

# Virtual Ohana time: What the Child Welfare Community Should Know



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# Objectives for today

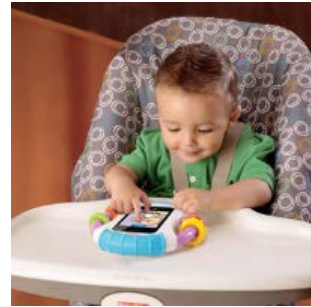
- Virtual Ohana time using videochat can be effective
  - A look at the research
- Important considerations
  - Age of the child
  - Length of time
  - Frequency
  - Role of foster parents
    - Planning
    - During the call
  - Special situations



# Important considerations: Memory development and individual differences



# Child: Infants & toddlers CAN learn from different types of media





# The Child Matters

- Skills develop over time.
- Transfer of Learning: What is it? How does it develop?
- Learning from screens requires Transfer of Learning



# The Child Matters

- The Transfer Deficit
  - Children 0-3 years can learn from screens, but learn less than they do face-to-face
  - Overcoming the Transfer Deficit with caregiver support



(Barr, 2013, Barnett & Ceci, 2002; Hayne, 2006)



# Encouraging effective Video Chat

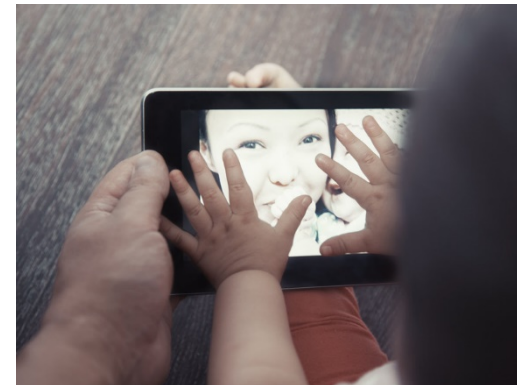
How we can support young children?





“Many young children today are geographically separated from their immediate or extended families, and remote communication is an important resource for them.” (McClure & Barr, 2016).





**parents** relatives touch  
 live child, state want country work keep  
 town watch see, long interact connect father let aunt distance skype, know overseas, distant, allow, different, living, far  
**family** see  
 friends, showing, way, talk



## Children under 7 are not good at using audio-only phones

(Ballagas, Kaye, Ames, Go, & Raffle, 2009)

# Evidence that virtual contact can be effective



**Video Chat**



**Alone**

(Tarasuik, Galligan,  
& Kaufman, 2011)



**Phone**

(Tarasuik, Galligan,  
& Kaufman, 2013)

# Evidence that virtual contact can be effective



# Evidence that virtual contact can be effective

- Decrease HR indicating engagement
- Babies can connect with their mothers over videochat
- Mothers who took longer to start playing peek-a-boo during the videochat smiled more—babies need a minute to connect.
- Games like peek-a-boo can be fun over videochat like they are in real life.



# Evidence that virtual contact can be effective

- As young as 6 months they respond to people they know (McClure et al., 2020);
- By 18 months they can recognize a new person after just a few videochat interactions (Myers et al., 2017)
- Repetition supports early learning from media (Barr et al., 2007)
- By 2 years are soothed by a videochat interaction with a caregiver (Tarsuik et al. 2013)

# Videochat: A naturalistic study

- 25 home observations of video chat
- Babies: age 6-24 months (M=16 months, 48% female)
- All calls included mothers, and fathers joined in 52%.
- All calls were with remote grandparents





