



Ten Things Grieving Children Want You to Know

- 1. Children want to be told the truth about the death**
 - a. Tell them in age-appropriate and direct language
 - b. Ask them if they have any questions and clear up misconceptions
- 2. Children look to you as a role model for how people grieve**
 - a. Share your feelings with them as long as they are relieved of the task of having to “fix it”
 - b. Each child will grieve in their own unique way
 - c. They will grieve alone in an effort to shield you from their pain
- 3. Children want to talk about their person who died**
 - a. They need you to tolerate listening when they tell their story or share their feelings
 - b. They fear that they will forget their loved one
- 4. Children express their emotions through play and behaviors which may be problematic for you**
 - a. They can't always tolerate intense emotions or know how to talk about them
 - b. They might make decisions you don't agree with
 - c. They need to take breaks from their grief and engage in age-appropriate activities.
- 5. Children need to know who would take care of them if you could not**
 - a. They may fear for your safety especially when you are apart
- 6. Children benefit from being included in mourning rituals**
 - a. Your child needs the opportunity to participate in ongoing rituals
 - b. Rituals aid in their understanding of death
- 7. They need you to help them feel safe**
 - a. Provide clear and consistent boundaries, limits and expectations
 - b. Give them room to safely interact with peers and adults outside of the family
- 8. They need to be taught coping strategies**
 - a. Include ways to comfort themselves in your absence
- 9. Children need to be included when making decisions:**
 - a. About how to celebrate holidays, birthdays and anniversaries
 - b. About other family circumstances such moving or changing schools.
- 10. Children need you to take care of yourself: they will only adapt as well as you do.**