. Try mirroring funny faces and playing peek-a-boo.

Plan ahead so your toddler is not waiting. It can take time to sort out problems with sound, video, or connection issues. Weekends might be best when foster carers are home and have more time. Don't be surprised if your child hangs up by mistake—that red button is tempting to young kids!

Lower your expectations. Toddler attention spans are short. A successful call may be five minutes or less. Asking questions and interviewing won't keep them long. Think of yourself as an entertainer, and enjoy your time on stage!

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respect

road map

acknowledgment support

meaningful access

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www.clarecare.ie/services/family-support-services/advocacy-service-parents-children-care

www.clarecare.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Technology_Access_Booklet_low_res.pdf

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