# An illustration





# Keep call short

## I. General Video Call Characteristics

~18 min

Average call length

41%

Baby's attention in the video call length

56% on mobile devices  
and 44% on laptops

Mobile devices; 32% touchscreen  
and 24% smartphones

# Role of Foster parents: Children make up for loss of Physical Contact





# Role of Foster Parents: Talk through Technical Problems





## Role of foster parents: Sharing Attention (JVA)

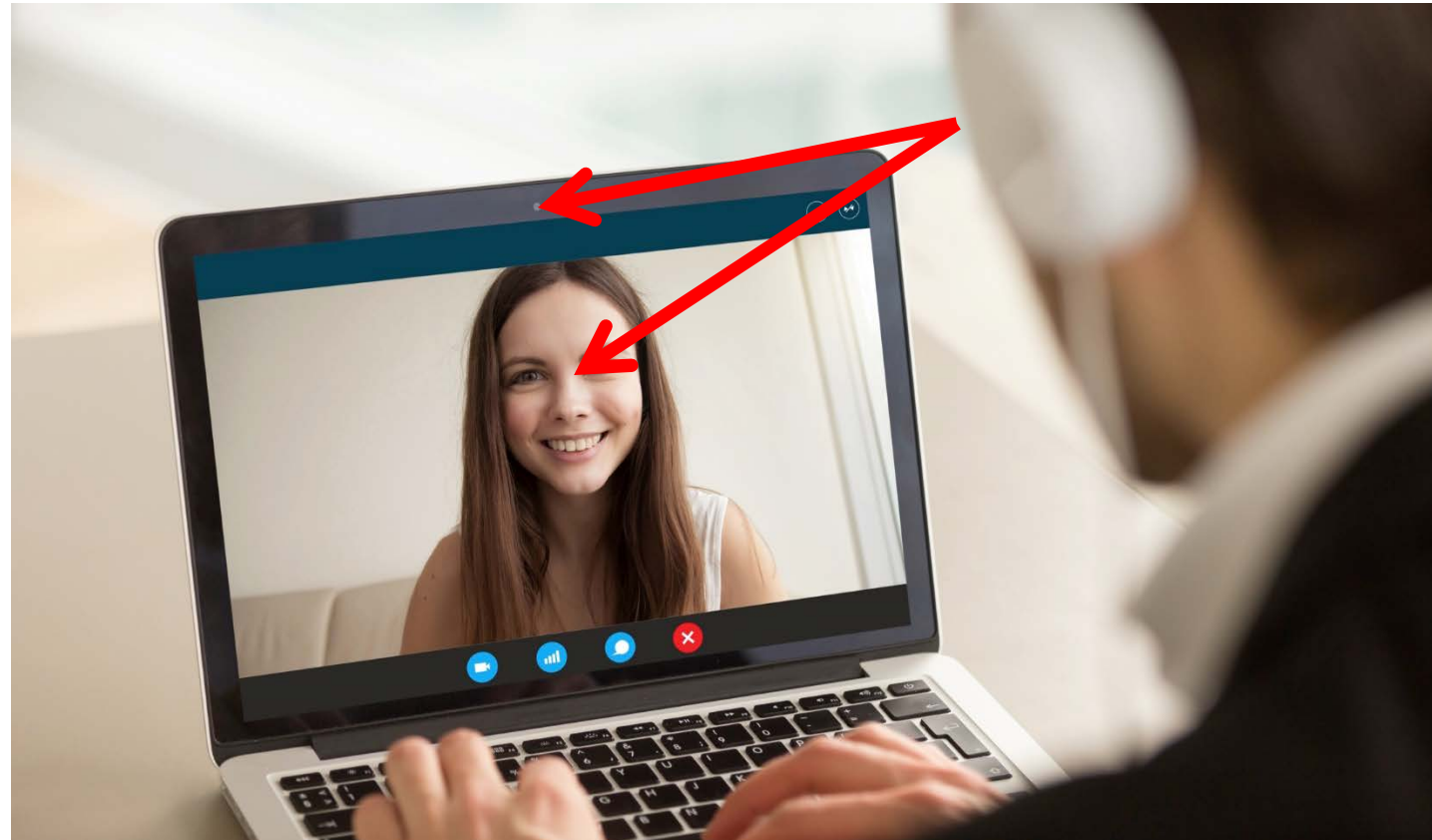
Joint Visual Attention (JVA): Directing an individual's attention to a third object





## Videochat Challenge: Sharing Attention (JVA)

- \*misalignment of eye contact is difficult to process where someone is pointing
- \*measured infant looking time during the video
- \*measured the sensitivity of grandparent responses





# Eye Contact

a



*Before Correction*

b



*After Correction*

## Parents as moderators

# Sharing Attention (JVA)

\*measured 2 forms of JVA



*Within-Screen JVA*



*Across-Screen JVA*

# JME: Families meet the Sharing Attention challenge

2.4 JVA attempts per minute, 84% success rate

Babies use the JVA that they can do well

- Older babies initiated JVA more often
- Babies initiated within-screen JVA (64%) more often than across-screen JVA (33%)
- Across screen was almost exclusively used by the older toddlers



