



Following the death of someone close, parents are often concerned about how to best support and meet the needs of their children. Like adults, children experience, express and process grief in a variety of ways depending on their stage of development, personality, family culture, understanding of death, past experiences of loss and the nature of the bereavement. When considering how best to provide support, the child's unique grieving needs should also be considered.

This information sheet is designed to help parents, caregivers and teachers to understand and help primary school children navigate their grief experience.

A primary-school-aged child's understanding of death

Children of primary school age are beginning to understand the concept that death is permanent, though young children may engage in 'magical' thinking, trying to outwit death. Due to a limited understanding of death, primary school aged children may also have an increased fear in regards to their own death or feel responsible for the death of someone close to them.

Talking to primary-school-aged children about death

- worry about who will look after them if a parent or other caregiver dies
- take on a parenting role to younger siblings
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