

## Children's Reaction to Grief by Age

It is important to understand that children cope and grieve in different ways. Not only will each individual child handle their emotions in a different way, but they will also respond differently based on their age.

<p><b>Possible reactions for infants, toddlers, and twos:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unsettled</li> <li>• Fussy and cranky</li> <li>• Clingy</li> <li>• Change in sleeping and eating habits</li> <li>• Tantrums, saying "no" more often</li> <li>• Thumb-sucking, baby talk, or regression in toilet training</li> </ul>	<p><b>Responses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain routines</li> <li>• Increase physical contact including holding and hugging</li> <li>• Practice mindfulness activities and calming with children</li> <li>• Incorporate more family play time</li> </ul>
<p><b>Possible reactions for children ages 3-5 years:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fear of the dark, monsters, or strangers</li> <li>• Trouble sleeping, including nightmares</li> <li>• Regression in toilet training</li> <li>• Fear of separation from caregivers</li> <li>• Aggressive behaviors such as hitting or biting</li> <li>• Repeated questions, searching for reassurance</li> </ul>	<p><b>Responses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reassure children that they are safe</li> <li>• Talk about the virus and the child's feelings</li> <li>• Maintain daily routines</li> <li>• Increase movement activities throughout the day</li> <li>• Read stories to increase their understanding</li> <li>• Spend one-on-one time and practice mindfulness activities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Possible reactions for children ages 6 and up:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Irritable, sad, crying, or anxiety</li> <li>• Physical symptoms such as headaches or stomach-aches</li> <li>• Worrying about the health of their loved ones</li> <li>• Difficulty concentrating or focusing</li> <li>• Withdrawal from regular enjoyable activities</li> </ul>	<p><b>Responses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give children an outlet such as art or sports</li> <li>• Provide reassurance and consistency</li> <li>• Give children responsibilities around the house</li> <li>• Use honest and open communication about feelings</li> </ul>