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## Comforting a Bereaved Child

Five ways to help children handle the loss of someone loved:

- *Allow your child to say good-bye*

A child who is five or older might help select a passage to be read or pick out some music. Explain what will happen during the last rites and let the child decide whether to attend or not.

- *Reminisce*

Open a photo album and talk about happy times you've had with the deceased. If your child does not want to talk, don't push it. Let the child know that you'll be there when talking feels right.

- *Hug or hold your child often*

Many kids worry that others will treat them like a diseased person, as if death is contagious. However, lots of physical contact will reassure them.

- *Ask for help*

You may not always be able to attend to your child's needs if you're still dealing with your own grief, so reach out: Find out if a friend, relative or teacher can spend some extra time with your child. Notify the school or daycare center so that the staff can offer support.

- *Take a break from mourning*

As soon as the family is emotionally ready, try to do some of the same activities that you used to do before the tragedy struck.

### Suggested readings for kids

- *Where's Jess?* (Written by Joy and Marv Johnson, illustrated by Shari Barum)
- *I Heard Your Mommy Died* and *I Heard Your Daddy Died* (Written by Mark Scrivani, illustrated by Susan Aitken)
- *My Grandson Lew* (Written by Charlotte Zolotow, illustrated by William Pene du Bois)
- *Blew and the Death of the Mag* (Written by Wendy Lichtman, illustrated by Diane Mayers)
- *Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs* (Written and illustrated by Tommie dePaola)
- *Part of Me Died, Too* (Written by Virginia Lynn Fry)