Parent Resources: Grief and Loss

What Do Children Need?

They need:

- love, care, consistency, continuity and connection.
- to feel safe in the world.
- to know that there are people in their lives who are there for them.
- to be allowed to grieve. We should be there for them as they experience their pain instead of trying to hide the death or shield them from the pain.
- us to respect where they are in their grief. All feelings should be validated. Everyone grieves in his own way and in his own time. Loss involves not only the death of the loved one, but the changes in life due to the loss.
- simple, truthful, age-appropriate information. Too much information can be confusing. Find out what they know. Allow them to ask questions that they want answered.
- us to listen to them carefully so we may understand how they are feeling and to be able to clear up fears, misconceptions or misinformation.
- us to know that they want to be included, not excluded from the truth.
- us to be authentic and share our feelings with them also. They learn by watching how we deal with loss.
- us to help them keep a connection with their loved one who has died. Give them the opportunity to remember, and share your memories with them also.
- us to know that they grieve sporadically and will grieve the loss through each developmental stage.
- us to challenge magical thinking.
- us to help them understand that going-on does not mean forgetting or loving the person who died any less. Going-on honors the person who died because as long as we remember, the memories never die.

Links to Grief Websites

- childrensgrief.net
  "Today's children face grief and loss issues we never dreamed of..."
- winstonswish.org.uk
  ... practical support and guidance to families, professionals and anyone concerned about a grieving child.
- kidsaid.com
  ... KIDSAID...is a safe place for kids to share and to help each other deal with grief about of their losses.
- growthhouse.org
  ...A collection of resources
- Childparenting.about.com
  ... How Elementary School-Age Children Express Grief and Ways You Can Help
- UCLA
  ...Documents, Resources, and Tools
• **Hospice: Teen Grief Program**  
  ...Grief Speak - A program where teens experiencing grief and loss can find their voice.

• **The Healing Place**  
  ...Grief Support For Teens and Their Families

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**Children's Books**

- The Fall of Freddie the Leaf. Leo Buscaglia, Ph.D. Slack, 1983. Nature provides a metaphor to teach about the changes that naturally occur in life and death.
- I had a Friend Named Peter: Talking to Children about the Death of a Friend. Janice Cohn, DSW. William Morrow and Company, 1987. Betsy’s friend Peter has been struck by a car and killed. Her parents explain death and what will happen.
- I’ll Miss You Mr. Hooper. Stiles, Mathieu, Henson, CTW. Random House for young readers, 1984. Big Bird goes through the same emotions and questions that we, especially children, may have after someone close dies. This opens wonderful dialogue for children to express feelings.

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**Books for Adults**

grief reactions by age.


Videos

- After the Tears, A Gentle Guide to Help Children Understand Death (2000). G Rating. Children are taught about death, the process of death, what it means to grieve and how our faith will sustain us in the difficult times.
- Charlotte’s Web (2003). G Rating. Special relationships between Wilber the pig, Charlotte the spider and Templeton the rat.
- Lion King (1995). G Rating. Lion cub is sent to exile after his father is killed by a rival uncle. The little hero finds his way to “The Circle of Life” with new friends.
- Finding Nemo (2003). G Rating. Nemo is captured by a scuba diver. His father, a nervous

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