Within-Screen JVA



Across-Screen JVA



# Special considerations

- Very young children—consider all relationships
- Siblings—some alone time with one sibling, or group activity like book reading
- Do not know the parent—babies recognize their mother's voice and by 1.5 years child will recognize the parent after just a few interactions



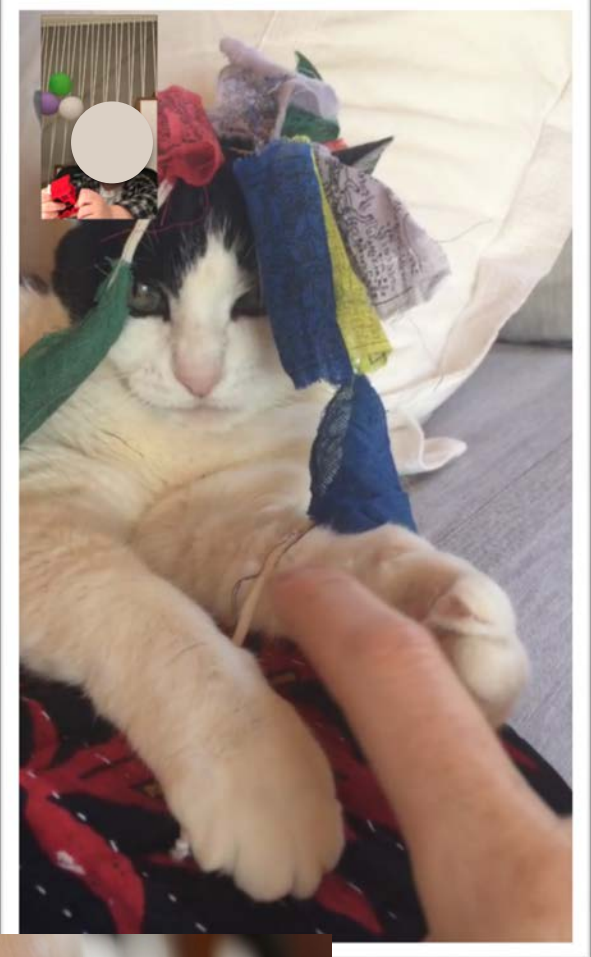
# Tips to Make the Most of Virtual Ohana time

- Plan for the call
- Make it a social, interactive experience.
  - Jointly engage
    - Use props (like books, toys, puppets, and snacks)
    - Caregivers on both sides of the screen are needed
    - Birth parents can help the baby by bringing the object to the screen
    - Foster parents can help those on the other side of the screen. What is the baby pointing to?
  - Consider the child:
    - Keep it short and frequent
    - allow children to move around
    - find out what the baby is interested in.
  - Technical Problems:
    - Talk through technical issues



# Ideas

- Take a minute to get started
- What will the baby share or be interested in?
- Short 15 min calls





# Ideas:

- Have some toys and books on hand
- Read books, take photos, have snacks, play together
- Make a recording



**SCREEN SENSE**

What the Research Says About the Impact of Media on Children Aged 0-3 Years Old



**SCREEN SENSE**

Free Screen Sense Webinar: All the Need-to-Know Research on Screens for Children Under 5



**SCREEN SENSE**

Choosing Media Content for Young Children Using the E-AIMS Model



**SCREEN SENSE**

**FIVE TIPS**

to Make the Most of Video Chats



**SCREEN SENSE**

**YOUNG CHILDREN AND SCREENS:**  
Putting Parents in the Driver's Seat



**SCREEN SENSE**



[www.zerotothree.org/ScreenSense](http://www.zerotothree.org/ScreenSense)

Rachel Barr -  
Deborah Nichols Linebarger Editors

**Media Exposure  
During Infancy  
and Early  
Childhood**

The Effects of Content and Context on  
Learning and Development

Springer



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# Sharing ideas

- Sharing barriers and solutions
- Videochat checklist

# Questions?

