

Children and Grief

Newborns
to Age 2




A Guide to Easing Your Child Through Loss

Facing grief can be a challenge at any age. Mercy wants to provide support, and it's our hope that this information about age-appropriate grief response will be helpful to caregivers.

Mercy  **Kids**

Every child. Every need. Every day.



When your baby or toddler is experiencing loss, your response and support are vital. Children at this age don't understand death, but they may be aware that something is different. Babies and toddlers may notice the emotions of others.

How babies and toddlers show their grief.

- Signs of irritability, including:
 - more frequent crying
 - weight loss
 - disrupted eating or sleeping patterns
 - changes in bowel and bladder habits
 - decreased activity
- Looking for the person who died
- Wanting to be held more often, being clingy
- Being jumpy or anxious

How to help.

When a very young child is experiencing the confusion of loss, you can help him or her through it by staying calm and offering constant comfort.

- Keep your child's routines as close to normal as possible
- Be verbally and physically affectionate and reassuring
- Speak calmly and be gentle
- Make sure a warm and loving — and consistent — caretaker is with your child when a parent or guardian can't be
- Provide familiar, comforting items to your child, such as a favorite stuffed animal, special toy, blanket or pacifier

With time and patience, you can ease your child through the pain and confusion of loss.

