

Talking to Children about Death

Here are some simple guidelines that may help families talk to children about the death of a person or pet known or loved by the child.

- Tell the truth as gently as you can.
Example, "Grandpa died. He's not coming back, but we will always remember him."
DON'T: Confuse your child with vague phrases such as "passed away" or "no longer with us."
- Share your grief.
Example, "I'm very sad. How are you feeling about this?"
DON'T: Hide your grief and send the message to your child that they should do the same.
- Comfort your child.
Example, "Death is a part of life." Ease your child's fears of the unknown. Talk about your spiritual beliefs.
- Deal with your child's emotions.
Example, "Let's talk about what you are feeling."
DON'T: Tell your child to stop feeling something without explanation.
- Encourage your child to attend memorial services or commemorate the loved one that they lost.
Example: "Would you like to go to the funeral/memorial service?"
DON'T: Force your child to go.