

## Helping Children Through Grief

1. Set time aside to talk with your child and explain the events that have occurred.
2. Use basic words like “die” and “dead” to convey the message instead of euphemisms such as “sleeping” or “passed away.”
3. Use the deceased person’s name when referring to him or her.
4. Let your child ask questions, and answer truthfully. Be honest, simple, and direct. If you don’t understand something, let your child know that too.
5. Be sensitive to the age of your child, and his/her level of understanding – don’t offer information beyond the child’s comprehension, as it will only confuse matters.
6. Read or have your child read children’s books related to death.
7. Play with your child in ways that allow the child to express feelings. (Drawings, dolls, imaging, remembering)
8. Share your own feelings and experiences with your child.
9. Let your child participate if he/she wants to go to the funeral or visit the cemetery
10. You are a role model for your child – if you hide your grief, they will learn to hide it too.
11. Watch for signs of maladjustments – eating or sleeping disturbances over a long period of time.
12. Do not be disappointed or angry if your child does not understand or appreciate the death. They are going through a learning experience – give them time.