

## Child Development Birth to 3 Years

General Concepts of Development	Concept of Death	Grief Issues	What Helps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Experiences the world through his/her senses</li> <li>•Attachment is developing along with stranger anxiety</li> <li>•Language, motor, cognitive, social/emotional development is critical</li> <li>•Trust vs. mistrust develops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Has no concept of death</li> <li>•Sense that something is different or has changed when a main caregiver is no longer present</li> <li>•Senses caregiver's emotional distress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•May respond to death with irritability, change in sleep, eating and play patterns</li> <li>•May regress</li> <li>•May search for caregiver</li> <li>•May be very attached to remaining caregiver and fear separation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Provide nurturing, love and physical closeness</li> <li>•Maintain a schedule</li> <li>•Take photos of deceased so that child will be able to look at them at a later date if needed</li> <li>•Take child to a portion of funeral or service</li> <li>•Use appropriate vocabulary for age (i.e. mommy is dead, she is not coming back)</li> <li>•Answer questions</li> <li>•Model/encourage appropriate expression of feelings and memory sharing</li> <li>•Keep a journal for child of important events, ceremonies, newspaper clippings and stories</li> </ul>

## Child Development 3-6 Years

General Concepts of Development	Concept of Death	Grief Issues	What Helps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Egocentric</li> <li>•Focuses on one thing at a time</li> <li>•Inanimate things can be alive</li> <li>•Magical thinking-just thinking about something can make it happen</li> <li>•Continues to learn about world through senses</li> <li>•Play is critical to development</li> <li>•Time is reversible, may be able to recall some very memorable past events</li> <li>•Continuing to develop trust</li> <li>•Pre-operational: unable to perform mental operations (reversal)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•May have a concept of death, depending on death experiences</li> <li>•Death may be caused by thoughts and feelings</li> <li>•May be interested in physical and biological aspects of death and dead body (what the body feels like after death, what does the inside of the casket look like?)</li> <li>•May think death is like sleep</li> <li>•Senses caregiver's emotional distress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•May appear fine</li> <li>•May respond to death with irritability, change in sleep, eating and play patterns</li> <li>•May regress</li> <li>•May be concerned with who will be caregiver</li> <li>•May show feelings, thoughts through play because he may not have the vocabulary to explain self</li> <li>•May be very attached to remaining caregiver and fear separation</li> <li>•May ask questions repeatedly</li> <li>•Very curious</li> <li>•Physical reactions and acting out behaviors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Answer questions</li> <li>•Maintain a schedule</li> <li>•Take photos of deceased so that child will be able to look at them at a later date if needed</li> <li>•Take child to a portion of funeral or service</li> <li>•Include child in funeral/service</li> <li>•Use appropriate vocabulary for age (i.e. mommy is dead, she is not coming back)</li> <li>•Provide play opportunities</li> <li>•Model/encourage appropriate expression of feelings and memory sharing</li> <li>•Keep a journal for child of important events, ceremonies, newspaper clippings and stories</li> </ul>

## Child Development 7-12 Years

General Concepts of Development	Concept of Death	Grief Issues	What Helps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Egocentric</li> <li>•Beginning to understand cause and effect</li> <li>•Concrete-operational: understands concrete concepts</li> <li>•Magical thinking-just thinking about something can make it happen (this is lessening)</li> <li>•Continues to learn about world through senses</li> <li>•Play is critical to development</li> <li>•Peer relationships are becoming very important</li> <li>•Self esteem is developing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Death is sometimes thought of as ghosts</li> <li>•Beginning to understand finality of death</li> <li>•May be interested in physical and biological aspects of death (what the body feels like after death, how long does it take to decompose? What happens in cremation?)</li> <li>•May feel that he caused death</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•May appear fine</li> <li>•May respond to death with irritability, change in sleep, eating and play patterns</li> <li>•May regress</li> <li>•May be concerned with who will be caregiver</li> <li>•May feel a stigma at school or around peers</li> <li>•May be very attached to remaining caregiver and fear separation</li> <li>•May be concerned about future of self and others</li> <li>•Very curious</li> <li>•Physical reactions and acting out behaviors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Answer questions</li> <li>•Maintain a schedule</li> <li>•Take child to funeral or service if he chooses</li> <li>•Include child in funeral/service</li> <li>•Use appropriate vocabulary for age</li> <li>•Be honest and factual</li> <li>•Provide play opportunities</li> <li>•Model/encourage appropriate expression of feelings and memory sharing</li> <li>•Keep a journal for child of important events, ceremonies, newspaper clippings and stories</li> <li>•Keep in contact with school</li> </ul>

## Child Development Teen Years

General Concepts of Development	Concept of Death	Grief Issues	What Helps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Formal operational: thinks abstractly, like an adult</li> <li>•Egocentric</li> <li>•Magical thinking-just thinking about something can make it happen (this is minimal)</li> <li>•Attempting to find a balance in terms of independence and dependence of caregiver</li> <li>•Peer relationships are very important</li> <li>•Self esteem is developing</li> <li>•Searching for identity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Death is final, an end to physical life</li> <li>•Realization of own mortality and thinks about meaning of life</li> <li>•May be interested in physical and biological aspects of death (what the body feels like after death, how long does it take to decompose? What happens in cremation?)</li> <li>•May feel that he caused death</li> <li>•Understands future and what loss will mean</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•May appear fine</li> <li>•May respond to death with irritability, change in sleep, eating, school and social behaviors</li> <li>•May be concerned with who will be caregiver</li> <li>•May feel stigma at school or around peers</li> <li>•May be attached to remaining caregiver/family</li> <li>•May be concerned about future of self/others</li> <li>•May attempt to take on role of deceased</li> <li>•Struggles with needing support and not wanting it</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Answer questions</li> <li>•Maintain a schedule</li> <li>•Take adolescent to funeral or service if he chooses</li> <li>•Include adolescent in funeral/service</li> <li>•Be available when teen wants to talk</li> <li>•Be honest and factual</li> <li>•Reduce expectations</li> <li>•Model/encourage appropriate expression of feelings and memory sharing</li> <li>•Keep a journal for adolescent of important events, ceremonies, newspaper clippings and stories</li> <li>•Keep in contact with school</li> <li>•Start a family communication journal</li> </ul>