Children, as well as adults, experience shock, confusion and pain at the loss of a loved one. Parents can reduce their children’s anxiety and pain by providing guidance and emotional support.

Some Signs of Grief are:

- Feelings of guilt
- Mood swings
- Hostility/aggressiveness
- Poor school performance
- Wish for own death
- Sleeplessness
- Depression
- Withdrawal

How to Help a Child Deal With Death

Tell them the truth: Give direct and simple answers for the absence or disappearance of a loved one. If appropriate, discuss terminal illness.

Don’t confuse them: “Going to sleep” and “gone away” are not the same as dying. Children might expect the deceased to come back. Explain that death is final.

Share experiences: Allow children to attend a memorial or funeral, but don’t force them. Let them know what to expect. Be ready to answer their questions.

Face grief: Let children cry and vent feelings to encourage healing. Discuss fears.

Reassure them: Hold children. Offer reassurance that someone will always be there to love them.

Encourage the creative expression of grief: Write letters, songs or draw pictures to say goodbye.

Take care of yourself so you can take care of your child.

Who To Call For Help

Self-Help Network
1-800-445-0116

Parenting Questions? Call the Parent Helpline at 1-800-332-6378
To order professionally printed tip cards visit www.KCSL.org