

# Supporting Children: Saying Goodbye From a Distance

Supporting children in saying goodbye to someone they love can help them cope and process the situation. If children choose not to be (or cannot be) there in person to say goodbye, they can still create connection.

## Staying connected and saying goodbye

Use the ideas below to help your child find a meaningful way to say goodbye to their loved one.

- › Help them write a letter to their loved one.
  - You can have an adult deliver it or even read it to them.
- › Have them draw a picture of their favorite thing to do with their loved one.
  - Either keep it as a memento or have someone deliver it to their loved one.
  - If you can make a copy, it can be special to keep one for the child and send the other to their loved one.
- › See if the child would write a poem or a song. You can have someone read it to their loved one or record it and play it aloud for them.
- › Make a “hug” for their loved one.
  - Trace the child’s hands on paper and cut out the tracing. They can decorate or write something special to their loved one.
  - Measure a piece of string from one hand’s fingertip to the other’s and attach the string ends to the paper hands.
  - This is now a paper hug that you can send to their loved one.

## Making memories

Use these ideas to help your child make significant memories about their loved one.

- › **Choose a special item** that belonged to their loved one that the child can keep. Make sure it is appropriate for a child's age. For example, a collector's coin would not be appropriate for a child, but a stuffed animal or larger item would be.
- › **Have the child choose a piece of clothing** that belonged to their loved one, such as a t-shirt. They can keep it as is or make it into a pillow for snuggling.
- › **Eat their loved one's favorite food** for breakfast, lunch or dinner one day.
- › **Do an activity** their loved one enjoyed.
- › **Look at photos** of their loved one together.
- › **Listen to music** that reminds them of their loved one. You can even make a playlist of their favorite songs.

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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).