

Thrive 365

Acknowledging the loss



Creating a **memory box** encourages conversation about the person who has died. It's important a child has someone they can go to to share their feelings and this can establish that connection. Put in drawings, photos or stories and listen to the child talk about special moments - or not so special moments. Just listen and ask questions, or repeat what they've said back to them so that they feel heard.

Keep routines in place to re-establish a sense of safety for a child - fear and anxiety are normal responses when their foundations have been shaken. Anger is also a common response, so give them safe ways of expressing their anger - without hurting themselves or others. This could include a '**safe-zone**' - where they can shout, hit cushions, engage in physical activity or make a mess by scribbling or messy painting.



Children can have a lot of questions about death - but if other family members are upset they may not want to ask them. Having a place like a **question jar** where they can write down or draw their questions means that an adult can sit down with them at some point in the day and answer them in an honest but age appropriate way.

Light a **memory candle** - one that will burn for 15 minutes, or mark the candle where it will be blown out. Explain that sometimes people light candles to remember someone who's died; encourage the child to remember their loved one - you might ask about their hair colour, places they went together, or whether they liked animals. If the child doesn't want to talk but isn't distressed, quiet is OK. If they cry, reassure them that it's alright to be upset. At the end, bring them back to their day and ask them to tell you something they're looking forward to.

