

Grief and Loss



Small Steps

Supporting bereaved young children in pre-school settings

Contents

1. Introduction
2. How can my setting be prepared?
3. What has death got to do with young children?
4. What can I do just after a bereavement?
5. How do I tell young children someone has died?
6. How do I talk with a bereaved young child?
7. How do I talk with the bereaved family?
8. How does a bereaved young child feel?
9. How do young children respond to a bereavement?
10. How do I support a child bereaved in complicated circumstances?
11. How do I support a child with additional needs?
12. What about children with different beliefs?
13. What activities can I do with a bereaved child?
14. How can I help a child on a difficult day?
15. What about when a family is anticipating loss?
16. What can I do if I'm still worried?
17. How can I look after myself?

Appendices

Appendix 1. Sample policy

Appendix 2. Sample letters

- a) When a child has died
- b) When a staff member has died
- c) When having a special time to remember someone who has died

Appendix 3

- a) Booklist
- b) Useful Contacts

Introduction

Small Steps are just about all a young child who is grieving may be able to take. When a death occurs no amount of mending can put a young child's world back together as it was before, no pretending can make it 'unhappen' and no magic wand can make this sad event disappear. The adults caring for the child may well feel overwhelmed by their own emotions and struggle to know how to support the child.

Small Steps is a support guide for Pre-school settings to help a child with their first steps in their grieving journey. This journey may well take a young child many, many years but having started it and been carefully supported it will hopefully be a few steps shorter for them.

This document forms part of a more extensive suite of advice and guidance available, through The Education People and on Kelsi, to schools and other colleagues from Kent Education Psychological Service. Some of the footnote references relate to the full Small Steps package available through The Education People.

With thanks to:

Beck Ferrari
Child Bereavement Specialist Teacher
(SEND)

Zenia Ford
County Strategic Lead for Early Years

2. How can my setting be prepared?

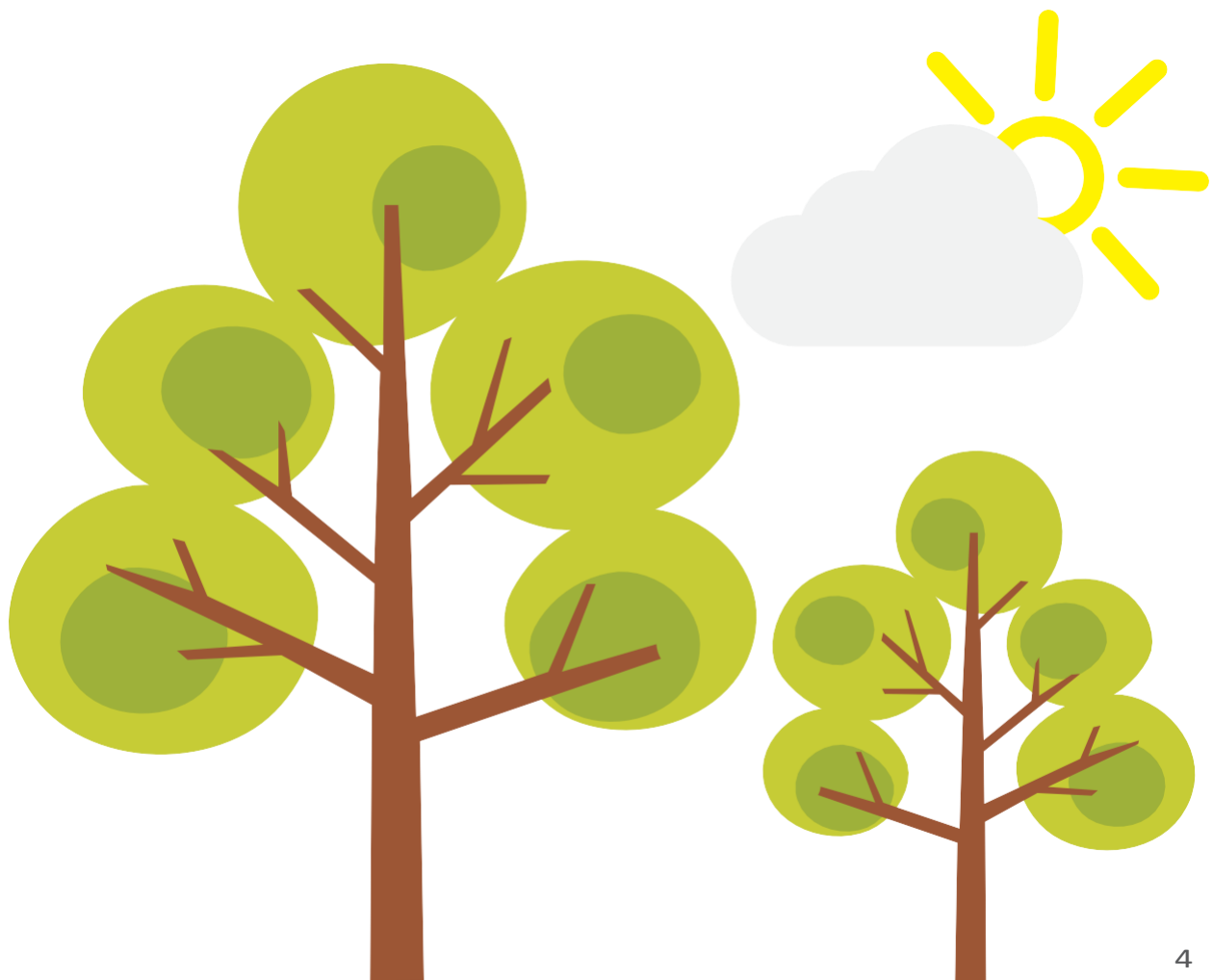
No person or setting can fully prepare themselves for the news that someone has died but there are things which might help:

- Identify one or more staff members as bereavement contacts and ensure they receive training in understanding the needs of bereaved young children.
- Have a Bereavement Policy in place (See Appendix 1)
- Have a staff meeting to talk about your policy and how as a setting you would respond to bereavement.
- Use training resources such as Not Too Young To Grieve DVD and download the free training pack to support the DVD (available from www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk)
- Look for opportunities in the Early Years Foundation Stage to talk about life and death- don't wait for something sad to happen.
- Use chance opportunities e.g. finding a dead bird in your outside play area, to talk about when things die.
- Share storybooks with all children (See Appendix 3a)
- Encourage children to share their 'news' whether good or bad. Allow children to talk about when they lose something (a favourite teddy) and how it feels, when their pet dies or when someone they know dies.
- If you are a Kent pre-school and a death occurs at your setting when the children are present, you can receive advice and support from the Kent Education Psychology Service on 03000 410100 (educational.psychology@kent.gov.uk)
- Keep records of any bereavements your children experience, with the key facts and important dates.
- Ensure that this information transfers with the child to their next setting or school.
- Have a bereavement resource box in your setting ready to be used. This box would include resources for some of the activities in 'What activities can I do with a bereaved child?' as well as the Useful Contact list with organisations and sources of support for the setting and the family (See Appendix 3b.)

