



# Center for Grief, Loss & Transition

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## HOW CAN WE HELP OUR KIDS?

1. Ask the child what s/he thinks is happening
2. Acknowledge concerns
3. Validate that it is normal to feel shocked, afraid, sad or not much at all
4. Be patient when asked the same questions over and over
5. Accept your limitations
6. Help kids to gather the facts; be honest when asked questions
7. Use language that the child can understand
8. Include the child in funeral preparations, discuss this process and include them in the funeral service
9. Reduce isolation – kids need access to helpful adults
10. Have kids express feelings in a wide range of ways: talking, drawing, toys, etc. This helps move the experience outside of self
11. Share your own feelings
12. Empower kids by allowing them to make choices when possible: letter writing, fundraising activities, artistic expression, donation, etc.
13. Shield kids from graphic details and pictures in media
14. Be honest—children need to know the truth about the death
15. Help kids to feel cared for and loved
16. Emphasize relevant spiritual/faith/values concepts
17. Use ritual to express self: flags, candles, prayer, etc.
18. Remember humor and play
19. Encourage hope, optimism and awareness of possible, positive outcomes
20. Balance news coverage with children's and family's life
21. Move toward returning to daily routines
22. Recognize that children grieve more sporadically than adults and grieve in small doses
23. Understand that children perceive death differently during developmental changes

“Avoidance always falls apart. Giving children information will help them cope more successfully.”