

Some Ideas to Try:

Reading

Grab a snuggle and a story whenever you get a chance.

Memory Books

With the help of a grown-up, you can paste pictures into a book or journal to help you remember your mommy or daddy and things you enjoyed doing together. Write stories to accompany the photos. You might want to draw pictures, too. You can look at this book any time you want.

Bear Hugs or Snuggle Time

When you feel sad, you can ask for hugs. It can also help to have extra cuddle time. Hugs can make everyone feel a little better.

Special Comfort Place

It can help to make a special comfort corner with pillows, blankets, art supplies, music, and stuffed animals.

Toys to have around your house:

- Play dough or clay (with hammers to pound)
- Soft balls, big balloons (can be thrown or kicked)
- Dollhouse with family figures
- Crayons, markers, paints
- Sensory boxes or containers filled with rice, sand, or flour. If you have small plastic people, animals, cars, they can go in the box, too. This can be a soothing activity.



PRESCHOOL/K



We are sorry that your parent died. This is a very sad time for you and your family. We wanted to share some ideas to help you talk about your feelings with a grown-up.

It is important for you to play and get lots of hugs. Remember, you can have all kinds of feelings on different days, and that is okay.

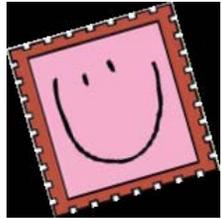
To parents and caregivers: Your presence and loving hugs will be important to your child. Inside we have listed some tips and activities to help support him/her during this time of grief. Please read this information with your child. Make adjustments according to your child's needs and understanding.



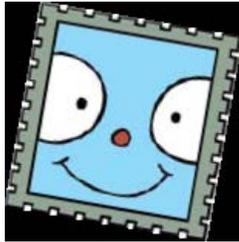
Feelings

When someone we love dies, people can be very sad. Sometimes they cry. Kids usually have “feeling bursts.” When you are sad, you can always ask for hugs. Sometimes you might cry and that is okay too. Kids can have lots of different feelings when a parent dies. These are called grief. You might feel mad, scared, or lonely. It can help to talk to grown ups about your feelings.

Here are some ideas:



- If you are mad: you can hit pillows, kick or throw balls.
- If you are sad: you can ask for hugs, hug your teddy bear, or listen to music or stories.



For Parents: Some explanations of death are troubling to young children.

- She passed away. She went to sleep.
- She was too good and God took her to be with God.
- She is in a better place.

These phrases are confusing to children. Children may become scared to go to sleep or worried that someone will take them or another loved one away. Young children will understand heaven as a concrete place and might ask to go visit.

Common Questions Kids Have

What does dead mean?

When someone dies his body doesn't work anymore. The heart stops beating. He doesn't breathe anymore. He isn't hungry. He doesn't eat. He can't feel, taste, hug or sleep. He doesn't feel sad, scared or happy. He is dead.

Is it my fault?

It is not your fault. You didn't do anything to make this happen. You did not cause your Mommy or Daddy to die.

What made my Mommy or Daddy die?

This is a question some kids wonder about. You can ask your parent or family if you are curious.

[Parent or caregiver: This is where you can explain what caused the death. Remember to use simple phrases. Don't feel that you have to give many details. It is important for children to have some information. Otherwise they can worry that they will get sick and die. Or, they may worry that the other parent in their lives will die. Tell the child that it is rare for a parent to die. Explain that “rare” is something that doesn't usually happen.]

Will Mommy or Daddy come back?

When someone dies you might think you can wish for him to come back to life. You might have a dream where he is alive again. This is normal. Once a body dies, we can't fix it. Your parent can't come back because he died.

Who is going to take care of me?

Your family and people who love you will take care of you.