3. What has death got to do with young children?

- Every 20 minutes in the UK a child aged 0-17 is bereaved of a parent (Average estimate in last three years 2019-2021).
- This equates to 127 newly bereaved children a day, over 46, 300 children every year.
- Many more children are bereaved of a grandparent, sibling, teacher, or friend.
- Children's understanding of death and grief varies with experience and their stage of development; this often causes their needs to go unrecognised and remain unmet.
- Without the right support bereaved children are at risk of health, social, emotional and educational difficulties. Research highlights some of the key issues for bereaved children and indicates that they are over represented in all areas of vulnerability.
- Bereaved children need; information and education, reassurance and communication to understand & express their grief and most importantly opportunities to remember.

¹Child Bereavement Network (part of the National Children's Bureau)



4. What can I do just after a bereavement?

When someone in the pre-school community dies you may be surprised by the strength of your own emotions and wonder if there is anything you can do. You can't make everything better, but you can find ways of supporting those grieving around you.

For the family

- Send a card- you don't need to include clichés or advice, often people find it more comforting to know your special thoughts and memories.
- Keep in touch with the adults so you can communicate about their child/ children.
- Find out what the child has been told, the language used and about any family beliefs.
- Find out their thoughts about the child attending the funeral. If the family are open to considering this, they could be encouraged to ask the child if they would like to go to a special service or meeting where everyone will say goodbye to the person who has died. There is no age that is too young to attend- even if the child is too young to remember going they may in later years appreciate that they were there. If the family are concerned about managing their own grief and trying to look after their child at the funeral they may want to ask someone else the child knows well to have responsibility for them during the service.
- If the child is attending the funeral you may be able to provide them with some information about what will happen.
- Attend the funeral-to show you care.

For the child

- Acknowledge their loss – 'I was so sad to hear that Daddy has died'- they may not want to talk about it right now but they need to know the communication doorway is open and it's ok to talk about it.
- Keep routines and expectations as normal as possible – but remember their life may not feel normal.
- Offer special time when needed and ensure the child knows who they can talk with - you, key person, everyone.
- Offer opportunities to do special activities whether on 1:1, in a small group or even as a whole setting. (See What activities can I do with a bereaved child?)

With the pre-school children

- Let parent/carers know you'll be talking with the group about the death of
- Use clear language to avoid misunderstandings.
- Expect questions and answer them as truthfully as you can- it's okay to say, "I don't know, I'll see if I can find out."
- Other children may be affected by bereavement whether or not they have experienced one directly before. They may need reassurance that the death of a child or young parent is rare and that most people recover from illnesses.
- Use stories to allow thinking and talking about their feelings.
- Offer opportunities to do special activities, memory tree to hang messages/ pictures on, let go of balloons, have a memory box for them to add things to.

5. How do I tell young children someone has died?

People often think that children do not grieve, but even very small children will want to know what happened, how it happened, why it happened and most importantly of all.....what happens next?

If you need to tell young children that someone has died, these guidelines may help:

- Identify the children who have formed close bonds with the person who has died and tell them as a separate group.
- Wherever possible inform children in as small a number as possible.
- In their eyes a child expects to live forever, so a child dying will feel very shocking. Adults too who are close to them aren't expected to die.
- Ensure your language is clear and unambiguous. Use clear language such as 'Yesterday, Jack was in an accident and he was hurt so badly that he died', and avoid phrases like "has gone to sleep" or "we have lost Jack."
- An example of the words to use when telling children about the death of an adult..... "I have got some really sad news to tell you today that might upset you. Sometimes people we love get poorly; sometimes they get poorly with something called cancer. Usually people with cancer get better but sometimes they don't and they die. Mrs. Smith, who is usually here at Nursery looking after you, has been poorly for a long time now and yesterday, she died in hospital".
- An example of words to use when telling children about the death of a child..... "I have got some really sad news to tell you today and it might upset you. Sometimes people have accidents at work, at home or even at Pre-school. People may get hurt and then they may have to go to hospital to get better. Sometimes the hospital can't make them better and they die. Yesterday, Jack was in an accident and he was hurt so badly that he died".
- Young children may well have difficulty understanding the concept of death and you may need to give further explanations e.g. "when someone dies they can't come back to life again" or "when someone dies their heart stops beating, they stop breathing and thinking and feeling."
- Children are often curious about death and dead bodies and may ask questions that make us feel uncomfortable. Whilst our answers need to be truthful we needn't give lots of unnecessary details to a young child. If they ask what happens to the person..... "the person cannot feel anything and will be buried in a coffin (wooden box) in the ground" or "the person will be turned into ashes and buried in the ground" may be enough information.
- Be aware that to talk about the dead 'body' can be misleading for young children who then worry where the head is.
- Children may ask questions about an afterlife – your answers will be given having sought information from the grieving family about their beliefs. If the family has chosen to introduce the idea of heaven be aware that concepts like heaven, whilst providing a sense of comfort are a further difficult concept for a young child to grasp.
- Your role may be to provide the child with a little more information. You may use words like "some people believe that the dead person goes to heaven. This is a special place just for people who have died. It is not like going on holiday and you can't come back from heaven." Or "some people look at the stars and believe that the dead person is now a star shining down on every one at night." If a child asks you what heaven is like it is perfectly appropriate to say "I don't know... what do you think it is like?"
- Allow a child time to talk about their own experiences of death, "my Granny died..."
- Be honest about your own feelings and experiences and talk honestly about the relationship that you had with the person.

For more information:

- Someone Very Important Has Just Died Mary Turner Chapter 5 'Words you could use'
- Use children's books- both information and stories (See Appendix 3a Booklist)
- Telephone Child Bereavement UK 0800 02 888 40 or Winston's Wish 08088 020 021 for advice for parent/carers or professionals or access their websites for useful information

6. How do I talk with a bereaved young child?

“My Mum died and my life changed forever, it was the biggest thing that ever happened to me. My teacher never mentioned it”

Most bereaved children will at some point be very glad to talk about what has happened and will appreciate that an adult cares enough about them to ask about them and their feelings.

