



When a child loses a parent, the entire community plays a role in supporting them. These simple, compassionate strategies can help both the grieving child and your own child as they navigate this difficult time.

1. Acknowledge the loss

- Encourage your child to say something simple like “I’m really sorry about your mom/dad.”
- Avoid clichés like “They’re in a better place.”

2. Keep communication open

- Let the grieving child know they’re welcome to talk, but don’t pressure them.
- Remind your own child to follow their friend’s lead—some kids want to talk, some don’t.

3. Offer practical help

Parents can offer the grieving family:

- Meals
- Rides to school or activities
- Help with homework or study routines
- Grocery runs
- Childcare if there are younger siblings
- These small things matter a lot when a family is overwhelmed.

4. Include them without overloading them

- Invite the child to normal activities, but make it easy for them to say no.
- Don’t stop inviting; grief can be isolating.

5. Maintain consistent routines

- Predictability at school and in friendships can feel grounding during grief.

6. Be patient with behavior changes

- The grieving child may seem withdrawn, irritable, or distracted.
- Parents should remind their own kids that grief looks different for everyone.

7. Respect privacy

- Don’t ask for details about the death unless the family chooses to share.
- Remind your child not to spread rumors or repeat private information.

♥ How Parents Can Help Their Own Child Support Their Friend ♥

8. Teach empathy and boundaries

Help your child:

- Listen more than they talk
- Avoid trying to “fix” feelings
- Understand that it’s okay not to know what to say

9. Provide simple scripts

Give your child supportive phrases, like:

- “I’m here if you want to hang out.”
- “It’s okay if you don’t feel like talking.”
- “I care about you.”

10. Encourage small acts of kindness

Some middle-school-friendly ideas:

- Sitting with them at lunch
- Bringing a small card
- Inviting them to a walk, movie, or game

11. Watch for signs the child might need more support

Tell your own child that if they see:

- Their friend crying frequently
- Talking about wanting to hurt themselves
- Withdrawing completely
- They should tell a trusted adult—not keep it secret.

12. Help coordinate group kindness

Parents can help kids organize:

- A group card or poster
- A small care basket (make sure it is delivered in a way that does not overwhelm the child/teen).
- A meal train for the family

13. Normalize grief

- Remind kids that grieving takes time.
- Explain that their friend might seem “fine” one day and sad the next.

14. Model compassion

- Children learn empathy from watching adults.
- Showing gentle care in your words and actions helps kids know how to do the same.