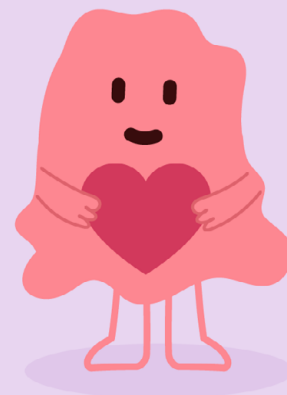


Small Hands, Big Hearts: Involving Kids in Supporting a Parent with Cancer



This resource was adapted from a blog post about ways children can offer support when a parent is facing a cancer diagnosis. To read the full blog post, visit nbcf.org/big-hearts

If you are facing a diagnosis, there are some practical and concrete ways to help your children feel more in control of what may feel like a scary or uncontrollable situation. Here are ways kids of all ages can participate in practical and emotional support for a parent facing cancer. But remember—a kid's main job is to be a kid!

Practical ways kids can support a parent facing cancer

Household responsibilities: If your child is able to take on more responsibilities at this time, offering them choices of chores can be motivating and empowering. Practical, hands-on ways kids can help around the house, depending on their age and developmental level, may include keeping their room tidy, unloading the dishwasher, taking out the trash, or folding laundry.



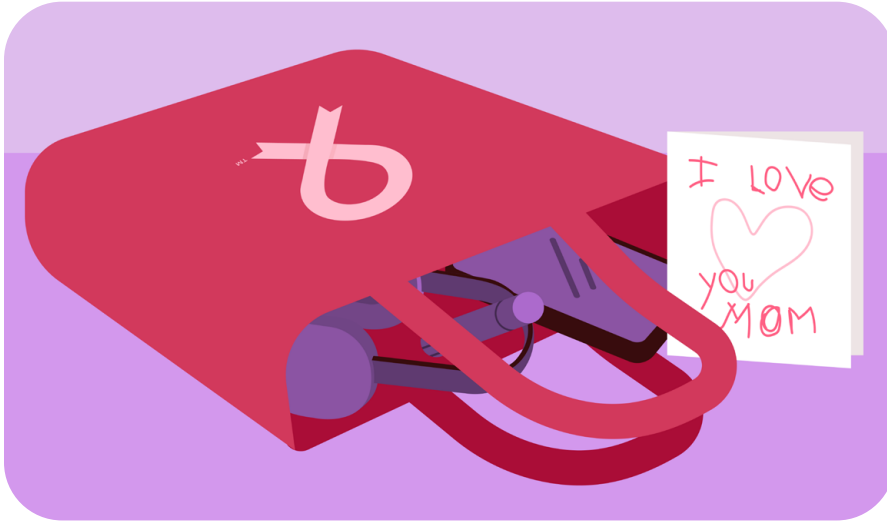
Pet care: If you have pets in the home, ask your child to take over some or all pet care duties, including walking the dog, cleaning out the litter box, or making sure pets are fed on a regular schedule.

Comfort tasks: Offering kids easy ways to help bring you physical comfort can bring them comfort as well. You can ask them to bring you water to stay hydrated, cover you with a blanket to rest, or let them help you get up from the couch when you are recovering.

Forms of emotional support kids can offer

Comic relief: Laughing together is a great way to reduce stress and strengthen emotional bonds. Ask your child to tell you a joke or a funny story.

Physical reminders: If your treatment and immunity allow, remind kids that hugs and handholding are some of the best gifts they can offer you right now. Even close proximity, such as watching a movie or TV show together, can be emotionally comforting to both of you.



Get creative: Drawing pictures or being otherwise creative is a great way for kids to express their feelings about the world around them.

Start with gratitude: Use a gratitude journal to share three things you are grateful for each day with one another.

Play together in a way that works for you: Playtime can give kids an outlet to channel their physical energy and emotional anxiety. Playtime doesn't have to be physically demanding. You can draw or color together, play a card game, or even try their favorite video game.

Pray or meditate together: Prayer or meditation can be a source of peace and comfort to adults and kids alike, helping to reduce stress and foster connection.



To access more free resources for families facing a cancer diagnosis, visit nbcf.org/parents