Here are some simple tips for speaking with children about death;

- **Be honest.** It is not an easy subject for anyone. If you are too upset do not be afraid to admit it. Model the fact that difficult feelings are ok and completely normal.
- **Use clear language.** Trying to avoid the word death by using phrases such as “your loss” and “gone to a better place” can confuse small children. A young child who hears that her Daddy is lost will want to know why no one is looking for him. Simply use language that is real and clear...“I am really sorry to hear that your Daddy died last week. Do you want to tell me about him?” Asking ‘How are you?’ often prompts little answer beyond, ‘Fine,’ or ‘Okay,’ however asking, ‘How are your feelings today?’ might encourage a more reflective level of conversation.
- **Expect questions,** but don’t feel pressured to provide immediate answers. Death often throws up questions for us all. Some may seem straight forward and obvious under the circumstances and some you may not feel you can answer. This is okay.
- **Recognise that every death and every reaction to it is unique.** The way a child reacts to a death is dependent on their relationship with the person that died, the time of death in that child’s development, the nature of the death, the child’s understanding of death, their support network and many other factors.

7. How do I talk with the bereaved family?

Although the grief of adults may well be more obvious than that of their young children, we may feel uncomfortable mentioning it if they don't. A common reaction is for adults to entirely avoid the subject for fear of seeing the bereaved person cry.

However, most bereaved families will want to have their grief acknowledged and to know that you genuinely care. It can be hard to know the right words to say- there are no 'right' words it is often enough just to listen. Many families have said that they'd rather not hear clichés such as "time's a great healer" but would appreciate hearing your memories of the person who has died if you knew them. If they cry, it is their sadness that makes them cry- not you.

It may be helpful just to say that you were sad to hear about the death of ... and that you'd like to have a chat with them about supporting their child at pre-school at some point. They may not feel up to such a discussion at that moment but will hopefully be able to before too long.

The discussion might include:

- Finding out what the child has been told about the death and the language used.
- What the child knows about what happens next re funerals, burial, cremation.
- What the family beliefs are about death including any concept of heaven or afterlife that has been introduced
- How the child is managing their grief at home (open, private, tearful, not mentioned it)
- How they are managing- they may wish to know about other sources of support (See Appendix 3b Useful Contacts)

Families may worry that they are being judged and may just need reassurance that grief is a very personal experience and their feelings are normal.

Keep in close contact - the family may have lots of ups and downs and will be reassured that you are still interested long after others appear to have forgotten. The most helpful thing for the young child will be to have supportive adults around them- both at home and at pre-school.

For More Information

- CRUSE Bereavement Care details can be found in Appendix 3b Useful Contacts

8. How does a bereaved young child feel?

We don't know exactly how a young child feels but we often see them displaying a range of emotions. A grieving child's feelings are similar to an adult's; they just don't have the language to tell us about their feelings or the strategies to manage them.

Young children we have worked with have told or shown us that they sometimes feel:

Sad	Worried	Angry	Shocked	Confused	Guilty
Bad	Alone	Frightened	Different	Cross	Upset

Many bereaved young children may continue to behave and appear exactly as before at their setting and we may question whether they are grieving at all. We need to be aware that:

- The child may be separating home from pre-school and therefore separating their feelings.
- The child may be containing their emotions until they get home where they will spill out as the absence of their special person is much more apparent e.g. at bedtime.
- Just because the child appears okay, even happy, doesn't mean that we shouldn't mention their grief and give them opportunities to let their feelings out.

Other children display their feelings more openly and we can feel worried that the child is struggling to manage and presenting more challenging behaviour. We need to be aware that:

- These emotions are normal but can be overwhelming and unfamiliar to a young child.
- Although such a child needs lots of time, attention and care they will also continue to need boundaries in place to help them feel safe.
- They may dip in and out of their feelings, one minute playing and laughing, the next losing their temper or crying. Young children are unable to tolerate a high level of emotional pain for long so will put their grief down for periods of time to get on and play.

Some children experience secondary losses following a death and have to cope with lots of additional change such as:

- Moving to a new home
- Moving to a new setting or school
- Having new carers
- A parent meeting a new partner

It can be these secondary changes that the child openly finds difficult having managed their initial feelings of grief more privately.

For how long will children feel like this?

Grieving doesn't have a set pattern or time scale. The loss of someone important for any child will impact on them for the rest of their life. A young child may never 'get over it' but with support will begin to adjust to life without that person.

For More Information

- Grief Encounter Workbook Shelley Gilbert <https://www.griefencounter.org.uk/get-support/grief-book/>
- See: Upward Spiral of Grief
- See: What to do if you're still worried?
- See: Activities to support a child to express their feelings

9. How do young children respond to a bereavement?

Although all children grieve differently and at different paces there can be some common responses at particular ages.

Below are some indicators of how young children may respond at their different ages, however children develop at different rates and some may respond above or below their chronological ages.

0 – 2 years

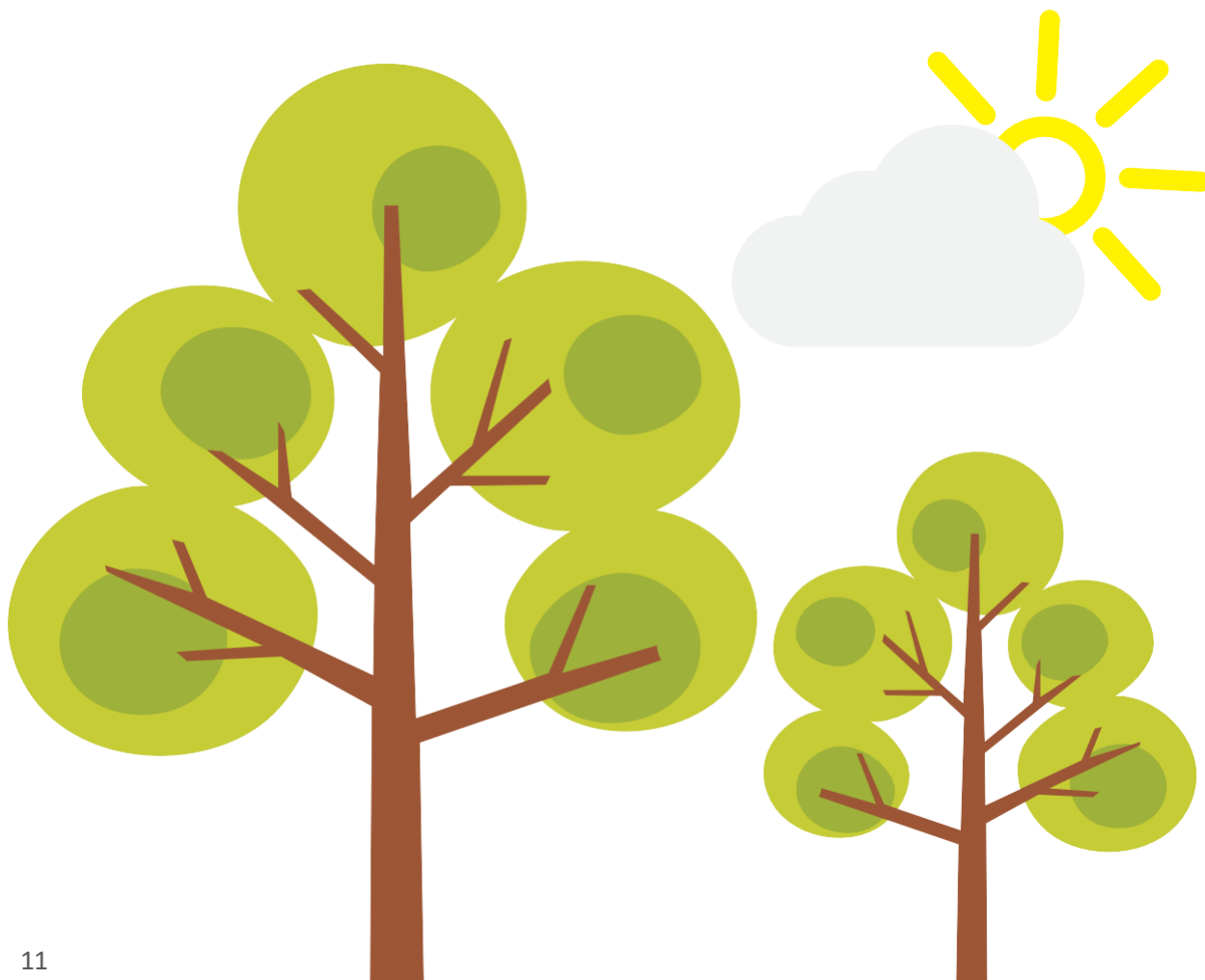
- Babies and infants will have no real idea about the concept of death so their responses will centre around the loss of a significant attachment, particularly if it is the main caregiver who has died.
- By around 18 months they may observe a dead insect and begin to use words such as 'dead' or 'gone' but will have no understanding about the finality or feelings about these words.
- They may well pick up on the emotions of those grieving around them and are likely to be unsettled for some time- sleep, eating and interacting may be affected.
- They will benefit from as much physical contact, continuity and stability of routine from those caring for them as possible.

