How to talk to your child



Listen carefully and give your child your FULL attention.

Give your child lots and lots of reassurance that this is not their fault in any way. There is a tendency for everyone to blame themselves for what they did or didn't do and believe it might have made a difference to the death.

Use clear and age appropriate language with your child.

Use the words 'died and dead'.

If you use euphemisms such as 'gone to sleep' that can be scary for a child. They might become scared at bedtime because they might think they won't wake up or they might ask when the person or pet is waking up again.

Be mindful that children below the age of about 6 don't quite understand the permanence of death. They might ask when the person or pet is coming back.

Try to answer any questions as honestly as you can without causing distress to your child.

If you need further support contact:

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The Hollybrook Schools Infant and Junior

Relaxation and fun things



Take time out to do relaxing and fun things with your child. It will be hard but sometimes doing things can help everyone to feel better.

- ❑ Plan an outing
- ❑ Have a movie night and make popcorn to share
- ❑ Go for a walk in nature
- ❑ Do some crafting or painting
- ❑ Have a takeaway delivered
- ❑ Go to your child's favourite café or restaurant
- ❑ Have a family games night and get the board games out
- ❑ Have hot bubbly baths and put in your child's favourite bath bombs.
- ❑ Visit friends or relatives

This will show your child that life does go on and you can still do fun things and enjoy yourselves.



For resources go to
www.elsa-support.co.uk



ABOUT GRIEF

A guide for parents

ELSA support

What is grief?

Grief is an overwhelming sadness over a loss.

You may have had a pet die or a family member and your child is grieving.

How can you cope with this? How can you help? As parents we always want to take away our children's pain and that is totally understandable. Grief is something we all work through in time and we are all affected differently.

Children can show grief in lots of different ways. They might be angry, anxious, worried, scared, confused and a whole range of other emotions.

That is totally normal and expected.

Emotions will come and go like waves in the sea. Initially the waves are huge and crash down on them. In time they will get smaller and smaller until they only appear occasionally.

How can you help and what can you do to make things a little easier on them and on you. You are probably grieving too. There are things you can do.

Feelings

Help your child to express their feelings. Make feelings talk part of your every day life. Tell them how you feel and ask them how they are feeling. Children can struggle to put their feelings into words and they might show up in their behaviour.

Reassure them that their feelings are valid and understandable. Reassure then that their feelings will come and go and sometimes they might be big and sometimes small. Their feelings are NORMAL. Everyone has feelings when something terrible happens.

It is absolutely OK to have feelings.

To help express feelings you can:

- ❑ Ask them to draw how they are feeling
- ❑ Give them a journal to write in
- ❑ Make a memory jar of happy memories of their pet or person who has died. They can write things on pieces of paper and pop them in the jar to read later.
- ❑ They could write a letter to the person or pet that has died.
- ❑ They could make a memory bracelet with colour beads, each bead representing a happy memory.
- ❑ They could fill a heart with all the things they love about the person or pet who died.
- ❑ You could grow something together in memory of the person or pet that has died
- ❑ Paint a pebble together and put it onto the grave or even in a special part of your garden.



ELSA support

Routines and Support

Your child may show grief differently to what you are expecting. They may even seem happy at times. This is also normal. Children are resilient and can forget for a time. They can carry on as normal with their day. Those waves may crash later on.

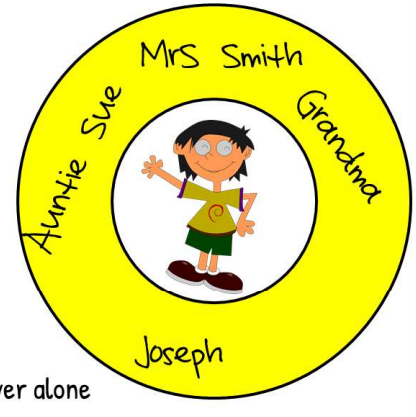
Keeping to your normal routines helps your child to feel safe. Do things you would normally do as much as you can.

Going to school can feel safe but make sure you talk to school so we can help if we are needed.

Ask your child to think of people who are there to support them. You could make a list of those people. This will help your child to know that there are people who are there if they are needed. These people can help if their feelings get too big and you are not there to help. Draw a circle (circle of support) and your child can write their name or draw their picture inside. They can write the people on the outside.

It might be:

- ❑ A teacher
- ❑ An ELSA
- ❑ A family member
- ❑ A friend
- ❑ A neighbour



This will help them to feel safe and cared for. There are so many people who can help. They are never alone