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SCHOOL TOOLS

DECEMBER 2020

SAYING GOODBYE TO 2020

The last months of the year are often filled with family time, holiday traditions, and togetherness. Regardless of which holidays you may celebrate, your faith or beliefs, these next weeks provide children with time off school to connect with family, celebrate, and reflect on the past year.

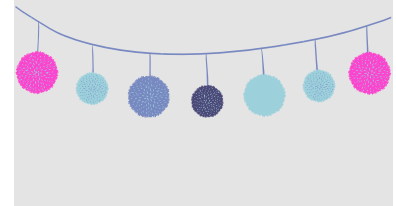
We understand that this year many families will be feeling a sense of stress and loss during this time. Perhaps the stress is from budgeting for gifts or trying to make ends meet after months of being unable to work. Or, from the loss of a tradition-- of being under the same roof as all of your loved ones as we shy away from larger gatherings. For some, the loss may not be a *something*, but rather a *someone* -- an empty seat at the table where a loved one who has passed this year once sat.

It is important to allow yourself to process and grieve these losses, no matter how big or small they may seem to others. It is also OK to celebrate this year in new ways. After all, you have survived a year filled with twists and turns, and *that* alone is something to be proud of!

Planning for the New Year

Ask your child, and yourself, these questions as you reflect and prepare for 2021:

- What was the most challenging thing that happened to you this year?
- What was the best thing that happened?
- Was there a person you grew closer to?
- What was a risk you took this year that you are proud of?
- What do you hope to achieve next year?



FINDING JOY THIS SEASON

The National Alliance for Grieving Children and Mayo Clinic provide holiday tips for parents and caregivers this year:

- **Create new holiday traditions** this year-- have a baking night with family, drive to look at lights together, or watching a holiday movie.
- **Incorporate loved ones who are not here physically** with a personalized ornament, a photograph or item they loved. Don't be afraid to talk about positive memories with them and feelings regarding their absence.
- **Find creative ways to connect with loved ones and engage the kids** -- drop off a meal, dessert or gift on someone's doorstep
- **Engage your children** to help decorate and plan activities.
- **Volunteer** or give back as a family
- **Create a budget and stick to it.** If finances are a stressor this year, consider other ways to give, such as a homemade "coupon" book or activity together.
- **Lower the pressure.** Years from now your child may not remember the gift they received but will remember the time they spent with you.