



When your little one loses someone

We'd like to acknowledge the numerous losses and potential heartbreak experienced by families, especially over the past 2 years of this pandemic. If your family has recently lost a loved one, you may find yourself struggling to answer your young children's questions about what death means or what happens after.

Young children often understand the separation aspect of death, that they won't be able to see this person, but depending on their age and developmental level may not grasp the "forever-ness" of this change. It's important to be direct about death without using euphemisms (kids are very literal), but don't share more details than necessary. If someone died by suicide, [here](#) is a specific guide for navigating this discussion without shame. Some families choose to share their personal or religious beliefs about an afterlife. Funeral attendance should be optional based on the child's understanding of the situation and caregivers' availability to comfort them during a ceremony. Regardless, you can help children capture their positive memories of the deceased (e.g., scrapbook, memory box) with stories or pictures.

After the death of a significant figure, children may wonder if other loved ones will die. Although you cannot promise anyone's health or safety, you provide reassurance that you, for example, will likely live a lot longer. It's possible children may display behavior changes such as increased clinginess (e.g., not wanting to leave you) and worries, physical complaints, thoughts about death, expressing feelings of guilt or shame, changes in attitude or behavior, or temporary regression in behaviors. If your child is talking about wanting to die, it's possible they are trying their best to express their grief and desire to see the deceased again. However, it's always important to listen to children and take them seriously. Be sure to monitor your children especially regarding access to ways they could harm themselves, in the rare event they may attempt to experiment without understanding the consequences.

Be willing to listen to any concerns they may be able to verbalize. Even if your child isn't expressing any sadness or confusion, maintain your routine and structure as much as possible. Prepare children for any expected temporary (e.g., funeral-related) or long-lasting disruptions including changes in holiday or milestone celebrations.

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Check out the page below for **[grief and loss and community resources!](#)**

Click [here](#) to tell us what topics you want covered in future newsletters!



Most kids are resilient and will recover naturally, especially with the help of caregiver support along the way. However, if behavior concerns persist (e.g., lasting depression or withdrawal, ongoing academic challenges, extended periods of regressive behavior), consider talking to your child’s pediatrician or connecting with a mental health care provider for additional support.

GRIEF AND LOSS RESOURCES

- Tips on talking to children about death from [Psychology Today](#), [Parents](#), & [NPR](#)
- Other general information from [Child Mind](#), [Kids Health](#), & [Child Development Info](#)
- *Relevant Books:*

Invisible String (Patrice Karst)	Talking about Death (Earl A. Grollman)	Why Did Grandpa Die? (B. Shook-Hazen)	Poppy’s Chair (K. Hesse)
When Dinosaurs Die: A Guide to Understanding Death (Laurie Krasny Brown & Marc Brown)	Last Week My Brother Anthony Died (M.W. Hickman)	A Quilt for Elizabeth (B. Tiffault)	The Day Tiger Rose Said Goodbye (Jane Yolen)
Everett Anderson’s Goodbye (Lucille Clifton)	Jasper’s Day (Marjorie Blain Parker)	Saying Goodbye to Daddy (Judith Vigna)	Chester Raccoon and the Acorn Full of Memories (Audrey Penn)

- [Additional recommendations](#) from NYC Public Library

Note: We have no commercial interests nor financial ties to these recommendations

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

HOUSING

- [Durham Continuum of Care \(CoC\)](#)
- Eviction Information: 216-965-5095
- [Durham Rescue Mission](#)
 - 919-688-9641
- [Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness](#)
- [Urban Ministries of Durham](#)
- [Durham County Social Services](#)
- [Orange County Social Services](#)
- [Wake County Social Services](#)

FOOD & GROCERIES

- [Wake County Public Schools Free Meals](#)
- [Durham County Public Schools Free Meals](#)
- [Orange County Food Resources](#)
- [Chapel Hill/Carrboro Schools](#)
- [TABLE](#)
- [Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina](#)
- [Wake County Food Resources](#)
- [No Kid Hungry NC](#) - Text FOODNC or COMIDA to 877-877 to receive information about 3 drive-thru or pickup sites with meals for kids closest to you

HEALTH & SAFETY

- [Compass Center for Women and Families](#)
 - 919-929-7122
- [Durham Crisis Response Center](#)
 - 919-403-9425
- [InterAct Family Safety and Empowerment Center](#)
 - 919-828-7501
- [Orange County Rape Crisis Center](#)
 - 866-935-4783 (call) , 919-504-5211 (text)
- [Freedom House](#)
 - 919-967-8844 (Crisis Unit, Chapel Hill)
 - 1-877-967-8844 (Mobile Service)
- [Suicide prevention lifeline](#): 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Hope4NC Helpline: 1-855-587-3463
- [Crisis Text Line](#): Text HOME to 741 741

CHILDCARE

- [NC Hotline for Critical Workers Seeking Child Care Options](#)
- [Covid Childcare Co-op Creator](#)
- [Covid Urgent Childcare](#)
- [Child Care Services Association](#)

LEARNING

- [Scholastics Learn at Home](#)
- [Khan Academy](#)
- [PBS Kids](#)
- [CDC Tips for Talking with Children about COVID-19](#)