



Kinship Quarterly

Strengthening Families

April 2020

IN THIS ISSUE: CANS TELEHEALTH

Beginning March 1, 2020, the Child & Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment became available via telehealth statewide! If a face-to-face CANS is not available, telehealth is another way to get a CANS completed. Telehealth means the appointment is not held in the assessor's office but from the child's placement or a local CPS office.

Who is eligible?

To participate, children must meet the following criteria:

- Child is age 10 or older;
- Siblings of the child may have a telehealth CANS as well, if they are under age 10 and live in the same placement; AND
- Child's level of functioning allows for the assessment to be completed using proper equipment.

Note: The CANS telehealth option has been updated to include 3-9 years old. This is temporary due to the COVID-19 and not being able to complete face-to-face visits.

What is needed? Where can the CANS take place?

With the right equipment, the CANS can take place in the child's placement.

- The placement must have one of the following: a tablet, smartphone (IOS or Android), or laptop/desktop computer with speakers and webcam.
- The placement must have Wi-Fi or internet access.
- The caregiver, DFPS caseworker or medical consentor must be present at the remote location to participate and ensure a private, quiet, well-lit space is available for the assessment to occur.
- A telehealth CANS may take place in a foster home (or the Child Placing Agency office), General Residential Operations (GRO), kinship home or DFPS office.
- **Important!** Choose a setting where the child is comfortable. The CANS should not take place in public or in a friend's home.
- The medical consentor calls Pathways Youth and Family Services directly:
- Contact Sandy Jenschke at (830) 515-4343 extension 103 or via email at sjenschke@pathway.org. Fax number is (830) 315-2274.
- Pathways hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. If needed, ask about appointments outside of business hours.
- Bilingual providers are available.
- Pathways confirms active STAR Health coverage and screens to ensure placement requirements listed above are met.
- Pathways will send forms to collect information about a child's history (available in English or Spanish) directly to you. The medical consentor must complete and return these forms to Pathways before the appointment date. Forms can be sent to sjenschke@pathway.org.
- Pathways will provide access to the secure portal and link at the appointment time.

How do I schedule a CANS via telehealth?

First, attempt to schedule a face-to-face CANS appointment. A CANS provider can be located by calling (866) 912-6283. If a face-to-face appointment is not available and the child is eligible, schedule a telehealth CANS.

Please call STAR Health Member Services at (866) 912-6283, your DFPS caseworker or DFPS CANS Mailbox:

CANS@dfps.state.tx.us with any questions.

Maintaining Connections

There are many benefits to Kinship Care. One of those benefits is the ability of the child to maintain connections to their parents, siblings and other family members. This is especially important during these stressful times. Children may be worried about their parents and siblings. Contact can help reassure them by letting them see that their family members are okay. Virtual visits are a great opportunity for children to stay connected and continue to nurture their relationships with their loved ones. In this article, we provide you with suggestions for your child's virtual visits with their parents, siblings and other loved ones. Contact your Kinship Development Worker if you need help using any virtual platform such as Skype or Google Duo.

Activities

Virtual visitation could lead to exciting opportunities to reinforce connections between children and their parents. The activities listed below are suggestions for your child and their parents to participate in. With the use of technology, there are various ways your children and their parents can share their daily lives with one another, which can diminish unnecessary fears on behalf of the child and parents during this time.

Story telling prompts:

www.kitchencounterchronicle.com/storytelling-prompts-for-kids

Storytelling is a wonderful activity for children. Whether it is retelling something that they experienced or imagining an entirely new story. Telling stories is how generations of people have carried their heritage over centuries. This link provides a collection of simple storytelling prompts that parents can use with their children to share or create their own stories.

Print monthly calendars for children and parents to each have a copy of at home. Children and parents can keep track of activities, plan, and talk about their experiences. Through this, parents and

children will have specific activities that they can ask about and or ask/offer to see photos of.

Share photos of the child and parent with each other via email. Print photos and let the children choose where and how to display them. Help your child pick out photos of themselves to send to their parents electronically or provide to the caseworker to print and send to the parent.

Check-in activities between the child, siblings and parents:

1. High Low Silly Slow: take turns sharing the best moment of the day, the most difficult moment of the day, something funny that happened, and something that made you slow down and think.
2. Share new things you learned.

Creative Questions (interactive, encourages bonding):

Provide these to parents and children as an activity for them to ask their parents during phone calls or video visits. These can be used for sibling visits as well. Communicating only through technology may be difficult for parents and children so use this time to create new opportunities for the children to explore information about their siblings, parents and family. Questions can be modified to explore various relationships.

