

How can I help at home?

Top strategies for helping if your child has been bereaved and building resilience.

Supporting Children who are Bereaved



Resilience is the ability to adapt to difficult or stressful events in our lives.

The strongest oak of the forest is not the one that is protected from the storm and hidden from the sun. It's the one that stands in the open where it is compelled to struggle for its existence against the winds and rains and the scorching sun.

Napoleon Hill (1883-1970)

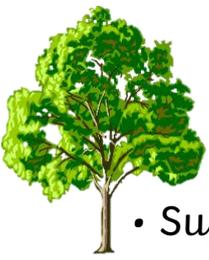
We often talk about children being resilient and somehow believe they bounce back more readily than adults just because they are children. But a child's resilience has a lot to do with their self esteem – how they feel about themselves, what they know they have and can rely on, and what they can do well.



Building resilience is especially important for bereaved children. Nothing can take away the sadness when someone important to them dies, but we can support them to feel good about themselves and help them to find ways to manage the worries and uncertainties that come with this huge change in their life.

Important things that will help build resilience are:

- Reassuring children that they are loveable, and are loved.
- Reassuring them about who will care for them, and that there are people they can rely on.
- Understanding their vulnerabilities and, when apart from them, letting them know where you are and when you'll be back etc.
- Letting them know who is there for them when they want to talk, have a cuddle etc.
- Keeping as far as possible to familiar routines, which increases a child's feelings of security and maintains a sense of continuity.
- Encouraging children to express their thoughts and feelings, and helping them to know that whatever they feel is OK.
- Helping them find ways to manage difficult feelings and worries.
- Being able to trust in the adults around them, through honest and age-appropriate responses to their questions.
- Asking them what they think and listening to their point of view about things that affect them.
- Involving them appropriately in decision making, which can help them feel more in control.



- Supporting children by letting school know how they might be and asking them what they might need - and identifying who they can talk to or be with there when they find things difficult.
- Understanding that they may react differently to things they would usually take in their stride, like falling out with a friend – any change is likely to be more of a challenge for a bereaved child who is facing lots of change in their life.
- Encouraging them to do things they like that are helpful and recognising the contributions they make, without expecting them to take on adult responsibilities.
- Showing them that you believe in them and what they can do.
- Acknowledging when they have managed things that are difficult for them.
- Giving praise for things they do or are good at – every child is good at something.
- Telling them why they are special to you.
- Keeping your expectations of them realistic, and not being afraid to let them know that usual boundaries are still in place.
- Recognising that adolescents may talk more to their friends than to their family, but this is an important source of support for them.
- Understanding that it's important that everything isn't overshadowed by the loss in their life – it's OK for them still to be children, to laugh, play and have fun.
- Encouraging appropriate independence in the knowledge that you are there to hold their hand when they need it.
- Helping them have hope for the future.



And remember:



You are a role model for the children in your care so show them you value yourself by making time for you and not having too high expectations of yourself really matters.

It can be immensely difficult to try to meet all your children's needs when you are also grieving. Be kind to yourself and don't try to be a 'superparent'.

The following websites can also offer additional support:

<https://www.winstonswish.org/supporting-you/supporting-a-bereaved-child/>

www.childbereavementuk.org

NHS - Grief after bereavement or loss

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/coping-with-bereavement/>

NHS - Bereavement and young people

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/bereavement-and-young-people/>

Coventry Educational Psychology Service (EPS) can offer support to parents to manage bereavement and loss within their community.

There are various guides available to help you talk to young people and support them to understand the bereavement.

For more information visit www.coventry.gov.uk/edpsych

Further information can be found at childbereavementuk.org or by contacting Child Bereavement UK's Helpline on: 0800 02 888 40 or Live Chat on the website, available 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.



Live chat 9am-5pm, M-F



Telephone support and drop ins can be organised in partnership with your school. Please phone 024 7678 8400 or email EducationalPsychologyService@coventry.gov.uk

Winston's Wish is a childhood bereavement charity in the UK. The charity offers a wide range of practical support and guidance to bereaved children, their families and professionals

<https://www.winstonswish.org/>

Guy's Gift delivers bereavement support for children, young people and their families throughout Coventry and Warwickshire.

<https://www.guysgift.co.uk/>

Managing a Sudden Death

www.childbereavementuk.org/managing-a-sudden-death

Barnardos - <https://www.barnardos.org.uk/>

Childhood Bereavement Network-

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/>

Childline - <https://www.childline.org.uk/>

Cruse Bereavement Care - <https://www.cruse.org.uk/>

Lifeline 24hr support helpline - 0808 808 8000

Samaritans - <https://www.samaritans.org/>

These texts can also help to explain death to children:

Granpa - John Burningham

When Dinosaurs Die - L & M Brown

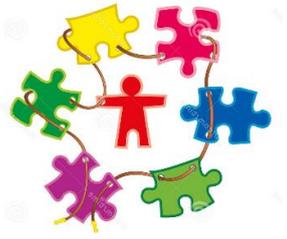
Missing Mummy - Rebecca Cole

The Heart and the Bottle - Oliver Jeffers

If all the World Were... - Joseph Coelho and Allison Colpoys



Sad Book – Michael Rosen



Badger's Parting Gifts – Susan Varley

Let's Talk about When Someone Dies – Molly Potter

Always and Forever – Alan Durant

Liplap's Wish – Jonathan London And Sylvia Long

The Memory Tree – Britta Teckentrup

I Miss You: A First Look at Death - Pat Thomas

Goodbye Mousie - Robie H Harris

The Lonely Tree - Nicholas Halliday

We have many of these available for use in school that you can borrow.

Also see the [Elephant's Tea Party](#) resource on the Child Bereavement UK's website to access a workbook to support children to come to terms with loss and bereavement.

