

## Ways to Help a Grieving Child

1. Listen .... and then listen some more.
2. Let the children ask questions. Be honest and answer truthfully, even the hard ones. But, it is also okay to say, "I don't know."
3. Keep explanations short, simple, and truthful.
4. Encourage everyone to use proper words, such as dead/dying. Avoid euphemisms, such as "sleeping", "lost", or "long trip."
5. Be a good model of grieving and share your feelings with your child. If you hide your grief, they will learn to hide it, too.
6. Talk about and remember the person who died. Use their name!
7. Expect and allow all kinds of emotions...sadness, numbness, anger, fear, guilt, frustration, happiness.
8. Don't misunderstand what may appear to be a lack of feelings when a loved one dies. Children are children first and often can tolerate only same dosages of grief at one time.
9. Get out the crayons, pens, pencils, paint and chalk; children often express their grief through artwork. Provide opportunities for the children to express themselves. Art, music, play, games, and books can be wonderful tools for expression and communication.
10. Run! Jump! Play! to release energy and emptiness.
11. Try to keep routines as consistent as possible
12. Set limits/rules and enforce them.
13. Give the child choices whenever possible.
14. Realize that children's bodies react when they experience grief. Anticipate eating and/or sleep disturbances and some changes in their behavior.
15. Be especially supportive at bedtime; sleep can be different for grieving children.
16. Respond with nurturing to physical aches and pains that often represent emotions connected to grief.
17. Hug with permission.
18. Practice patience.
19. Inform teachers and all important people in the child's life about the death.
20. Don't force children to talk.
21. Resist being over-protective.
22. Remember special days that are important to the child (holidays, birthdays, etc.) and expect a variety of feelings on those days.
23. Plan family days together.
24. Seek additional professional help for the child if needed.
25. Remember that "playing" is "grieving" for children.
26. Make each child feel SPECIAL and IMPORTANT.



SCAN ME