

A BEREAVEMENT CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

➤ SET ASIDE SPECIAL TIMES TO BE WITH YOUR CHILD

He or she may be feeling lonely and afraid. Listen carefully to both verbal and body language. If your child acts unconcerned, it may be because he or she is having difficulty handling the strong feelings of grief.

➤ ALLOW ALL FEELINGS

It is natural for your child to be upset and behave differently after the death of someone special. There are no "wrong" feelings, but there is unacceptable behavior.

➤ USE CONCEPTS AND TERMS THE CHILD CAN UNDERSTAND

The child's concept of death may be very different from yours. The idea of a natural flow of life and death is hard for the preschooler.

➤ INVOLVE THE CHILD IN YOUR FAMILY GRIEVING PROCESS

Don't try to "protect" the child by hiding the reality of physical death.

➤ TALK HONESTLY

Children are curious about death and want the truth. It is OK for children to see adults showing emotion.

➤ EMPHASIZE THAT DEATH IS NOT LIKE SLEEP

Children often worry that they will not wake up.

➤ EMPHASIZE THAT PHYSICAL DEATH IS FINAL

This may be difficult for your child to understand.

➤ EMPHASIZE THAT DEATH IS NOT A PUNISHMENT

Neither the child nor the deceased is being punished.