**Best Practices for SEMS Virtual Meetings**

**Determine Case Suitability**

Ask:

* Do the parties have access to at least one type of technology?
* Do all parties agree on use of technology?
* Can the parties effectively and comfortably use technology?
* Can any difference in capacities among the parties can be managed?
* Will the use of technology harm the relationship between the parties?
* Does technology pose an unmanageable risk to confidentiality?
* Will using technology negatively impact the process?
* Are interpretation needs manageable?
* Can all documents be shared?

Centers and parties, perhaps with mediation/facilitator input, should assess the suitability of each case for virtual service. Some cases may be suitable for phone conference, others for web-cam. If it is determined that no technology is possible due to center and/or mediator/facilitator capacity, SEMS should be notified immediately

**Set Up Documents**

* Sign into Adobe Sign - info@mikids1st.org – and request a password if you you have not received one
* Get code from SEMS – you might need to call and let us know there is one pending
* Load documents into Adobe Sign
* Enter emails of all participants, including mediator/facilitator and send documents

**Help parties prepare for and set up technology**

* Try to help the parties equally or simultaneously to avoid appearance of favoring one over the other

**Have a back-up plan**

* Arrange technical support for the meeting
* Have alternative technology available if needed

**Teach your mediator/facilitator the technology**

* Including private chat (caucus) if available.
* If not, create a method to have a private conversation with one party
* Can mediator/facilitator prevent certain parties from hearing a conversation?
* Arrange tech support to free mediator from playing a role that may cause distraction or the appearance of bias if one party needs more tech help than another. (See Determine Case Suitability above.)

**Create a clear agenda**

Setting a clear meeting agenda and guidelines (and sending them to the team at least 24 hours in advance) will help ensure that everyone is on the same page before the virtual meeting takes place. Include:

* Key talking points
* Meeting structure (for example, when and for how long you plan to discuss each talking point)
* Names of team members or teams that will be in attendance
* What each team member/team is responsible for bringing to the meeting
* Any relevant documents, files, or research