

Saying Goodbye from Afar

Remember to always be honest with your children about the death of a loved one.

Children need opportunities to say goodbye to a loved one who is dying. Visiting them in the hospital may not always be an option.

What to say and how to say it.

Ways to say goodbye from afar:

- Use words “dying” and “dead.” Young children can be confused by non-concrete terms, like “in a better place” or “went away.” Reading a children’s book about death can help.
- Create a piece of artwork to help express feelings:
- Plant a tree or flowers to remember and honor them
- Make a scrapbook (paper or online)
- Write a letter to your loved one saying goodbye
- Write a poem or song about them. Share it aloud, alone, for your family, or make a recording.
- Read a book or poem that reminds you of your loved one.
- Draw a picture of your loved one.
- Donate money in their honor to something they loved
- Create a playlist of favorite songs or songs that you enjoyed together
- Listen to music that reminds you of your loved one.
- Look at photos of your loved one.
- Talk about your memories your loved one.
- Make a list of things you learned from your loved one.

These ideas are just a place to start. There are many creative ideas to say “goodbye” to a loved one and help children remember and honor them. Ask the child what they would like to do to say goodbye.

For more information or to reach a Child Life Specialist, please email childlife@erlanger.org or call 423-778-5907.