



MAKING A MEMORY BOOK

Memory Books allow children and young people to have easy access to the memories of someone which are particularly important to them. For example, memories of a parent, family member or friend who is absent due to a long trip away, moving away, family break up, hospitalisation, or a death.

You can tailor make a book that suits the person it's for, and the more involved the person is the better. It can be read together or left on a shelf to be looked at and read when it suits. Most find the process tremendously therapeutic and well worth the investment of time and effort. It helps continue the bonds they have with someone who's no longer with them. It's not intended to look professional. It's a very personal book. Here are ideas to get you started but trust your instincts and include your own ideas.

Buy a scrapbook with a strong cover and on the front page put the name of the person being remembered and perhaps a drawing or a photo of that person. On different pages explore the memories, most preferably with the person the book's for working with you.

Here are some ideas about what some of the pages could contain:

- Photos or drawings of the person
- A list of key information, such as birth date, contact details, and personal things like age, colour of hair and eyes, height etc.
- If someone has died perhaps also the date of death and, as appropriate, the place and/or reason for death
- Photos of favourite memories
- Drawings of favourite memories
- Cartoons of favourite memories
- Lists of fun things you remember doing
- Funny memories
- Holiday memories
- Xmas or birthday memories
- Sad memories
- List of their favourite food/drink
- List of their favourite movies/videos
- List of their favourite songs/music/bands





A skylight information sheet

- List of their favourite places to visit
- List of jobs that person had or any special achievements
- Tickets from holidays or special events shared
- Old library cards
- Something with their handwriting and if possible their own signature on
- Letters – from the person or to the person
- Favourite recipes of food they loved or liked to cook
- Perhaps some scraps of material from their clothes (rest could be made into a quilt?)
- List of people who really loved that person and who also miss them (E.g. family and friends, workmates, neighbours etc.)
- If someone has died it may be appropriate to include some details about the funeral or tangi (e.g. when, where, who came, music played and so on.)
- Write a list of people who really loved the child whose book it is, to reassure them that there are people right near them who love, support and care for them in an ongoing way. (E.g. family and friends, workmates, neighbours etc.)
- A space for writing things you wish you could tell them, or how much you miss them, or anything at all that's on your mind – questions, thoughts, words that remind you of them
- Poems or sayings that mean something to you and perhaps remind you of the person in some way.

It's also a good idea to leave some spare pages for other memories that may be added later on, or for photos or drawings which may be put in at a later date.

Also, you might think about asking a few others who remembered/s the person to write a few things down about what they remember, especially in regard to memories also involving the child/young person the book's for. These can be stuck in to the book. You may consider making an audio or filmed recording of people's memories of someone. Perhaps at a family gathering. As children and teens grow up they could enjoy hearing about the person they love with 'older ears'.

Memories connect us with someone who isn't with us anymore.

Keep them, repeat them and weave them into your family's life in positive ways.

They may be poignant and painful at times, but also wonderful and precious.