Parallel Activities (interactive, sensory-rich):

These are activities that the parent and child can do in their respective homes while on a call or independently, and then discuss the activity or share photos of the activity during their contact. This is most appropriate for ages 3 and up, or when children are talking.

1. Reading the same pages of a book, newspaper, or magazine: this can be done during the contact or separately and then discussed during their communication time.
2. Trying a recipe together and then sharing photos of how it turned out.
3. Working on a craft or simple project that they can give the other when they

are able to see each other in person again.

4. Taking a nature walk virtually or take pictures on your walk and allow the child to share the fun things they saw with their parents when they next communicate.
5. Learn and use a new word; each week introduce a new word and plan to use it in the next conversation.
6. Use the same coloring book and color together while they talk or send colored pictures through the mail.
7. Help the child create a playlist of songs that remind them of mom, dad, or siblings and send the list.
8. Have both the child and parent go outside of their homes and talk about how the weather feels, how the sky looks, and other things they can see, feel, hear, and smell.

Voice and Sound Communication:

These activities can be done over phone calls or virtually, or by providing a recording. All children benefit from hearing the voices of people they love. For babies, this may be even more key during times of separation. Babies can hear and distinguish the sound of parents' voices even before they are born:

1. Reading favorite bedtime stories - the caregiver can play the stories during bedtime or schedule a call at bedtime.
2. Singing lullabies or playing music for their child for bedtime or to help them soothe.
3. Ask the child to sing a song for their parents or video the child playing so that it can be shared with the parents.

Sharing Physical Closeness through Smell:

1. Encourage parents to send lotions or scented items that they use regularly in their homes or know their child enjoys.
2. Parents can send sweaters, blankets, stuffed animals, and other comfort items for the child to enjoy.

SAFETY



ONLINE SAFETY

- Talk to children about sharing personal information such as their names, addresses and phone numbers.
- Talk to children about posting pictures that may be considered inappropriate online.
- Tell children to not respond to anything that makes them feel uncomfortable in anyway, but rather to speak to you right away.
- Tell children to not share their passwords, including with their closest friends.

SAFE PROOF YOUR HOME

- Cover all outlets including outlets on extension cords.
- Prevent large furniture from tipping, such as dressers and bookcases, by bolting them to the wall.
- Prevent accidental poisoning by putting all medications, cleaning agents and otherwise toxic chemicals out of children's reach.
- Prevent accidental drownings by keeping the toilet lid down, and never leaving children unattended in the bathtub.
- Keep breakable items out of children's reach.
- Keep cribs safe by removing bumpers, pillows, toys, and blankets. These items make the crib unsafe for your baby.



- [Unemployment Benefits](#)
- [Meals for Students](#)
- [National Geographic Kids](#)
- [Seussville](#)
- [Switch Zoo](#)
- [Fun Brain](#)
- [Scholastic Learn at Home](#)
- [All Kids Network](#)
- [The OT Toolbox](#)
- [Nomster Chef](#)
- [Meditation](#)
- [2-1-1 Texas](#)
- [Texas Kinship Caregivers Facebook Page](#)
- [Kinship Manual](#)

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Kinship recognizes the vital role you play in caring for the safety and well-being of children, especially during these particularly stressful times. We urge you to practice self-care so that you are better able to manage stress and take care of your loved ones. Taking breaks from watching or reading information on COVID-19 may help reduce feelings of stress, while over exposure may increase the stress levels of those in your home. Eating healthy, well-balanced meals, staying hydrated, and exercising regularly help your body remain healthy.

Your mental health is just as important, and you may benefit from taking time out to relax and enjoy hobbies on your own, as well as playing board games, sports, and committing to family exercise with the children. Meditation has also been proven to improve sleep and reduce anxiety, and there are many online resources you can use to find more information.

Most importantly, do not be afraid to seek help. Click on the links under the "Resources" section of this and previous newsletters for information on educational, health and financial help. But remember, we are still here for you. Contact your Kinship Development Worker with any needs that you may have, whether it be resources, advice or just an ear to listen. We will continue to provide support during the extended time you have with children at home.

We are in this together, and together we will get through this. We look forward to in-person visits with you and the children in the near future.



Kinship
Quarterly
Strengthening
Families



We all have the
power
to stop
child abuse.



TEXAS
Department of Family
and Protective Services
Child Protective Services

Report abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children, the elderly, or
people with disabilities at
(800) 252-5400 or www.txabusehotline.org.