3- 5 years

- Young pre-school children will know about the absence of a significant person but are likely to have little understanding of the finality of death and will need repeated explanations that the dead person cannot return.
- They will need death explained using clear unambiguous language in order to prevent misunderstanding and fear about euphemisms 'lost' or 'gone to sleep.'
- At this age (and into school age) they can be prone to 'magical thinking' where they think they are responsible for what happened because of something they said or did and equally that they could magic the dead person back.
- They may well have separation difficulties from the remaining caregivers and will need lots of reassurance. They may also worry about any illnesses they have and that they may die.
- Young children may express a range of emotions but have little vocabulary to describe how they are feeling.
- They may ask questions about death and may well play imaginary games about death as a way of making sense of what they are experiencing.
- They are likely to 'dip in and out' of their grief and in between bouts of sadness, play and behave as if nothing has happened as they find it difficult to tolerate emotional pain for long.
- They may regress in terms of behaviour and even temporarily lose some of their developmental skills such as feeding, toilet training and language.

5 – 8 years

- Children begin to understand that death is permanent and irreversible.
- They may ask questions again and again particularly about abstract concepts such as heaven- 'Can we go there?' 'Can daddy come home from heaven for my party?'
- Some children may have dreams or nightmares and need extra time and lots of reassurance.
- Children may continue to have moments of 'magical thinking' and a feeling that they or someone else is responsible for the person's death. They can make irrational links between events and may have feelings of guilt.
- They may have difficulties concentrating and will often retreat into play to escape the sadness of those around them.
- Children may have difficulty controlling their emotions and may cry excessively.
- They will continue to use the world of play to act out death and dying.



10. How do I support a child bereaved in complicated circumstances?

Death is complicated for all children and in every situation the circumstances may affect the child's grieving journey. However there are particular bereavements that may make you concerned about how to respond.

Death of a parent when there had been little or no contact following a divorce or separation:

- The child may find it additionally difficult to understand that the parent is dead and the finality of this when they didn't have much contact with the parent before.
- Feelings may be complicated if the relationship was not a loving one before.
- The surviving parent may find it difficult to discuss the death as the relationship had already broken down.
- The surviving parent may be surprised at the strength of their own emotions as a result of the death.
- There may be additional difficulties for this child in having few or no direct memories and feeling unable to discuss the dead parent at home.

Death of a Baby or Stillborn child

- When young children are expecting the birth of a new sibling the death of the baby can be a real shock and sadness to them. It can also present further difficulties for their understanding as birth is meant to mean new life not death.
- If the child was jealous about the new arrival they may even feel guilty that the baby died- (related to their magical thinking stage.)
- They are likely to be surrounded by grieving family members and may not know how to ask what has happened.
- People within the family or the community may not even mention that there was ever a baby or a pregnancy, making it difficult for the child to understand.
- It may be difficult for the child and the whole family to be surrounded by others with babies and young children for some time.

Death of a family member before the child was born:

- The death of a family member before a child was born does not mean they do not grieve, but rather that they grieve for the relationship they never had e.g. a father who dies when the mother is expecting their child.
- They may pick up on the surviving family members' grief and find it difficult to understand.
- The child may struggle because they have no direct memories of the person and may find it helpful to hear about what the person liked and enjoyed when they were alive.

Death of someone in the Armed Forces

- Families in the Armed forces may have already had to adjust to many changes and losses such as moving home / pre-school, sometimes with little notice.
- Young children may be used to not seeing their family member if they are serving abroad so have increased difficulty understanding that the death of this person is permanent.
- There is less opportunity for the family to visit the place of death if this is abroad which for young children can be part of them understanding what has happened.
- The death of someone in the Armed Forces also brings challenges of being in the media spotlight and having the details of their loved ones death in every news bulletin, sometimes with graphic images.
- There may be additional protocol to be observed, the return of the body, their funeral etc. For some families this will provide them with much needed support and structure. Other families may struggle with others being “in control” of what is happening to their family member.
- The grieving family may have strong networks of support from other forces families, but may find it hard when everyone else’s loved ones return home at the end of their tour of duty.
- If the pre-school has several forces families on roll, the ripple effect of this bereavement may be felt particularly strongly, as others’ fears are re-ignited.

Death from murder or non – accidental injury

- When something as traumatic as this happens in a young child’s family, people understandably feel very concerned about the child coping with the truth. Sharing in an age appropriate way becomes vital so answering their questions but not necessarily giving lots of details at this young age.
- If the child was not present then he or she may have questions about what happened that perhaps no-one can answer as an investigation is underway.
- If possible, the child can begin to understand by using simple language e.g. ‘Daddy died because someone hurt him very badly.’ More information can be added as the child grows up and asks for it.
- If the child witnessed the death then the child should access professional support from other agencies via the police family liaison officer.
- The family will probably have to cope with the additional pressure of police involvement and media attention and may find it difficult to manage with the lack of privacy whilst they are trying to grieve.
- There may be a long delay before the court hearing but when it comes the family will have to cope with the hearing the details of the death and having it again in the media spotlight.

