10 Things Grieving Children Want You to Know

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Ten Things Grieving Children Want You To Know

1. **Children want to be told the truth about the death:**
   - Tell them in age-appropriate and direct language
   - Ask them if they have any questions and clear up misconceptions

2. **Children look to you as a role model for how people grieve:**
   - Share your feelings with them as long as they are relieved of the task of having to “fix it”
   - Each child will grieve in their own unique way
   - They will grieve alone in an effort to shield you from their pain

3. **Children want to talk about their person who died:**
   - They need you to tolerate listening when they tell their story or share their feelings
   - They fear that they will forget their loved one

4. **Children express their emotions through play and behaviors which may be problematic for you:**
   - They can’t always tolerate intense emotions or know how to talk about them
   - They might make decisions you don’t agree with
   - They need to take breaks from their grief and engage in age appropriate activities.

5. **Children need to know who would take care of them if you could not:**
   - They may fear for your safety especially when you are apart

6. **Children benefit from being included in mourning rituals:**
   - Your child needs the opportunity to participate in ongoing rituals
• Rituals aid in their understanding of death

7. They need you to help them feel safe:
   • Provide clear and consistent boundaries, limits and expectations
   • Give them room to safely interact with peers and adults outside of the family

8. They need to be taught coping strategies:
   • Include ways to comfort themselves in your absence

9. Children need to be included when making decisions:
   • About how to celebrate holidays, birthdays and anniversaries
   • About other family circumstances such moving or changing schools.

10. Children need you to take care of yourself: they will only adapt as well as you do.

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