

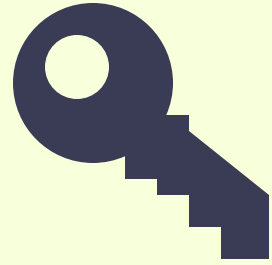
Tips for Supporting a Child Dealing With Grief

With Children's Grief Expert, Andrea Warnick

1. Create An Open Environment

Create an environment that lets your kids know that they can ask you **any question** they may have.

2. Honesty is Key



Being **honest** with kids when talking about death is so important. When we are not honest, they are left to imagine -- it's not unusual for them to make up answers in which they are responsible.

3. Be Aware of the Power of Language



Be cautious about the **language** you use -- kids take things very literally. Use clear words like "death" and "dying".

4. Find Teachable Moments in Everyday Life

When someone dies in a Disney movie, or a pet goldfish dies -- use these moments to **teach your kid about death**, so when it occurs in their personal life, it isn't their first time learning about it.

5. Give Them the Opportunity to Say Goodbye



A funeral gives your child the opportunity to say goodbye to their loved one. Unless they absolutely **do not** want to be there, they should be there. If your child does not want to go to a funeral, try to get to the bottom of their concerns before you decide whether or not to bring them.

6. Provide Ongoing Support



There's a big difference between **intellectually** understanding someone's going to die & **emotionally** understanding it. Sometimes emotional understanding doesn't happen until after the death has occurred.

7. Keep An Eye Out for Warning Signs



Some examples include: **not getting back into the activities that they used to love** (it's okay for a week or two, but ongoing disinterest could be a symptom of their struggle with grief), signs of **self-harm**/intention to self-harm, **talking about suicide**/not wanting to live, experiencing **panic attacks**, or having **anger management issues** - these are all signs to **seek help from a professional** who is well equipped to support your child.