Death by suicide

- Suicide remains perhaps the final taboo and sparks many responses from the community.
- As with murder, there can be additional difficulties in telling the child what has happened. If the truth is not provided from the outset it can be hard to keep this secret if the news is widely known in the community.
- It may be helpful for the family to tell the child the circumstances in stages: initially that the person has died; then where it happened; moving towards explaining that the person 'made themselves die;' finally saying how the person died. These stages may take some time to complete and may need revisiting as the child grows up- again be led by the child's questions.
- Many children, even the young, feel somehow responsible for a death in the family and this is more so when the person has died in this way.
- Children can feel very angry that their family member didn't want to stay alive to look after them.
- Children may need reassurance that they are loved and they are not responsible for the death.

Death by alcohol, drug or substance abuse

- Telling the child can be complicated as these are not subjects that we want to discuss with young children.
- As with murder and suicide, death by alcohol, drug or substance abuse can often prompt attention from the media and mean that the details of the death are very much in the public domain.
- Once again, for a child not knowing the truth, they can only imagine what happened and may fill in these gaps of knowledge for themselves.
- They may well have an understanding from seeing drug abuse or hearing conversations about it but will need the basic information to be confirmed so they are not left merely imagining.

For More Information

- See: Appendix 3b Useful Contacts for information and sources of support for many specific types of bereavements
- We were going to have a baby but we had an Angel instead – book by Pat Shwiebert explores the feelings of a child whose sibling died stillborn or miscarried. See: Appendix 3 b Booklist
- Beyond the Rough Rock published by Winston's Wish includes a helpful section on explaining suicide to children
- See: Appendix 3a Booklist for additional titles specific to murder or suicide

11. How do I support a child with additional needs?

Children may present with a wide range of difficulties and special needs and provide us with additional challenges in supporting them in their grief.

Cognitive needs:

- For a young child whose learning skills are delayed it may be hard to ascertain how much they understand. Although they may not fully understand the complex concept of death they will be aware of changes and may well make emotional responses to the bereavement.
- Use clear language and be prepared to repeat what has happened regularly and answer their questions. You may need to give the child very concrete examples of death with a bunch of flowers left to die or even a dead fish from the supermarket compared to a live one in a fish tank.
- Do not assume that because they cannot talk about the loss they do not feel it.
- Offer the child frequent opportunities to remember the person who has died to help them retain a sense of that person and their relationship with them.

Social communication needs:

- A child with social communication difficulties may respond in a less 'typical' way and leave adults wondering if they have understood the implications of what has happened.
- They may say inappropriate things- 'Can we get a new mummy then?' or be very focused or anxious about the inevitable changes to routine.
- Discuss with the family ways in which you have successfully helped the child to understand about changes in the past and suggest they try to use similar strategies again e.g. pictures / story boards/ photos.
- The child may also need additional support in understanding their own feelings and those of others around them.

Behaviour needs:

- A death in the family is such a huge event that many children find it hard to manage their feelings so may need additional support.
- It can be hard for settings and families to retain the same boundaries and expectations of behaviour when a child has been bereaved. However, although they may need extra support, boundaries provide children with security and a feeling that some things are still the same. It may be harder to try to reinstate expectations of behaviour many months down the line.
- For a child who was already presenting with difficult behaviour prior to the bereavement it is likely that their behaviour may deteriorate further.
- Look at using systems of support that the child has responded well to in the past and try to offer 'safe' ways of letting out anger rather than telling the child not to be angry.

For More Information

- See: What activities can I do with a bereaved child?
- See: What can I do if I'm still worried?

12. What about children or families with different beliefs?

As professionals we strive to respect the beliefs of all the children we work with and their families. It can be easy to make assumptions about how people grieve; too little, too much, for too long or not long enough.

Every family and every person will have their own way of grieving impacted on by the beliefs they hold. Kent has families from every major world faith, and although there are customs associated with each faith, families may follow and interpret them very differently.

The most important thing to remember is to ask the family, as individuality is key.

You may want to find out whether it is appropriate to visit the home and whether there are customs about clothing (certain colours- particularly red may be best avoided), covering your head and removing your shoes. These may also apply for the funeral ceremony.

E.g. for a Muslim family the funeral at the mosque may be attended by all the family, but men and women will usually enter and sit in separate areas. Women and children will probably not go to the burial.

Families from some faiths may be far more open in their grieving and caring for the dead body and may follow customs about periods of official mourning.

E.g. within the Sikh community the men will usually wash and prepare the male body themselves and the women wash and prepare a female body.

For many families flowers are accepted but check with the family first.

In the months that follow a death it is important to find out about official periods of mourning and the customs associated with their grieving.

E.g. in Romany traveller culture there can be strong beliefs about not mentioning the name of the dead person and not keeping the dead person's belongings for fear the person may return to haunt them. This would obviously have implications for a young child wanting to talk about the dead person and perhaps wanting to keep a personal memento.

For More Information

- www.acorns.org.uk a children's hospice charity with vast experience in supporting families from different religious backgrounds

