

Patient Education | Pediatrics

## Supporting Children: Connection, Memory and Legacy Through Art

When a child has a loved one who is in the hospital, or who is very sick, they might not get to visit or see the person as much as usual. They may feel left out and disconnected from the sick person. Creating art is a great way for a child to connect with their person and express emotions, especially if their loved one will not get better.

### Making a connection using art

Depending on your child's interests, their art can use different formats. Here are a few ideas to use as suggestions:

- › Ask your child whether they want to draw pictures for their loved one.
  - They can draw a favorite memory or something that they enjoyed doing with their loved one. Tell your child that their drawing can brighten up their loved one's hospital table or bedroom.
- › Write a story, poem or song for them.
  - This can be a silly made-up story or a story of a memory that feels special to the child and their person. Invite the child to record themselves reading it.
- › A child can make bracelets, necklaces or keychains for themselves and their person.
  - If they create 2 pieces, your child and their loved one can think of each other when they wear it.
- › Print out an outline of a tree and let your child use either ink or paint to put their fingerprints on it, making a "family tree."

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- This is something you and your child can do together and can be a special memory. You can write family names on the tree to show their connection with their loved one and help them feel included.
  - › Teach the child to create a bouquet of “flowers” for their person.
    - Use pipe cleaners to shape stems and blossoms. This is another project your child can do to brighten up their loved one’s space.

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If you need support in helping children say goodbye or make memories, you can email a child life specialist at [NMHChildLife@nm.org](mailto:NMHChildLife@nm.org).