



## 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.

[www.OurHouse-Grief.org](http://www.OurHouse-Grief.org)

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