13. What activities can I do to support a bereaved young child?

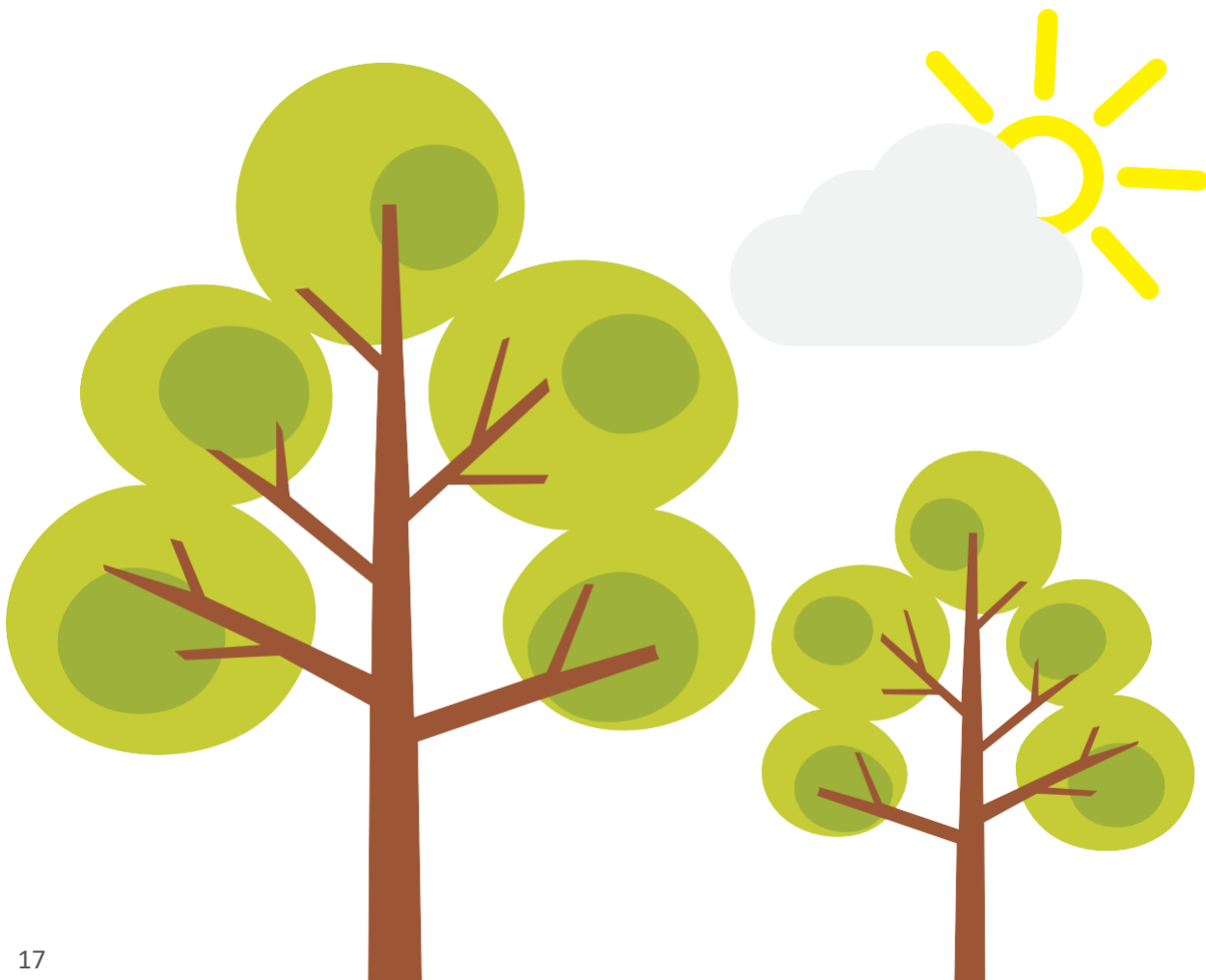
What to do?

Offer a range of activities that encourage the young child in your setting to express their grief. Activities would be optional for children to participate in. Some of them would be special to do in a 1:1 situation, but others are perfectly appropriate for a small group or even the whole setting.

The activities will focus around four key themes based on William Worden's Tasks of Grieving:

- Telling their story
- Expressing their feelings
- Holding on to memories
- Learning to cope and adjust to life without their special person

A storybook has been recommended for each section of activities- see Appendix 3a Booklist for further details.



Telling the story:

Young children need the opportunity to tell someone about what has happened in their own way, to help them make sense of and process this sad event.

Story book: Granpa by John Burningham

Photo frames

WHY? To focus the child on talking about their special person and to give them an opportunity to display a cherished photo.

HOW? Decorate foam frames and chat about the person in the photo- who is it? When was it taken? Where was it taken? Where would you like to put the frame at home?



Home corner to tell story

WHY? To give the child an opportunity to explore through play what they remember of life with their special person and perhaps what happened when their person died

HOW? Using questions, guide the child's play- if they don't respond then give a further question but don't push it if they're not ready.

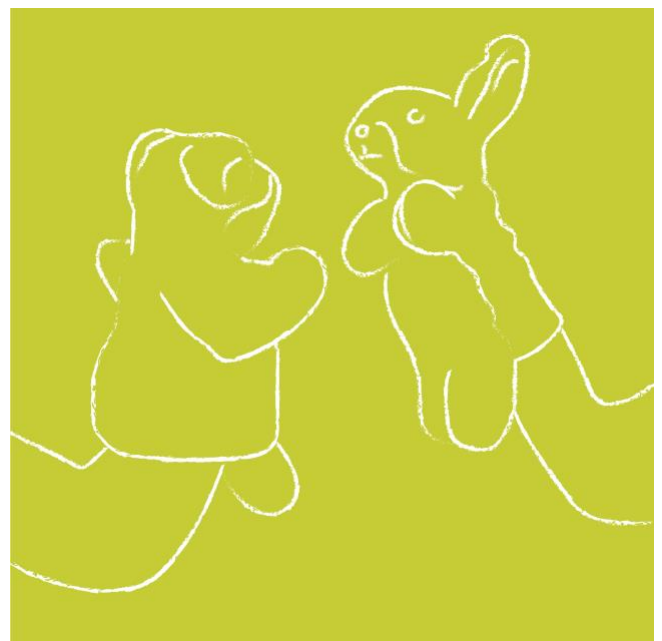
- Before: What was it like when ... was at home with you? What did you used to do together?
- At the time: Can you remember when died? Where were you? Who told you?
- Now: Show me what it's like at home now?

This kind of activity may also be done with a dolls house, small world toys such as playmobil or lego people or the child's preferred choice of toy.

Puppets to tell story

WHY? Some children find to easier to talk through play e.g. to a puppet

HOW? Using puppets, tell a story about someone who died- it could be an animal or character related to the puppet. Then the puppet can ask the child's puppet about their story.



Using bugs to explore what dead means

Why? Children need a good sense of what dead means if they are to understand what has happened to their special person

How? Show the child a small insect you have found (a caterpillar is ideal as they are easy to hold.) Present the bug in a pot with air holes in and with some leaves or things from its habitat to eat. You can watch the insect move around, eat and maybe even hold it. You can have a discussion about the insect e.g. why there are air holes- because it needs to breathe; why it has food- because all living things need good to eat; why we need to be gentle with it- because we don't want to hurt the bug; how it stays alive- it has a heart that beats. The child may want to feel their own heart beating in their chest.

Then show the child a dead bug in a pot with no air holes and no food. Nearly always the child will respond that it is dead without adult intervention. We can then introduce some ideas about what dead means in a concrete way: the bug can't move, its heart isn't beating, and it doesn't need air or food or somewhere to live. We can also explore the fact that we can't bring the bug back to life- not even if we wish, give it some medicine or are really good and tidy our bedrooms. Death is permanent.

Children may then want to explore what happens next- put the bug in a little box like a coffin, write a goodbye message from the bug's family etc. This might help us talk about the idea of a grave or headstone. Sometimes children want to talk about the dead insect's family and how they may be feeling.

Feelings:

Young children are likely to have a range of different feelings inside them but may not know what these feelings are called, much less be able to manage them. When talking to a child about their feelings start with happy or sad as most children can identify with these and then perhaps introduce other words.

Story book: No Matter What by Debi Gliori

Feelings biscuits

WHY? An easy (but tasty) way of exploring feelings.

