



CHADD's
National
Resource
Center
on ADHD

ADHD Quick Facts

Helping Children with Grief

Grief often impacts the whole family. It can be difficult to offer support to a family member who is grieving when you are also mourning the loss of a loved one. Taking care of a child who depends on you for emotional support can be extra hard. It's okay to accept a friend's offer to babysit or stop by for conversation at this time.

The recent loss could be the first person your child has known who has died. Answer their questions in age-appropriate terms. Younger children may not be able to understand death's permanence and may ask when the person who died is coming back. Older children may be afraid that this death means they will also lose their parents. In addition to the emotional connection, they may have fears about who will care for them. Talking with friends and family who will help support your child in any crisis can help.

Discussing your family's traditions regarding death and religious beliefs can be helpful to your children. Create ways that you can remember the person who has died, either through photographs and scrapbooks or by creating little traditions based on shared memories. Your children may not have seen their own parents cry and be upset before. Reassure them that adults feeling sad and crying doesn't mean that nobody will care for them, and that this is a phase that won't last forever.

You can help children by modeling [healthy ways of grieving](#):

- Be honest about negative feelings.
- Acknowledge that pain exists and that they are sad or hurting.
- Have a conversation and take ownership of your feelings.
- Manage your own behavior and emotions.
- Avoid overwhelming or scaring children by keeping discussions simple and age-appropriate.
- Use language to empathize with children.

Remind children that while grief is hard, it is a process that can be worked through and there is hope of normalcy in the future. Children may feel bad if they don't feel as sad as others, or if they don't want to talk or think about the loss. It's important to let children know that everyone grieves differently, and that it's okay to cry, to feel numb or to want to be distracted. Children may feel guilty if they are angry at the person who died and may need reassurance that it's part of normal grief. Observing children for signs of stress and reminding them that they can turn to you and to others if there are any feelings that bother them can help.



Examples of What to Say to Children

I know this is hard; I miss them, too.

Sometimes I cry, too. Sometimes I feel numb. Sometimes I don't know how I feel. It's all normal.

It's not always going to hurt this badly.

We can do this together.

Resources for Grief

SAMHSA's National Helpline 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

[National Bereavement Online Resource Center](#) 206-298-1217 (9-5 PST)

[Grief, Loss, and Bereavement Support Groups](#). A listing of various support groups for grieving individuals.

[Finding a Grief Counselor](#)

[Bereaved Parents of the USA](#)

[The Compassionate Friends: Support After a Child Dies](#)



Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)

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