



# Early Intervention Clearinghouse

<http://eiclearinghouse.org>

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## Handling Stress in Times of Crisis

With COVID-19, everyone seems to be experiencing some degree of stress. Further, stress can be hard to manage, especially with limited resources and time. As you may have already experienced, compared with other parents, parents of children with disabilities and delays are already at greater risk for increased stress. Thus, the current circumstances may be compounding your stress level.

It is often how we cope with stress that determines the effects of stress on our parenting, health, and overall well-being. Research shows that, in response to stress, a more active (versus emotional) coping style leads to better outcomes for children and their parents.

In this article, we suggest ways to cope with stress. Notably, each person is different and may resonate with different coping mechanisms—that is alright! The purpose of this list is for you to find the coping strategy that works best for you.

Suggested action-focused coping strategies:

- **Reach out to your social network:** Especially in a time of social distancing, it's easy to feel isolated. Reach out to friends and family. Communicate with one another. Such communication could be through text messaging, e-mail, phone calls,

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## STRESS

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and video conferencing. Our social networks often provide great stress relief.

- **Prioritize tasks:** With multiple competing priorities of work, childcare, housekeeping, and other responsibilities, your to-do list may feel never-ending. It is easy to get overwhelmed by all of the things you could be doing. Prioritize your tasks. Identify just a few, feasible tasks to get done. Remember—not everything needs to get done on your to-do list.

- **Gather information and problem-solve:** If you are facing a challenge, take an active approach. Gather information from the Early Intervention Clearinghouse, your early intervention providers or service coordinator, and reliable Internet sources. Information can be empowering and can help you to overcome challenges. Then, identify several potential solutions to a problem. You

may feel better once you have identified a realistic solution to the challenges that face you or your child.

- **Eliminate stressful activities:** Consider your daily routine. Are there activities that you engage in that are stressful? Can you eliminate these activities from your routine? If you cannot eliminate them, can you reduce them? This may include watching the news and/or attending to social media. Although potentially informative, limiting your time with the news and social media may help reduce your stress.

Notably, it can be important to pair action-focused coping strategies with strategies to address your own well-being. While action-focused strategies can provide sustained relief, the strategies we mention below may help provide immediate relief in those moments when you feel overwhelmed and stressed.

Here are some short-term strategies you may consider:

- **Take deep breaths:** When en-

countering a stressor, take a moment. Close your eyes. Take several deep breaths. These breaths can help you collect your composure and begin to tackle the stressor.

- **Exercise:** Even brief amounts of exercise can help overcome stress. This may include taking a short walk outside or doing a few yoga poses. Remember, it isn't necessarily the time that you put into the exercise but rather the break the exercise provides you from the stressor itself.

- **Go to your happy place:** Facing a stressor? Consider your favorite place. This may be a vacation spot or a childhood memory. Take a few moments. Close your eyes. Visualize yourself in that place. Your “happy place” may give you a few moments to escape from the stressor, regroup, and then face the stressor with newfound energy.

Finally, cut yourself some slack. With any crisis situation, expectations need to be adjusted. It is alright to give yourself time, effort, and attention.

# Introduction to Early Intervention (EI) Live Video Visits: Frequently Asked Questions

Live video visits (i.e., telehealth or teletherapy) enable you to receive EI services during COVID-19. Live video visits are new to Illinois EI services and are ONLY being offered during the pandemic. Here are some questions you may have about live video visits.

## What Are Live Video Visits?

Live video visits are EI services provided through the Internet. You and your EI provider will be present in real time. Over an Internet platform, you will see and hear your EI provider. Internet platforms vary; platforms may include Skype for Business and Zoom for Healthcare.

## Who Provides Live Video Visits?

Your service coordinator and EI provider may provide live video visits. During the visit, the provider will coach you in using EI strategies with your child.

## Where and When Can Live Video Visits Be Provided?

Your service coordinator will contact you to explain live video visits. If you are interested in live

visits, you will provide consent. Then, you will schedule the live video visit during a convenient time/date. To ensure privacy, we encourage you to conduct the live video visit in a quiet area of your home, to the extent possible.

## Why Provide Live Video Visits?

During COVID-19, all in-person EI visits are

paused. To ensure children receive EI services, Illinois is implementing live video visits so you and your family can continue to receive EI services.

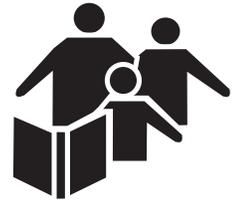


 For more information, visit the Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse at <https://eicclearinghouse.org>

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# A Description of Live Video Visits

Live video visits (e.g., telehealth or teletherapy) enable you and your child to receive early intervention (EI) services during COVID-19. Live video visits are new to Illinois EI services and are ONLY being offered during the pandemic. As such, live video visits may be new to you. Below, we provide some ways live video visits compare with in-person EI visits.



