

Helping a Grieving Friend - for Kids

When your friend had someone special die, you might not know what to say or how to help. Here are some ideas from [Judi's House/JAG Institute](#):

Did you know?

- Everything that lives also dies. Plants die, animals die, and people die. Death is a natural part of life.
- When someone we care about dies, we have all kinds of reactions. We call these reactions “grief.” Any kind of thought or feeling you might have when you are feeling grief, or “grieving,” is normal and okay.
- Grief can include painful thoughts and feelings and everyone grieves in their own unique way. If your friend had someone special die, they might need some extra support like having someone to talk to about their grief and someone to play with when they want a break from their grief.

How can I help?

- Ask them how they’re doing and let them know you’re there for them.
- Being there for them might look different at different times. Sometimes kids want someone to talk to about their grief and other times they just want to be treated like other kids and have fun.
- Examples of ways to be supportive include:
 - Let them know they are not alone.
 - Offer to talk and use your listening ears.
 - Ask them to share memories about the person who died.
 - Ask them to play with you.
 - Give a high-five or ask if they want a hug.
 - Make a card or a picture for them.

What do grieving kids say they want people to know?

- My play is how I grieve.
- I may seem okay, but I grieve in little bits.
- Grief is a process, not an event.
- Please give me space.
- I want to remember.
- Let’s talk about my special person together.
- I just want someone to listen sometimes.

- Sometimes saying “I’m sorry for your loss” makes me feel like I have to take care of you.
- I’m not doing this to get attention. I’m hurting.
- It’s okay if you don’t have all the answers.
- The little things really matter: laughing, feeling safe, telling stories, being patient, giving hugs, sharing memories, listening, playing, etc.