

What Do Children Need When They Face Loss?

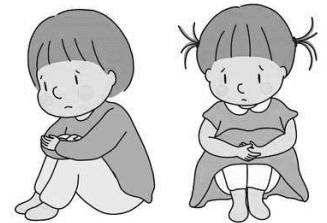
Support

- Children need love, care, consistency, continuity and connection.
- Children need to feel safe in the world.
- Children need to know that there are people in their lives who are there for them.



Time to Grieve

- Children need to be allowed to grieve. We should be there for them as they experience their pain instead of trying to hide the death or shield them from the pain.
- Children need us to respect where they are in their grief. All feelings should be validated. Everyone grieves in their own way in their own time. Loss involves not only the death of the loved one but the changes in life because of the loss.
- Children need us to help them keep a connection with their loved one whom they have lost. Give them the opportunity to remember, and share your memories with them as well.
- Children need us to be authentic and share our feelings with them. They learn cope by watching how we deal with loss.
- Children need us to know that they grieve sporadically and will re-grieve the loss through each developmental stage.



Honesty

- Children need simple, truthful, age-appropriate information. Too much information can be confusing. Find out what they know. Allow them to ask questions that they want answered.
- Children need us to listen to them carefully so we may understand how they are feeling and to be able to clear up fears, misconceptions or misinformation.
- Children need us to know that they want to be included, not excluded from the truth.
- Children need us to challenge magical thinking.



Permission to Move Forward

- Children need us to help them understand that going-on does not mean forgetting or loving the person they've lost any less. Going-on honors the person who was lost because as long as we remember, the memories never die.

