How Can I Help My Child Deal With Loss and Grief?

The following tasks help the child in adjusting to a loss. Each child will complete these tasks in his or her own way and on his/her own time schedule. The below suggestions may help you.

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<th>Task</th>
<th>Activites to Assist Child</th>
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| Understanding: facing the reality of death| • Offer the child time to talk about death and loss as he/she experiences it in everyday life. Allow the child to tell his or her “story” of death of the loved one.  
  • Be there to listen, including long after you think the child should be moving on, as he or she will revisit this grief throughout his/her life.  
  • Answer questions about death and loss as honestly as possible. |
| Identifying and expressing feelings        | • Show the child how you talk about feelings and help the child identify and express feelings.  
  • Tell the child that his/her feelings are normal and that others feel the same way.  
  • Offer age-appropriate expressions of feelings such as: writing about feelings; talking to someone about feelings; crying; laughing; snuggling; singing; arts and crafts; walking or other physical activity like dance and martial arts. |
| Commemorating/honoring the person who died| • Assist your child with creating an ongoing list and put it on the refrigerator.”Things I remember about ______” and have family members contribute to it when they want  
  • Help your child write a story, poem, prayer, or song for the loved one.  
  • Assist your child in creating a memory book or box with photographs and/or other items.  
  • Take your child to the cemetery. Take flowers or a balloon.  
  • Plant a tree or some flowers with your child in honor of the loved one. |
| Going on - not “getting over”              | • Create a ritual good-bye to the loved one.  
  • Ask your child to create a collage of the things that make him/her happy to be alive.  
  • Express and validate the child’s mixed feelings about “going on.”  
  • Develop rituals around anniversary dates for remembering the loved ones. |


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