

## Video Conferencing: Best Practices & Tips

For children involved in child protection cases, appearing in person to participate in their court hearings can be difficult due to the child's placement, transportation barriers, and the needs and behaviors of the child and/or family members. The primary purpose of the video conferencing (VC) project is to enable a court to engage with a child involved in child protection cases without the child being physically present in the courtroom.

### Additional Considerations:

- VC is an alternative for a child who cannot be present physically due to medical needs or because of school commitments.
- It allows dialogue about placement, school, medication, siblings, therapy, etc., when the child cannot be there in person.
- VC lets the child know the judge is interested in what they have to say.
- Judicial engagement is especially important to older children.
- VC allows for conversation with the case manager/therapist without requiring travel from the facility.
- VC offers the opportunity for the child to see how many people are interested in their case and invested in their success.
- VC can be used for sibling contact if siblings are not placed together or do not get to see each other often, which is vital for children.
- VC is usually user-friendly and easily accessible with a little instruction.

### Best Practices:

- Develop user resources for VC.
- Establish a webpage and include:
  - A Help Menu / User Guide
  - Who may use VC
  - What types of events are appropriate for VC
  - How to set up an account
  - Equipment needed
  - FAQ
- Provide a dedicated inbox to receive questions and inquiries for technical support.
- Make training available on setting up VC and how to use the tool.
- Establish a process for VC for each end-user type.

### Tips for Judges:

- Do a test run!
- Judges (or their coordinators) should connect with the Residential Placement prior to the hearing to ensure system compatibility.
- Practice using the program prior to the hearing.
- Establish specific times and/or days when VC will occur in court.
- Create a VC tip-sheet for best practices and trouble-shooting.
- Practice interviewing skills, if necessary.