

Supporting a Child Through Bereavement

When a child loses someone important, it can be hard to know how to help. Children experience grief in different ways and at different speeds. The most helpful thing you can offer is patience, honesty, and reassurance.

1. Be Honest

Children benefit from clear and simple explanations.

- Use straightforward language such as "died" rather than confusing phrases.
- Give information in small amounts.
- Be prepared to answer the same questions more than once.

2. Listen and Allow Feelings

Children may feel many emotions including sadness, anger, confusion, or worry.

- Let them talk if they want to.
- Accept their feelings without correcting them.
- Remember that children may move between grief and play. This is normal.

3. Encourage Expression

Children often express grief through activities rather than conversation.

Helpful ways to support them include:

- drawing pictures
- writing messages or letters
- talking about memories
- playing or storytelling

4. Provide Reassurance

Loss can make children feel unsure or worried.

You can help by:

- reminding them they are safe and loved
- keeping familiar routines where possible
- reassuring them that their feelings are normal

5. Remember Together

Talking about someone who has died can help children feel connected.

You might:

- share favourite memories
- look at photographs
- create a memory box
- mark birthdays or special days

6. Seek Support if Needed

If a child appears overwhelmed or you feel unsure how to support them, additional guidance can help.

Trusted UK organisations include:

- Winston's Wish
- Child Bereavement UK
- Cruse Bereavement Support

Remember

Children do not need perfect explanations. What they need most is a caring adult who listens, reassures them, and gives them space to feel and remember.