

Activities

Below are some suggestions of activities that you may want to try with a primary aged child:

- Make a memory box. Put together a box of significant items relating to the person they have lost (photographs, drawings and mementoes). This could provide a huge source of comfort to the young child.
- Teach the child about their emotions, what they are and why they might be feeling them.
- There are many books that can explain grief and bereavement in a child friendly way. They are aimed at various ages. Story books and activity books can be a useful and engaging tools for discussion.. Michael Rosen's *Sad Book*, Susan Varley's *Badger's Parting Gifts* and Diana Crossley's *Muddles, Puddles and Sunshine* are just a few suggestions.
- Planting a shrub, lighting a candle or letting off a balloon in honour of the person can keep the memory of the person alive for the child.
- As a preventative measure, the PSHCE curriculum can be used to explore bereavement and grief. This will need to be done in a sensitive manner as there may be vulnerable children.
- Social stories are a great way of putting difficult topics across to children. You could explain how people become upset and cry when someone has died, and perhaps that it is okay that they have/have not cried.

What can I do to support a young child who is grieving?

- Answer any questions that they may have an always tell the truth.
- Be patient. Don't try to make a child talk about their feelings. Let them talk in their own time and at their own pace. Give them space to express their feelings – they may be frightened by the intensity of their emotions (or their lack of emotion), so reassure them that bereaved people often feel this way.
- Avoid euphemisms such as 'gone to sleep' as these may only cause the child to feel confusion and fear.
- Children at this age may need repeated explanations of what has happened to clarify and help them to understand that they have not been the cause and are not to blame.
- The child may need extra reassurance that they are still loved amid all the sadness and loss. They need to know you are still there for them \ too, even though this important person in all your lives has died. Routine can be reassuring, so try to keep to their usual meal times and bed times if possible.
- Show the child that it is ok to be sad. Children model their behaviour on how those around them are behaving. If you are telling them that it is ok to grieve, but are trying to hide your own grief from them, they may feel that they also need to 'be strong'.

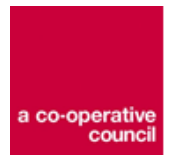
Telford and Wrekin Educational
Psychology Service

Grief and Bereavement For those aged 6-12

A guide for parents and school staff who are supporting children aged 6 to 12 and under experiencing grief and bereavement.



Telford & Wrekin
COUNCIL



Understanding Grief, Loss and Bereavement

Grief is the process and the range of emotions we go through as we gradually adjust to loss. Loss can arise in many forms which may generate grief. Examples of loss include: parental separation, incarceration of a family member, death of someone close or a pet, breakdown of a friendship or relationship.

It is important to note that grief is normal and natural.

Symptoms can include shock, numbness, despair, intense sadness, guilt, depression, relief, fear and anger.

"Children and young people mature at different rates and their understanding and responses to bereavement are likely to be based as much on their experience of life as their chronological age. The age categories given are guidelines only and it is important to realise that responses do vary and occur at other ages" (Monroe, 1993; Monroe & Kraus 1996.)

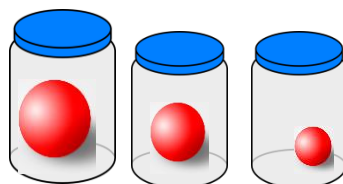
Age	What death means	Possible reactions
5-11 years	The child will have more experience of death and more understanding of what it is and that it is permanent.	They may become withdrawn. They may appear sad, depressed, and lonely. They may have anger, outbursts, temper tantrums and nightmares. They may feel guilty. They may have behaviour problems. They may struggle socially and academically at school. This could be due to low motivation and low self esteem. They may become preoccupied with death. They may go to the other extreme and become extremely good and well behaved and appear very brave and self controlled.

The Grieving Process (Barbara Monroe adapted Tonkin's model Growing Around Grief, 1996)

Barbara Monroe adapted Tonkin's *growing around grief model* by presenting three different sized glass jars to represent us as a person. Inside each jar she placed a ball to represent our grief.

You will notice that although the grief doesn't get any smaller, we simply adjust and adapt our lives around the grief to cope and manage.

'No-one wants their grief to shrink. It's all they have left of the person who died. But if your world gets larger, then you can keep your grief as it is, but work around it'



Further Support

- Your child's school may have a trained ELSA who can support him or her on a 1:1 basis.
- Winston's Wish is website full of great specialist books and resources designed for children of all ages
<https://www.winstonswish.org/>
- Child Bereavement UK
<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/0800.028.8840>
- Mind UK
<https://www.mind.org.uk/>
- Gingerbread
<https://www.gingerbread.org.uk/information/bereavement/>
- Looking after/supporting a bereaved child could be emotionally challenging for you, especially if you are grieving also. It is important that you take time for yourself and if you need to, talk to a friend, family member or professional such as your GP or CAHMS.

EPS Contact

Telford and Wrekin Educational
Psychology Service
6th Floor Darby House
Telford

01952 381045
SENDandInclusion@telford.gov.uk

Website:
<http://eps.taw.org.uk/>