



INDIGENOUS PARENTS

ParentLink guides use 'he' and 'she' in turn. Change to suit your child's sex.

“Mummy, what you crying for ... you crying for Papa?”

“Yeah baby, Mummy crying for Papa!”

“Where Papa gone Mummy?”

“He’s gone to sleep now.”

“Wake him up then!”

“No baby, he’s gone up into the sky now.”

“Me want my Papa ...”

What is grief?

Sometimes adults can be so sad with their own suffering that children’s pain can be overlooked.

Kids grieve too, and from an early age, but not in the same way that adults do.

- They feel the same loss and are likely to show their grief in different ways.
- They grieve in bursts, that is, they move in and out of grief. One day they will seem to be okay and another day they will show that they are not okay.
- They often have more needs at this time, and can become more demanding.
- They are only trying to get closeness, care and support.
- They are trying to understand it all. They often don’t have the words to explain their feelings and will show them in the way they behave.

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Times when kids grieve

- When a parent or grandparent dies or goes away.
- When a pet dies or gets lost.
- If they have a disability or are in hospital.
- Being injured or abused.
- When they move to a strange place.
- When they have long periods of separation from a parent or any family member.
- When they leave behind friends or school.
- When the family splits up.

Kids might show grief by

- Physical pain, such as a headache or stomach ache.
- Sleeping problems or bad dreams.
- Eating problems (not eating or eating too much).
- Fear of being left alone.
- Being naughty or mean to others.
- Being very clingy (wanting to be near certain people).
- Easily upset.
- Temper tantrums.
- Blame themselves.



These things might help

- Give clear and truthful information in a way that is at their level.
- Encourage kids to show their feelings by letting them write a letter, a story, a poem, or drawing.
- Share your grief.
- Kids will feel more normal about their own feelings if they see that you are sad too.
- Allow them time to talk and ask questions and share worries. This helps stop muddled and scary feelings.
- Tell them about death in language they understand.
- Keep as many of the family routines and things they're used to as you can. Too many changes will add further stress.
- Allow them to be involved in the funeral and other family rituals.
- If you are too distressed and can't answer their questions, make sure there is someone who can.
- Kids need to know someone is in control, can keep them safe, and be there for them.
- Don't rely on your child for support. You need to support your child.
- Let them know it's OK to be sad and that these feelings will pass.
- Children need to know what is happening, even if they don't ask.

The biggest need for kids at times like this is to be able to be supported and cared for, and to have someone to talk to about it.

These places might be able to help you

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services	6205 4798
Barnardos Parenting and Outreach Program	6241 5466
Child & Family Centres	Tuggeranong 6207 8228 Gungahlin 6207 1020
Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation	6231 9555
Lifeline	13 11 14
Parentline	6287 3833
Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service	6284 6220

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