HOW? Ask the child to think of a feeling- good or not so good and decorate their biscuit using the icing tubes and sweet decorations. Feel free to make one yourself and tell the child what feeling you were thinking of and why.

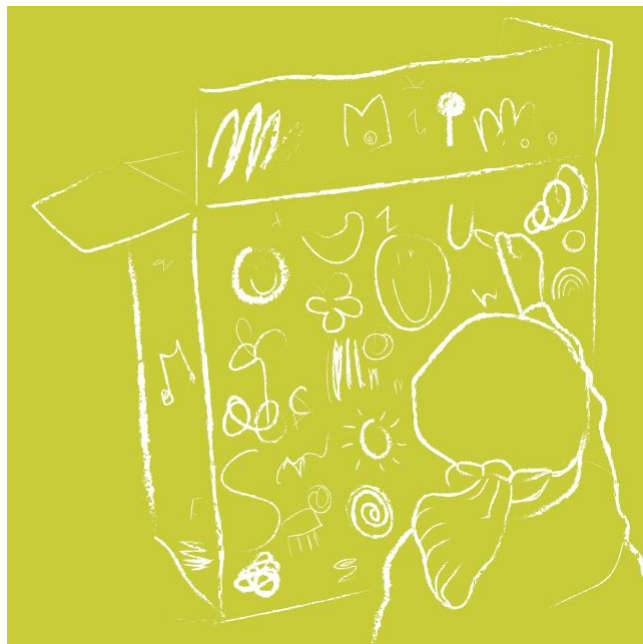


Mad and sad box

WHY? The next step on from thinking about happy and sad feelings is to allow children to express any angry feelings. Feeling angry and upset is a normal reaction to missing someone special but often children don't recognise their anger is related to their grief.

HOW?

- As a group decorate the box with any coloured scraps, big crayons, marker pens
- Ask the child what makes them upset or cross or angry- use the words they are most likely to understand.
- Use a piece of paper to record their ideas- encourage them to draw or write with your support.
- Get them to show their anger on the paper by screwing it up, stamping on it etc. and then getting rid of it by putting it in the box.



Water Balloons

WHY? To give children a safe way to express their feelings of anger and sadness that may sometimes overwhelm them.

HOW? Fill balloons with water and let the children, take them outside to throw and stamp on them when they are angry – rather than hurting themselves or others around them.

Wooden Spoon Feelings Faces

WHY? To give children a way of showing you how they are feeling.

HOW? Using a wooden spoon and collage materials ask the child to decorate each side to show a feelings face, perhaps happy and sad. Keep the spoon somewhere accessible and encourage the child to show you the face they are feeling each day. This resource can be good for children who are reluctant to talk as it gives an ideal prompt to check up on how they are doing.



Feelings Pebbles (An alternative to Wooden Spoon Feelings Faces)

WHY? To give children a way of showing you how they are feeling.

HOW? Use a child's palm sized, flat pebble and ask the child to paint / or felt pen a face on each side; one side to show showing a happy face and the reverse a sad or upset one. You may like to use a diluted PVA glue varnish on it for protection. As with the wooden spoon feelings faces use it to encourage the child to show you how they are feeling each day. Some families may like to use this at home- parent/carers too!

Angry Dragons

WHY? It is typical that many young children feel cross that their special person is no longer with them. Asking them not be cross is not usually helpful. Giving them a way to be cross that doesn't hurt anyone or get them into trouble can be more effective.

HOW? Use a paper cup, and make a small hole in the bottom. Add pom-poms and googly eyes; draw on nostrils and a zig zag mouth. Glue on tissue paper flames from the large opening in the dragons mouth. Allow the child to blow hard through the small hole to make the dragon's fire flames move to show they're angry.



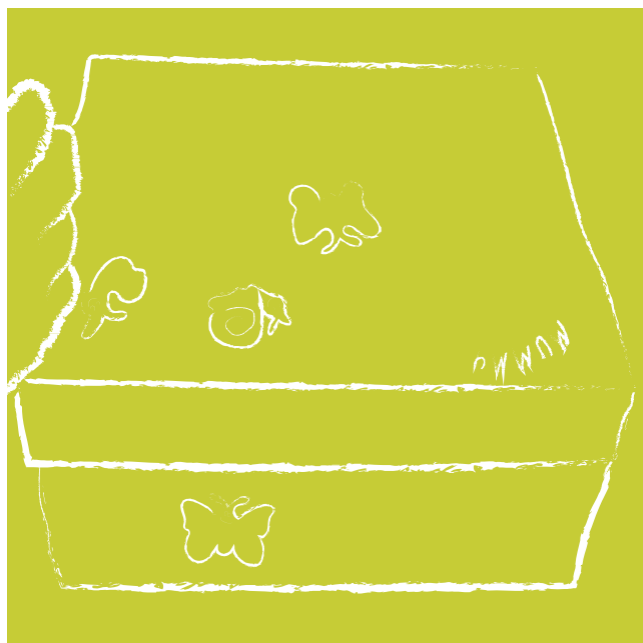
Memories:

Holding on to memories is especially important for young children who can find it hard to remember someone who died when they were so young.

Story book: Always and Forever by Alan Durrant

Memory Box

WHY? The memory box gives the opportunity for children to have a special, personal place to keep the things they make at pre-school as well as things they may already have at home. As well as giving children a place to keep the things that remind them of their special person, the memory box provides ongoing opportunities to talk about memories with the child.



HOW?

- Give the child free rein to paint their box and lid - inside and out with any colour/colours they wish.
- You may want to talk to them about colours their special person may have liked.
- When the box is dry the children will have the opportunity to decorate and personalise their box.
- Use craft materials- stickers and cut out pictures etc. to decorate and personalise their memory box. They may want to include things their special person liked.

Model memories

WHY? A further opportunity to hold on to memories by modelling, with play dough/ air drying clay things that remind them of special times.

HOW?

- Discuss a special time the child spent with their special person and make items with the air drying clay which remind them of that day.
- Children enjoy making little models of things their person liked e.g. a football or a guitar. Another idea is to invite them to model their special person's favourite meal and put it onto a paper plate.



Foam hearts

WHY? A fun decorative heart with both their and their special person's names on.

HOW?

- Use foam sheet heart shapes and give the child free rein to decorate their heart- perhaps include letters for their own and their special person's name.
- Add ribbon to hang up – possibly as a door

Memory Jar

WHY? Some children can recall lots of memories of times spent with their special person- others have more difficulty remembering as time goes by, so it is important for the people around them to help remind them of memories and embed them in their mind. The memory jar provides the opportunity to talk about memories and have a jar of colours to remind them of special times.

HOW?