Similarities between live video visits and in-person visits	Differences between live video visits and in-person visits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You will continue to meet with your EI provider or service coordinator for your EI services.</li> <li>You will continue to receive coaching from your EI provider about how to support your child.</li> <li>Billing will remain the same regardless of whether the EI session is via live video visit or in-person.</li> <li>The use of interpreters and co-treatment can still occur regardless of whether the EI session is via live video visit or in-person.</li> <li>You may use items and resources in your home to incorporate them into the EI session.</li> <li>Initial, annual, review, and exit Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meetings can be conducted via live video visits.</li> <li>Documentation is the same for live video visits and in-person visits.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Live video visits are conducted via an Internet platform. Live video visits are not conducted in-person.</li> <li>In live video visits, your provider may share resources with you over the Internet platform (versus in-person).</li> <li>If you agree to live video visits, you will need to provide consent to your service coordinator.</li> <li>At present, EI evaluations will NOT be provided via live video visits. However, this may change over time.</li> <li>Prior to implementing live video visits, EI personnel need to complete required teletherapy training.</li> <li>Live video visits will NOT be recorded.</li> <li>Families cannot be asked to encounter financial hardship (e.g., buying equipment or Internet service) to receive live video visits.</li> </ul>

Live video visits can look different depending on the context, the child, the service being provided, and a variety of other scenarios. Here are some clips of live video visits:

- Live video visits for early intervention:  
<https://ddc.ohio.gov/video-ei-series>
- Examples of using coaching in live video visits:  
<https://www.cdd.unm.edu/ecln/FIT/fit-focus-video-library.html>

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# Technology for Live Video Visits

Live video visits (e.g., telehealth or teletherapy) may enable you to receive EI services during COVID-19. Live video visits are new to Illinois EI services and are ONLY being offered during the pandemic. Below, we provide some technology tips for live video visits.

## What Internet Platform Do I Need for Live Video Visits?



Your service coordinator and/or EI provider will identify a platform (e.g., Skype for Business, Zoom for Healthcare) to offer the live video visits. Each EI provider or service coordinator may have a different platform. However, all platforms will let you see and hear the EI professional. Your service coordinator and/or EI provider will tell you which platform they're using and help you access the live video visit. No public-facing platform (e.g., Facebook) should be used for live video visits. You should ask your early intervention professional about whether the platform protects your privacy.

## What Technology Do I Need for Live Video Visits?

For live video visits, you will need an Internet/data plan with a stable connection. Usually, you can use a phone, tablet, laptop, or desktop computer for live video visits. Some laptops or desktops may require a webcam and speakers.

## How Can I Prepare for a High-Quality Live Video Visit?

During COVID-19, we understand that your family circumstances are unique and constantly changing. Below, we provide tips for a high-quality visit realizing that, in the current context, it may be difficult to implement these tips.

- Choose the best location in your home that will allow you to see and hear the EI professional. Ideally, this location would be private and quiet. This will help avoid background noise so you can see and hear the EI professional.
- Try to ensure a consistent and sufficient bandwidth for your Internet connection. You may ask family members to avoid using the Internet during your live video visit. If possible, hard-wire your Internet connection (versus relying on WiFi). If you're using WiFi, try a location as close to your router as possible. The ideal bandwidth of your Internet connection will depend on the Internet platform you are using. Ask your EI professional about the needed bandwidth for the platform you are using. Check your Internet bandwidth with the Speakeasy Speed Test at <https://www.speakeasy.net/speedtest/>



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## How Can I Access Needed Technology for Live Video Visits?

There are several free and low-cost ways to access technology for live video visits. Consider:

- Comcast has a program that offers low-cost computers.  
<https://internetessentials.com/low-cost-computer>
- The Arc of Illinois-Technology Fund for families will pay for a \$500 device for a family.  
<https://www.thearcofil.org/assistive-technology-program-application-form/>
- AT&T has a program for low-cost, high-speed Internet services.  
<https://www.att.com/support/article/u-verse-high-speed-internet/KM1094463>
- Mobile telephone and Internet companies can provide free mobile service, including both voice and data, through the Lifeline Program. The customer accesses the Lifeline benefit by obtaining service from one of the participating companies, and the companies verify eligibility.  
<http://linkupillinois.org/>
- Safelink is a well-established lifeline mobile carrier.  
<https://www.safelinkwireless.com/Enrollment/Safelink/en/Web/www/default/index.html#!/newHome>



