

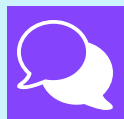
# How Parents Can Support Their Grieving Children



Talking with your children about death is especially challenging when you are dealing with your own grief. They may have not experienced a loss before, and may not understand what has happened or what their reaction means. They may be unsure how to act or respond, and might ask difficult questions and wonder what will happen to their family. We don't need to have all the answers to support our children. We can help them by being present and listening as they ask questions and express their feelings. Below are some tips to help families navigate through this difficult time.



Invite your children to ask questions and talk about their feelings.



Older children and youth may not want to talk to their parents. Help them identify other adults they can speak to when they're ready.



Let your child know you are feeling sad too and model ways to cope with strong emotions.



Invite children to attend funerals and memorial services. They will benefit from the support of friends and family.



Using words like "dead" or "died" helps children understand what has happened and is less confusing than "passed away".



Help children preserve and create memories through stories, pictures and talking about the person who has died.

## Help Children Understand the 4 Concepts of Death



Death is irreversible. Understanding this allows children to begin to mourn.



All life functions end at the time of death. Understanding this helps children realize the person who died is not suffering.



Everything alive eventually dies. Understanding this helps reduce guilt or shame associated with death.



There are physical reasons why someone dies. Understanding this minimizes confusion about death.

