



# Helping a grieving child



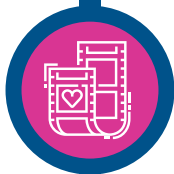
## **EXPLAIN DEATH AND GRIEF**

Talk openly about the death. Use the words death, dead and died. Explain that the sadness they feel is grief. Grief is normal and natural. It is needed to be healthy. Talk about ways people show grief.



## **LET THEM SEE YOU GRIEVE**

Let children and teens see your feelings and how you handle them. Talk about your grief. Don't hide your tears or sadness.



## **SHARE MEMORIES**

Make it feel safe for children and teens to think and talk about the person who died. Share stories, photos or videos. Give your child or teen something to remind them of the person who died.



## **PROVIDE COMFORT**

Show them physical and emotional affection. Provide comfort items (blankets, toys, pillows, fidget toys, play dough). Build up your child or teen's self-esteem. Remind them that they are safe and loved.



## INVOLVE THEM IN THE FUNERAL OR MEMORIAL

Allow the child or teen to be involved in the funeral or memorial service. They can share stories, write a letter, color a picture or do whatever helps them be a part of it. Let the child or teen decide if they want to be part of the service or not.



## BE PATIENT

Answer their questions, no matter how many times they ask. Let them share their thoughts and feelings. Listen to them without judgment or telling them how to feel. It's okay to not feel okay. There is no timeline for feeling better.



## GATHER SUPPORT

Involve friends, family, teachers, religious leaders, other trusted adults and professionals to help support your child or teen in their grief. Tell your child's school about the death and grief.



## TRY NOT TO MAKE CHANGES

Avoid changes to routines. Create a schedule for your child or teen to look at.



**Children's**  
Wisconsin

(414) 337-4250  
griefsupport@childrenswi.org

**childrenswi.org**