

QUICK REMINDERS WHEN TALKING WITH KIDS ABOUT DEATH



- ◆ Listen carefully to what has been asked. Answer what has been asked
- ◆ Use age appropriate language
- ◆ Use clear, concise, accurate language (do not use clichés, euphemisms)
- ◆ Start with small steps. Evaluate response. Add more information as needed

- ◆ Look directly at child, but do not stare. Be on the same physical level with no barriers between you (i.e. desk)
- ◆ Offer appropriate support (tissue, hand on shoulder, etc)
- ◆ Speak slowly with plenty of pauses to be sure information is being received (remember the child may be “frozen” or in shock)
- ◆ Follow information with a tentative plan of action
- ◆ Do not overload with unnecessary information
- ◆ Help children identify their feelings and find appropriate ways to express them
- ◆ Stay tuned into the emotional responses rather than the intellectual rhetoric
- ◆ Remember that grief lasts far longer than anyone expects it to
- ◆ Treat trauma first. Remain available for prolonged or delayed grief reactions
- ◆ Help child find good memories to balance the difficult ones
- ◆ Continue to be available for long term support
- ◆ Give information concerning the grief process to lessen feelings of panic and abnormality
- ◆ Be patient
- ◆ Be There!