



## General Guidelines for Helping Children Cope with Death

*A. Jann Davis, R.N., M.A.*

### Do

1. Know your own beliefs.
2. Begin where the child is.
3. Be there. Be physically present.
4. Confront reality.
5. Allow and encourage expression of feelings.
6. Be truthful.
7. Include the child in family rituals.
8. Encourage remembrance.
9. Admit when you don't know the answer.
10. Use touch to communicate.
11. Start death education early, using naturally occurring events.
12. Recognize grief responses and acknowledge their grief.
13. Accept differing reactions to death.

### Don't

1. Praise stoicism.
2. Use euphemisms. (“passed away”)
3. Be nonchalant.
4. Glamorize death.
5. Tell fairy tales and half-truths.
6. Close the door to questions.
7. Be judgmental of feelings and behaviors.
8. Protect the child from exposure to experiences with death.
9. Encourage forgetting the deceased.
10. Encourage the child to be like the deceased.
11. Be dishonest about the death. If a child is old enough to ask a question, they are old enough to hear the answer.