

## How do I say 'goodbye' from afar?

Saying goodbye to a loved one who is dying is never easy, and is made even more difficult when circumstances like hospitalization make being together impossible. Children and teens share the need to say goodbye to their loved one, but often in different ways. The resources below provide guidance on how to support your child and help them say goodbye from a distance.

### Activities to Try

Activities a child can do by themselves:

- Write a letter to their loved one of things they would like them to know
- Draw a picture of themselves and their loved one
- Write a poem or song about their loved one
- Read a book or listen to music that reminds them of their loved one
- Make a list- What did they learn from their loved one? What do they love most about their loved one? What are their favorite memories with their loved one?
- Look at photos or videos of their loved one

Activities a child can do with the help of a trusted adult:

- Send the letter, drawing, song, or poem to their loved one
- Record the child singing, reading, or saying a special message for their loved one
- Share stories together about their loved one
- Read a book together that talks about dying and death, and talk about the different things they may feel
- Try an activity that their loved one used to enjoy, like cooking or gardening

These are some ideas to get started, but often the best place to start is with the child themselves. They often have their own ideas about saying goodbye, dealing with loss, and how trusted adults can help.

### Resource for Caregivers

- The Dougy Center: The National Center for Grieving Children & Families ([www.dougy.org](http://www.dougy.org))
- National Institutes of Health: Talking to Children about Death (<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Digest/2018-19/childdeath.pdf?la=en>)

### Books to Share

Always review books and websites before sharing them with your child to ensure they are appropriate for your child's age and understanding and align with your family's beliefs around dying and death.

- *Life is Like the Wind* by Shona Innes and Irisz Agocs
- *The Invisible String* by Patrice Karst
- *When Dinosaurs Die* by Laurie Krasny Brown and Marc Brown
- *When someone very special dies* by Marge Heegaard
- *I Miss You: A First Look at Death* by Pat Thomas
- *Lifetimes* by Bryan Mellonie and Robert Ingpen