

Tips for supporting father-child relationships using video-visitation in prison

Video visits can support children and their fathers to have a good relationship. Research has identified the following tips to get the most out of visits.

Key messages to parents/carers to promote positive father-child video-visits

Prepare joint activities. Plan in advance for the father and child to do something together they enjoy, such as having the father read to the child or vice versa, enjoy the same snack during the visit, or have the child and father both draw during the visit.

Follow your child's lead. Encourage your child to direct the chat by showing their toys or other interests. Be understanding if the child needs to take a break.

Key messages to fathers to promote positive video-visits with child/ren

Bring the father into the child's world.

Video-visits allow children to share their world with their father. This can involve celebrating events like birthdays, and achievements like sports or school awards. It can also involve prompting the child to show their father new toys, drawings, or awards.

Ask the child's other parent/carer about your child's interests. Stay on top of your child's current interests to start conversations and keep the chat going. Ideas include asking about their favourite activities and friends.

Co-regulate before, during and after visits.

Video-visits may bring up strong feelings for children. Stay calm, relaxed and available to help your child process their emotional reactions and return to a state of calm.

If you can, keep in contact with your child and their parent/carer. Regularly scheduled visits help fit them into your child's routine and make it easier to be involved in parenting decisions with your child's other parent/carer.

