

STAYING CLOSE FROM FAR AWAY

Being far from your child/ren can be a very trying and difficult way to live. The following includes some suggestions on way for you to stay in touch with your child/ren.

Read Stories on Tape. Read a story or a book in your own voice onto a tape. Buy your child a tape player that is age-appropriate (consider earphones), teach your child how to operate the player, and send the tapes. Read from age-appropriate literature. It is an easy way for your child to hear your voice every day. You may also want to send the stories or books so your child can read along.

Postcards. You do not need to write long letters. Just a simple “I love you and I am thinking about you” is enough. Send a postcard weekly. Select scenic cards from the area in which you live, scenic cards from where you visit or take business trips, humorous cards, or cards of a particular interest to your child.

Magazine Subscription. Kids love getting mail addressed to them. There are many age-appropriate magazines that are reasonably priced. There are certainly magazines your child would enjoy. When the magazine arrives, your child thinks of you.

Collections. Start a collection that is unique to you and your child. It can be something your child is interested in, such as baseball cards or animal knickknacks. Send something from places you visit, for special occasions, and “just because.” It will be a special collection.

Fax, E-Mail, and Computer Contact. Many households now have fax machines, or you can set up your child’s computer so you can write every day, every week, or at some regular intervals. It can just be “hi,” to celebrate a special event, or just to report about a normal day. It is high-tech and easy way to stay in touch.

Make Videotapes. Send your child videotapes of your daily life, your travel, and special events. Special events are easy, but remember your child is also interested in your normal routine, the dog or cat, and just to see you and hear your voice. When your child is with you, make sure he or she knows how to run a VCR without help.

Photo Album. This is the same idea as the videotape except in still form. Buy an album and send pictures of you doing routine daily things as well as trips and special events. Take pictures when your child is with you and send them.

Watch TV Shows Together. Find a TV show that your child enjoys and “watch it together.” You may be miles apart, but you each know you are “sharing” the show. When you talk on the phone, you have something in common to discuss. It may be a great ice-breaker.

Provide Addressed Postcards, Stationery, and Stamped Envelopes. Let your child stay in touch with you without having to ask for help. Give your child a supply of postcards or stationery with self-addressed, stamped envelopes. Your child can write you and put it in the mail.

Phone Cards or 1-800-Numbers. You can purchase phone cards for your child that have a determined number of long-distance minutes to call you without any help. 1-800 numbers are not very expensive. This will enable your child to call you whenever he or she wants to tell you something or just hear your voice.

Talk to the Teacher. Make arrangements with your child's teacher to send copies of his or her work regularly. Provide envelopes and stamps. Most teachers are happy to oblige. Also arrange a regular time to talk to your child's teacher. You'll feel much closer.