

HOW TO BEST HELP YOUR CHILD IN GRIEF

- Provide a place where the child can feel safe and supported.
- Try to be available to your child.
- Let your child know that what they are feeling is normal.
- Have open, honest, and age appropriate communication with your child.
- Let the child know that their grief may be felt physically as well as emotionally (stomach aches, headaches, etc.)
- Don't be afraid to talk about death and dying with your children. Don't be afraid to answer their questions. If you don't know the answer, be honest with the child and let them know. Ex: "Oh, that's a great question, but I don't have that answer. I'll try to get the answer for you."
- Your child may try to take over the role of mom or dad. This is known as the "Big Man/Big Woman syndrome. Try to prevent indirect or direct actions that contribute to this behavior.
- Try to actively and permissively listen to your child. Guilt and regret are normal feelings. This teaches your child that their feelings will not be judged as being good or bad.
- Talk with your child about the loved one. Share memories and stories, good and bad.
- Being angry or mad with a person does not cause the person to become sick or die. Let the child know that.
- Be a role model in grief with expressions of appropriate emotion to allow the child to know it's OK to have these feelings and feel comfortable with asking questions and talking about it.