



Parent's Grief Checklist

- Always talk about death in plain, direct language (i.e.: “Her body stopped working and she died.”)
- Avoid use of euphemisms such as “Daddy went to visit God in heaven.” Instead of saying, “your Mommy was very sick and she died” use the names for the cause of death (i.e.: breast cancer, brain hemorrhage, etc.)
- Share remembrances of the parent who died with your child whenever possible. This will help them keep the memory of that parent alive, keep the feelings of being loved alive and will help them in their grief process.
- Acknowledge the birthday of the parent that died and the anniversary date of the death. Include your children in planning a remembrance or ritual for those special days.
- Try to accommodate the different styles of grieving within your family. While some children will cry openly and seek comfort, others may only cry in private or act out their grief in angry outbursts.
- Assist your child in making transitions – endings or beginnings (i.e. first and last day of school or camp, birthday parties, religious ceremonies).
- Head off holiday blues by anticipating and planning ahead. When possible, incorporate the preferences of the deceased parent into the decision-making or devise new rituals.
- Always provide as much consistency in parenting, limit setting and maintaining routine as possible. Your children need limits to feel safe!
- Acknowledge what you can't accomplish on your own and allocate – you just can't be everything for everybody.
- Praise your children and yourself as often as possible for doing the best you can during trying times!

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