



Community Voices on Tapping into Tech

Fostering equity for children with diverse abilities
and/or medical complexity in rural and northern BC

TAPPING into TEXTING OPTIONS

Emerging research findings from '[Community Voices on Tapping into Tech](#)' highlight that for some families, a preferred and sometimes only means of connecting virtually with early child development and intervention (ECDI) providers is via texting. For some families this can also involve receiving and responding to texts *when* they are able to access free/public Wi-Fi. Providers in this sector are also voicing the effectiveness of texting to connect and check-in with parents and maintain contact in between in-person visits, coordinate/send reminders about visits and send parents links to relevant resources.

This info-sheet is a starting point for the texting options that we have been hearing about in our research to date. We are not endorsing any specific App as each provider/agency need to make their own informed decision about texting including levels of privacy and security before deciding which App to use or what to share when a parent is using one of these Apps.

Signal – This free, secure end-to-end encrypted messaging service is currently being used by the Provincial Health Service Authority to send messages and secure file transfers of images, videos etc. Can be used on Android and iPhones and via desktops. For more info on privacy - <https://privacysavvy.com/security/mobile/secure-messaging-apps/#h-1-signal>

Facebook Messaging – This free App appears to be frequently used by and fairly accessible for parents who may only have text minutes on their phones. Users need to have a Facebook account and we are hearing that Facebook is being used by parents and providers to access and share relevant resources. For more info on privacy – <https://www.facebook.com/help/messenger-app/408883583307426>

WhatsApp – This is another frequently used free App that can be used by parents with minimum Wi-Fi. According to the following updated privacy information, 'personal calls and messages on this App are protected with default end-to-end encryption'. For more info on privacy – <https://about.fb.com/news/2022/08/new-privacy-features-on-whatsapp/>

Apple iMessage – If parents and ECDI providers have iPhone devices, messages between these devices have end-to-end encryption¹. Otherwise, messages are unsecured if texting between iPhone and an Android phone. For more info on privacy - <https://privacysavvy.com/security/mobile/secure-messaging-apps/#h-5-apple-icmessage>

¹ End-to-end encryption means that a messaging method allows only the sender and the receiver to decipher and read the message. See: <https://privacysavvy.com/security/mobile/secure-messaging-apps/#h-what-is-encrypted-messaging>