

Table 16-3: Children's Developmental Stages of Grief

Age	Thoughts	Feelings	Actions	Interventions
0–3 years			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cry • Exhibit clinging behavior • Exhibit regressive behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold the child • Offer words of reassurance in a calm tone of voice
3–5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loved one will return • Loved one is just away 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confused • Anxious • Fearful of separation • Sad or angry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cry • Temper tantrum • Nightmares • Exhibit regressive behavior • Exhibit clinging behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide extra attention • Offer reassurance calmly, don't worry about the "right words"
6–9 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wonder if loved one can return • Deceased can still function • Their actions or words caused death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confused • Anxious • Fearful of separation • Sad or angry • Fearful they might die too 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cry • Temper tantrum • Nightmares • Exhibit regressive behavior • Difficulty concentrating • Exhibit clinging behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide extra attention • Tell the truth; give only appropriate information • Reassure the child they were not responsible for the death • Encourage physical or artistic expression of grief • Maintain structure, limits and rules • Use children's books about death to normalize feelings

Table 16-3: Children's Developmental Stages of Grief (continued)

Age	Thoughts	Feelings	Actions	Interventions
9–12 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand finality and irreversibility of death • Their actions or words caused the death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sad • Confused • Anxious • Withdrawn • Lonely • Guilty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibit aggressive or impulsive behavior • Engage in risky or dangerous behavior • Decline in grades • Difficulty concentrating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide extra attention • Tell the truth; give only appropriate information • Reassure the child they were not responsible for the death • Encourage physical or artistic expression of grief • Maintain structure, limits and rules
12–18 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand finality, irreversibility, nonfunctionality of death • Their actions or words caused the death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sad • Confused • Anxious • Withdrawn • Lonely • Guilty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibit aggressive or impulsive behavior • Engage in risky or dangerous behavior • Decline in grades • Difficulty concentrating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek community and school support • Maintain structure, limits and rules • Encourage physical or artistic expression of grief