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# Ways to Implement EI During COVID-19

Early intervention (EI) programs and providers around our state have suspended in-person visits. However, infants, toddlers, and their families can keep working on EI outcomes. The EI Clearinghouse has put together this collection of selected tip sheets with ideas about how infants and toddlers can keep learning during play and daily routines. Use them to:



- Promote healthy development during your everyday routines
- Work on oral motor, gross motor, eye tracking, and other skills while blowing bubbles
- Build muscle and vocabulary skills while playing on and around your couch
- Enhance cognitive skills while playing with items found in your kitchen or while sorting and folding laundry
- Develop several different motor skills as your child moves about your home

 To request books and DVDs for you and your child to use at home, visit <https://eiclearinghouse.org>

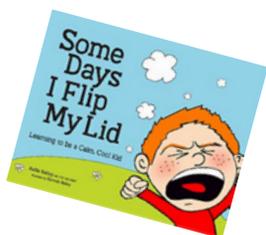
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# Mindfulness Resources

## Some Days I Flip My Lid: Learning to Be a Calm, Cool Kid

Kellie Doyle Bailey  
PESI, 2019  
BF 637 .M56b15 2019



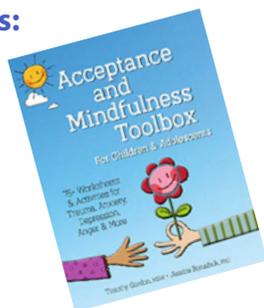
## 2,4,6,8 This Is How We Regulate! 75 Play Therapy Activities to Increase Mindfulness in Children

Tracy Turner-Bumberry  
PESI, 2019  
BF 723 .M37 T851 2019

## Acceptance and Mindfulness Toolbox for Children and Adolescents:

### 75+ Worksheets and Activities for Trauma, Anxiety, Depression, Anger, and More

Timothy Gordon  
PESI, 2019  
BF 723 .M37G65 2019



## Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids Workbook

Laura Markham  
PESI, 2018  
HQ 769 .M3417 2018

## The Challenging Child Toolbox: 75 Mindfulness- Based Practices, Tools and Tips for Therapists

Mitch Abblett  
PESI, 2018  
BF 723 .M37 Ab199 2018

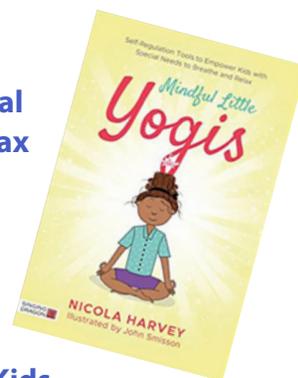


## Yoga and Mindfulness for Young Children: Poses for Play, Learning, and Peace

Maureen Heil and Ilene S. Rosen  
Redleaf Press, 2020  
Only available as an **eBook**

## Mindful Little Yogis: Self-Regulation Tools to Empower Kids With Special Needs to Breathe and Relax

Nicola Harvey  
Singing Dragon, 2018  
BF 723 .S25 H37 2018



## I Can Do Hard Things: Mindful Affirmations for Kids

Gabi Garcia  
Skinned Knee, 2018  
PZ 7.1 .G1651 2018

## Mindfulness for Kids: 30 Fun Activities to Stay Calm, Happy and in Control

Carole P. Roman  
Althea Press, 2018  
BF 723 .M37 .R6611 2018

## Mindful Me: Mindfulness and Meditation for Kids

Whitney Stewart  
Albert Whitman, 2018  
Only available as an  
**eBook**



## Mindful Chair Yoga [flash card]: 50+ Practices for All Ages

Mayuri Gonzalez and Jennifer Cohen Harper  
PESI, 2019  
BF 637 .B6441 2019

## eBooks Are Here!

You can now check out and download eBooks instantly, using the cloudLibrary or Overdrive app on most devices. For more detailed instructions, visit [eiclearinghouse.org/resources/library/ebooks/](https://eiclearinghouse.org/resources/library/ebooks/) or click on one of the icons on the right.



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Champaign, IL 61820-7469

## Keeping Up to Date About COVID-19 Impacts

With COVID-19, things are changing quickly. It can be difficult to stay informed about changes in early intervention. To this end, the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development has created a website for families. The website includes current updates in early intervention. For a list of updates, see

<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/Pages/COVID-19.aspx>

Specifically, you may be interested in reading the frequently asked questions (FAQs) for families about COVID-19, live video visits, and early intervention. The FAQ includes information about evaluations and eligibility, live video visits and phone consultations, available technology, and transition. See

<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/Documents/EI%20FAQs%20for%20Families%20about%20Live%20Video%20Visits.pdf>

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## Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse

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