

# Communicating with kids during COVID-19

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Athens CASA/GAL Program  
CASA to CASA | July 30, 2020

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# Expectations for this session

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## Zoom Etiquette

- Remain muted when you aren't speaking
- Use the chat feature and the 'raise your hand' feature
- If you are experiencing a slow connection, try turning off your video
- If you are experiencing technical troubles, send a private chat to Jess Chadwell
- Complete the survey at the end of the session

## Learning Objectives

- CASA to CASA Networking
- Introduction & Updates on Protocols
- Engagement Strategies
- Managing Critical Conversations
- Safety
- Video Review & Evaluation
- Application of Skills Practice
- Debriefing & Closing

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# CASA to CASA | Share, Support, Learn

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- What challenges have you experienced in your CASA work during the pandemic?
- What has surprised you about working with kids during this time?
- Share a case activity or interaction that has went well.
- Do you need anything to help your work go more smoothly?

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# Before the visit

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Interim Protocols from Athens CASA

“Stay Safe Home Visiting Guide”

Pre-Interview Checklist

- Scheduling
- Planning
- Safety
- Privacy



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# Stay Safe Home Visiting Guidelines

## Before Your Visit, Ask Yourself & Your Supervisor

- Can the core objectives of this interview be accomplished in a technology assisted format?
- Complete a self-assessment and do not schedule the visit if you have experienced any COVID-19 symptoms or if you have possibly been exposed to COVID-19 in the past 14 days.

## While Scheduling, Ask:

- Who will be at the residence during the visit?
- Has anyone at the residence experienced flu-like symptoms or a new loss in senses of taste or smell anytime in the past 14 days?
- Has anyone at the residence had contact within the past 14 days with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19?
- Do the household members who will be participating in the visit have masks?
- Is there a space where we can conduct the interview outside?

If you can assess and monitor **safety + permanency + well-being** from technology-assisted visitation and collateral contact, please do not complete the home visit.



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# PRE-INTERVIEW PLANNING

When you arrange your virtual visit, consider the following conversation starters with the caregiver.

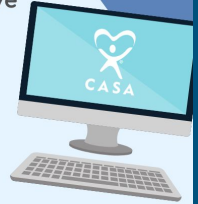
I'll be wearing headphones during our virtual visit to protect confidentiality. It would be helpful if the child could also wear headphones or be in a quiet room so we can speak privately.

How long do you estimate the child might be able to pay attention during our virtual visit? Do you have any suggestions for activities that might help us start our talk?

My virtual visit will probably last about 25 minutes. When we begin, it would be helpful if you could be in the room to make sure the child is logged on properly. Then I'd like to talk to the child privately. After that, I might ask them to get you again so we can touch base before signing off.

I will need to talk to the child about some sensitive issues during my virtual visit, when is their next counseling appointment? Could you check in with the child after our visit and reach out to me if they have more questions?

Are there any particular questions or worries that the child has shared with you recently?



# Strategies for Engagement

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**Activities | Practice Narratives | Autonomy | Establish Traditions**

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# “the upside down triangle”



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# Critical Conversations

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# Critical Conversations: Major Case Changes

Strategy	Example
Partialisation	"I know that you are nervous about the upcoming court hearing. Let's focus first on what types of decisions might be made during that hearing."
Universalisation	"It's normal to worry about seeing your parents after being apart for so long."
Informative	"The decisions that Children Services and the Judge make can impact your life. What questions do you have?"
Responsive Redirection	"You mentioned that you can't go home because your mom doesn't have a house. That's one issue that your mom is working on, but we also need to make sure that she can keep you safe."

# Critical Conversations: Trauma & Loss

Strategy	Example
Reflection & Interpretation	In response to “I’ll never get to Level 4 to get out of this place,” say “Maybe you’re feeling this way because of your last treatment team meeting. It must’ve been tough to hear some of the feedback from your team.”
Logical Reasoning	“I know it’s a let down when your dad doesn’t log on for your visit. If it happens again, how do you think you might respond? What would happen if you respond that way? Are there any other ways you might react?”
Active Listening	In response to “I hate my caseworker. She lies to me,” say “So you’re upset with your caseworker when she doesn’t tell you all that’s going on...”

# Critical Conversations: Child's Wishes

Strategy	Example
Summarizing	"To be sure I have this right, you want to live with your mom, but you want to visit your dad sometimes."
Exploration	"Help me understand why you don't want to participate in counseling any more." "What bothers you about counseling?" "What would make counseling better for you?"
Objectivity	"Part of my job is to tell the Judge what you want and he will listen to what we have to say, but it's important you understand that your wishes are one part of all the information the Judge has to think about when making decisions."

# Critical Conversations: COVID-19

Strategy	Example
Inquiry	“What do you know about why you can’t be visiting your parents in person?”
Reframing	“I know it stinks that we can’t play in the yard together during our visit, but I’m glad we can both be safe during our conversation today. Let’s think of a game that we could play during our Zoom Call.”
Reassurance	“Your Foster Mom told me that you’ve been upset about the news lately. Me too. We’re all going to do our part to stay safe, which is the best thing we can do right now. I’m really glad to know that you’re safe right now too.”
Ventilation	“Let’s make a list of all the feelings you’re having right now.”

# Considering Safety

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# Responding to concerns of safety during virtual visits

## What if... Then...

**A child discloses they are in imminent danger?**

Call 911

**A child discloses abuse or neglect by a past caregiver?**

Reassure the child and thank them for sharing. Call your CASA supervisor once the call ends to discuss next steps on reporting appropriately.

**A child tells you they don't feel safe in their current home?**

Call your CASA supervisor right away and make a plan for notifying children services and possibly law enforcement.

**A child tells you they feel like they might self-harm?**

Contact the caregiver who is currently with the child right away to share the information. Contact your CASA supervisor to plan next steps such as talking with counselors or caseworkers.

**A child tells you they have a plan for suicide or immediate self-harm?**

Keep the child on the call and communicate with their caregiver the immediate safety threats. Contact your CASA Supervisor. If the child is actively self-harming or ends the call after making the statement, call 911.

**A child doesn't want to talk to you?**

Thank the child for letting you know how they feel and ask about planning a better time to talk. Don't rush the relationship, just keep showing up.

**A child hangs up on you?**

Call the caregiver to arrange a new time or plan to talk.

**\*ALWAYS\* thank the child for sharing difficult news or sensitive information with you. Reassure them that you are a safe, trusted person they can count on.**





# Practice & Application of Skills (15 minutes)

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**Breakout Objective:** One partner should be the Interviewer and the other should be the Subject. Utilize 1-2 techniques learned from this session to interview your partner to learn about the most interesting meal they've had during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Here are some examples of details to explore:

- Why did they choose that dish?
- How did they acquire the ingredients?
- Did they learn a new cooking skill in order to prepare the meal?
- What was challenging about preparing the dish?

Switch roles and complete the interview again.

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# Reflections & Questions

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# Learn More

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- Stay Safe Home Visiting Guidelines
- Athens CASA Interim Protocols & Procedures
- Supreme Court Guide on Communicating with Children
- What If... Then... Safety Guidelines
- Pre-Interview Checklist

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*@athenscasa.org/superhero*

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