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**Caring Dads Stop Gap Support**

**Staying connected with your children if you are not having contact**

It may be that your contact with your children has been reduced or stopped during the current pandemic. Below are some ideas for how you can keep in touch with your children even if you can’t have direct contact. Obviously this will be easier if you have an okay relationship with their mother and you can work together to support your children. However if you are in touch it’s useful to consider if it is helping your children; if you are struggling it is worth giving some thought to how you can look after yourself and also avoid your children feeling worried or responsible for you.

Ideas for staying connected when you can’t see your children:

* Skype, Facetime, WhatsApp, Zoom, House Party contact – ideally regular, fixed times and making sure you stick to it even if your children are not always available. This will hopefully be helpful in allowing your child’s mum to have a break.
* If you or your child find it hard talking on the phone/video you could prepare a list of things to ask or talk about. If you have a good relationship with the other parent you could ask them for ideas such as things they’ve done that day that they are proud of.
* Younger children may find it difficult to concentrate on a video or phone call for too long. You could talk to their mum about when the best time would be.
* Ask them about their school work, agree subjects you can help with or get them to show you work they have been doing.
* Send video or audio recordings of bed time stories, or read these on video calls.
* Try getting a copy of their favourite books so you can read while they look at the pictures.
* For older children find out the books they are reading and read them too so you can talk to them about it.
* Send quizzes to each other on shared interests.
* Watch the same series or films and talk about afterwards, or set a quiz on it.
* Keep up to date on what children are doing – ask them about their favourite foods, programmes, books, toys etc, ask about the people that are important to them.
* Once you know what they’re into you can share films or info by WhatsApp.
* Send them pictures of you or other family members with updates about what you’ve been doing.
* Watch the same film or series at the same time and talk about it after.
* Play a board game via video chat – if necessary play a bit each time you chat.
* Write a story about your child or one of their favourite characters and send it to them – possibly in instalments.
* Send them letters, cards, postcards.
* Do a fitness or exercise programme at the same time e.g PE with Joe Wicks weekdays at 9 – agree to keep a record of how you’re both doing to discuss.
* **Agree to do a virtual tour of a museum and then talk about it - there are loads to choose from depending on your child’s interests e.g. The Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre** <https://youtu.be/EslHJmFnNs8> **or the Hull Streetlife Museum of Transport** <https://www.hcandl.co.uk/museums-and-galleries/streetlife-museum/streetlife-museum>