



Back to School Video-Call Exhaustion Fact Sheet

Our children are navigating a new world where online study and parents working from home has become the norm. Video-call exhaustion can be a real problem for kids and adults spending all day in front of a screen as part of their home-schooling requirements or work commitments.

Video calls mean close-up eye contact for long periods of time, which is an unnatural social interaction. It can be intense to have people constantly in your intimate space and video lagging can cause social awkwardness.

Seeing yourself in an online social context is unusual and taxing and this can cause exhaustion, especially for our young ones.

Children also can't move around as much as they'd normally do in-person, which can be an issue as movement helps us create neurotransmitters that help us to focus. Forcing our kids to sit still is actually making it harder for them to focus!

The lack of social interaction available via video-calls also means children miss the full range of non-verbal cues like gestures and body language, so their brains are working harder to understand and comprehend.

It can be good to understand why video-call exhaustion happens, but how can we fix these issues?

These are some easy ways to help reduce video-call exhaustion:

- **Activate speaker view.** This will help kids avoid staring at themselves which can be draining, they can also cover themselves with a post-it notes on the screen, just check to make sure they don't cover their camera!
- **Wear headphones.** Hearing speech that is unclear or they can't understand reduces cognitive performance by 10%. Noise cancelling headphones will work best to reduce the chance of mishearing speech and help them stay focused.
- **Take 'good' breaks.** Every five to ten minutes, get the kids to move around which will help with focus and will help the brain to release dopamine and serotonin. Even something as simple as standing up and having a thirty second stretch will make a difference.
- **Avoid multi-tasking.** Teach your children not to multitask as it raises stress levels and increases the chances of mistakes with work. Try to help them focus on one task at a time, get them in the habit of closing tabs when they are done with a task, so they don't jump back and forth between things.
- **Close your eyes.** This will help with de-stressing and gives young eyes a chance to rest. This can also help with dry eye which can be painful after a long day.

A bit of self-care when it comes to studying the screen all day is essential, and we should be teaching our children good online study habits that they can learn and remember as they grow.