



Child & Adolescent | *Tip sheet*

Understanding Grief and Loss in Children

Grief is a normal reaction when someone important dies. Children may feel sad, confused or angry. These feelings can come and go for a long time. This is part of learning to live with a big change.

Children do not “get over” a loss.

They grow and learn how to live with it. Their feelings may rise again during birthdays, holidays or major life events. This is normal.

Be honest with children

It may feel hard to use words like “dead” or “died,” but clear, simple words help children understand what happened. Honest answers build trust. They also help children feel safe asking questions.

Every child grieves in their own way

Each child’s grief is unique.

- Some want to talk about the person who died.
- Some may ask the same questions many times.
- Others may express feelings through play, art or writing.

All of these reactions are normal.

Grief changes over time

Children may feel their grief at different ages and stages. A child may understand the loss in a new way as they grow. There is no time limit on grief. Give children space to share feelings when they are ready.

Support helps children feel less alone

It helps children to meet others who have also had someone die. Many grief camps, groups and programs can offer support and connection. You can find programs across the country at [ChildrenGrieve.org](https://www.childrensgrieve.org).

Source: National Alliance for Children’s Grief

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