

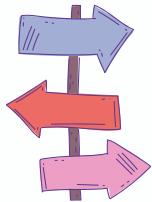
# Talking to Children About Death



 30 Minutes

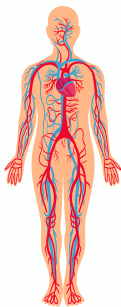
 Talking to children about death can be challenging. This guide provides tips for navigating difficult conversations, as well as ideas to help children cope with the loss of a loved one.

**Encourage questions and provide accurate information:** Create an open and safe environment for children to ask questions about death. Provide honest and accurate information in response to their inquiries



**Follow the child's lead:** Children may have different levels of understanding and readiness to talk about death. Let them guide the conversation and ask questions at their own pace.

**Be honest and use age-appropriate language:** Use clear and simple language when discussing death, avoiding euphemisms or complex concepts that may confuse children. For example, children might not understand that someone has "passed on", and they may actively spend time worrying about and looking for someone they have been told is "lost".



**Use concrete examples:** Utilise concrete examples to explain death, such as the cessation of bodily functions, rather than abstract or religious concepts.

**Validate their emotions:** Acknowledge and validate the child's feelings about death, even if they seem confusing or contradictory. Let them know it's normal to experience a range of emotions. Offer physical affection, comfort, and reassurance to the child, letting them know that their feelings are valid and that they are not alone in their grief.



**Encourage expression of emotions:** Encourage children to express their emotions openly through age-appropriate means, such as talking, drawing, writing, or participating in creative activities.

**Use stories or books:** Reading age-appropriate books or sharing stories about grief and death can help children understand and process their feelings in a more relatable way. For some book ideas, click [here](#). YouTube has a great variety of videos, too. A starting point could be: [Coping with Grief \(for kids\)](#), and the story, [Why Do I Feel Sad?](#)



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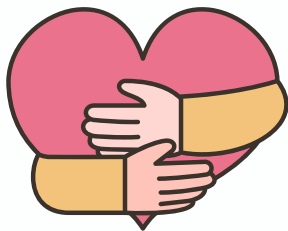
**Encourage remembrance:** Encourage children to remember and honour the memory of the loved one through activities like creating a memory box, writing letters, or sharing stories. For some ideas on how to create a memory box, [click here](#).

**Maintain routines and stability:** After a loss, maintaining familiar routines and a stable environment can provide children with a sense of security and help them cope with grief more effectively.



**Address fears and misconceptions:** Children may have fears and misconceptions about death, such as associating it with sleep or feeling responsible for the death. Address these concerns openly and provide reassurance.

**Be prepared for recurring questions:** Children often revisit the topic of death and may ask the same questions repeatedly. Be patient and understanding, offering consistent and supportive responses.



**Offer ongoing support:** Grief is a process that takes time, and children may experience waves of grief even after some time has passed. Provide ongoing support, patience, and understanding as they continue to navigate their feelings and adjust to life without their loved one.

**Seek professional support if needed:** If a child is struggling to cope with the death of a loved one or exhibiting signs of prolonged distress, consider seeking professional help from a counsellor or therapist experienced in working with children and grief.



**It's important to note that every child is unique, and the grieving process can vary. Adapt these tips to suit the individual needs of the child.**