







# Supporting Children with Autism:

## Virtual Playdates

**A virtual playdate is when your child and a friend get a chance to see each other and play using a video chat application. When kids can't physically be together this a great way to have some social time with friends.**

### How To:

1. Decide on which video chat app you will use

 Apple FaceTime	 Messenger Kids (Facebook)	 Skype	 Google Hangouts
Use with an I-phone or I-pad	Can be used on any device. Managed through parents Facebook account.	Can be used on any device.	Can be used on any device through a google account.

2. When the video call begins help the children (if needed) decide which activity they will play. It is best if they play the same thing.

3. Let them play! This might look like:

- showing one another their individual toys or toy set-up
- creating a play scheme and each acting out parts
- playing separately and commenting on what the other is doing

### Activity Ideas:

Choose activities both children enjoy and that your child with autism is good at. Now is not the time to learn a new game or skill.

#### • Drawing

Try to guess what their friend is drawing.

#### • Show and Tell

Try this if conversation skills aren't a strength. Share 2-3 things (color, shape, what's it for) about the item. Write down things for them to say (as an aide). Turn this into a game by placing the object in a bag & give the clues. Their friend can try to guess what it is.

#### • Legos



#### • Hide-and-Seek

One peer can hide an object in their room and the other has to guess where it is!

#### • Dolls or Action figures

#### • Guess Who

If they both have this game just set up one board per person and play.



#### • Play-Doh

They can show off their creations to one another.





# Tips for Success

## Create a schedule

- Write out the schedule.
- Include greetings, play activities (1-2), and saying goodbye on the schedule.
- Decide on how long the playdate will last (20-40 minutes). shorter is best! Play can be tough for kids with autism and virtual play is more difficult.

## Practice in advance

- Do a practice video call (this can be with someone or not).
- Practice where to place the device and how to show items.
- Practice greetings, goodbyes, and what to do if you have to step away from the screen for a minute.
- Practice playing with toys that may be used during the playdate.

## Remove distractions

- Put away any items that may distract your child.
- Keep your distance-kids may feel more comfortable if you are not in the room. Stay close enough so you can hear and help as needed.
- Pull out the toys/activities that they will play with so they are easy to get to.

**Most important:**  
**Have FUN!**