



# 35 Ways To Help a Grieving Child

from the Dougy Center

1. Listen
2. Listen some more
3. Be honest. Never lie to a child.
4. Answer the questions that they ask. Even the hard ones.
5. Give the child choices whenever possible.
6. Encourage consistency and routines
7. Talk about and remember the person who died.
8. Make a child's world safe for grieving
9. Expect and allow all kind of emotions
10. Forget about the "grief stages."
11. Respect difference in grieving styles.
12. Get out the crayons, pens, pencils, paint and/or chalk.
13. Run! Jump! Play! (or find other ways to release energy and emotions).
14. Be a model of good grief
15. Hug with permission
16. Practice patience
17. Support children even when they are in a bad mood
18. Expect some kids to act younger than their age
19. Expect some kids to become little adults
20. Encourage children to eat right and drink lots of water
21. Help the children at bedtimes. Sleep may come hard for grieving children.
22. Inform the child's teacher and other school personnel about the death
23. Resist being overprotective
24. Don't force kids to talk
25. Take a break
26. Remember: "playing" is "grieving"
27. Seek additional help for the child if needed
28. Attend to the physical aspects of grief
29. Help children know they are not alone in their grief
30. Understand that grief looks different at different ages
31. Set limits and rules, and enforce them
32. Remember special days that impact the child
33. Play family times together
34. Be available for children when they need you
35. Take care of yourself, and do your own grieving