- After discussing memories of special times and things they remember about their special person, help them to think of a colour to represent each memory.
- Record the colours and the memory they represent on a memory jar label.
- Take a jar and fill to the brim with salt
- Use a paper plate for each colour chosen
- Pour some salt onto each plate emptying the jar completely.
- Using coloured chalk rub onto the salt until the salt has changed colour to the desired shade.
- Pour the coloured salt into the jar; you can create different effects by tilting the jar.
- Tap the jar to allow the salt to settle and fill right to the brim.
- Cut and place a cotton wool pad on the top before replacing the lid.
- Tie the label around the neck of the jar.



Coping and adjusting to life:

There is no magic wand to take away the pain of grief, but with support, children can learn to cope and adjust to life without their special person.

Story book: Silly Billy by Anthony Browne

Friendship bands

WHY? To help children identify the people who are there for them.

HOW?

- Help children think about who is there to support and comfort them- family members, their young friends, other adults in their life. You could ask them who they can talk to, hug, laugh with and cry with.
- Select elastic thread and beads to remind them of the people they have identified. Alphabet beads allow children to select initials or letters.
- Thread beads on to elastic and knot to form a wrist band.



Handprints

WHY? When a special person has died a child can be anxious that others in their life are going to 'leave' them and may have difficulty separating from their parent/carer. The handprints provide a reminder that the remaining parent/carer is there to care and support them.

HOW?

- Ask the parent/ carer to stay for this activity.
- Get the parent/carer and the child to make a painted handprint of their hands touching on a piece of paper.
- When the paint is dry, laminate the handprints for the child to keep somewhere safe.
- If you're feeling ambitious you can use plaster of Paris or air drying clay to make 3D moulds of their handprints!

Special dates booklets

WHY? Although young children may have no real awareness at present of the special dates related to their important person, they may well want to be involved in occasions of remembering. As they grow up they may appreciate having their own record of these dates to refer to in their memory box.

HOW?

- Use a paper booklet with a calendar in and a blank section to record what the dates signify.
- You will need to ask the parent/carer to supply the special dates that are important to their family
- The child can be involved in decorating and personalising their booklet.

Worry Dolls

WHY? Fears and anxieties are common for many young children when they are grieving. Although we cannot take their fears away, it can help to tell someone and have their fears acknowledged and be given some reassurance.

Worry dolls originate from Guatemala. They are tiny handmade dolls crafted from small bits of wood and scraps of cloth and thread and are available from local shops as well as online.

HOW?

- Use the box of worry dolls to ask the child if there are things that frighten or worry them.
- Where possible offer reassurance that their worries are normal.
- Then put each worry doll away in the box to look after that worry.
- You can make larger worry people with the child using dolly pegs or wooden people shapes and collage materials to decorate.



Feather comforts

WHY? To have a comfort to remind them of special times

HOW?

- Talk about special times that the child might remember.
- Choose a coloured feather for each special time.
- Put feathers in a drawstring bag.
- These can be carried around as a comfort.



Balloons

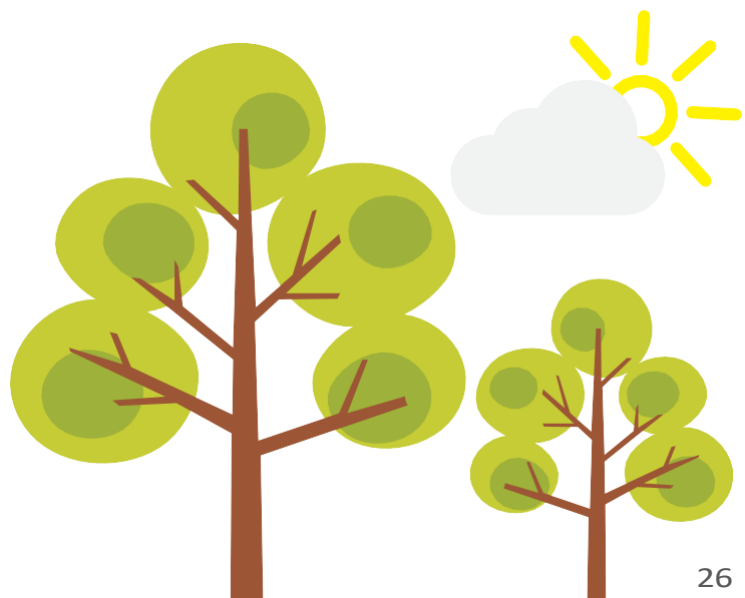
WHY? To give children the opportunity to think of something they would say if they had five more minutes with their special person.

HOW?

- Ask the child to tell you a special message for you to write on their label.
- Make a copy of their message on a separate label to keep in their memory box.
- Attach label to the ribbon of a helium filled balloon.
- Go outside to let go of their balloon.

With special thanks to:

- Slide Away, children's bereavement charity whose workshops for school aged children provided a framework for developing the activities for small steps groups.
- Winston's Wish, children's bereavement charity some of whose activities are included in this section.



14. How can I support a child on a difficult day?

There will be times of year and particular dates that may be difficult for a young child who is grieving. Days that are personal to the family e.g. the anniversary of the death or the person's birthday may not be known by a young child, but if they are aware they may want to do something to mark the date or remember the person. Some of the following ideas may be done with the child at Pre-school; others may be suggestions to give the family.

- Draw a picture or make a card to go in their memory box.
- Decorate a foam heart and keep it somewhere special.
- Let go of a balloon with a message or picture attached.
- Blow some bubbles.
- Take some flowers or a picture to the grave or where their ashes were scattered or buried.
- Visit somewhere they remember going with their special person- the park, the beach.
- Have their favourite person's meal for dinner that day or even go to their favourite restaurant.
- Wear something special- a bracelet from Mum or a t-shirt in Dad's favourite colour.
- Listen to their favourite music or song.

Dates celebrated by many e.g. Mother's Day, Father's Day or Christmas may be difficult because for the family it is a reminder of times when that person was there. Every trip to the High Street will be a constant reminder of the date that is approaching, with shop windows and displays dedicated to Mother's Day and every song on the radio about Christmas.

For a young child being bereaved can already make them feel very different to their peers. Rather than excluding them from activities at your setting, wherever possible give the child the choice of how they would like to participate and if they are not sure you could offer some suggestions:

- Make their Mother's (or Father's) day card or gift for their Mum.
- The child could choose to place the card in their memory box, or to laminate it and take it to the grave or tie it to a helium filled balloon and release it.
- Make their card for someone else who cares for them.
- It may be helpful to prepare the child's parent/ carer in advance about when you are card making and let them know what their child has chosen to do.

For More Information

- See: What activities can I do to support a bereaved young child?

15. What about when a family is anticipating a loss?

For a family who is anticipating the death of someone important in their life, perhaps the key question for the pre-school practitioner is: what does the child know?

Do they know the person is ill? Do they know of treatments already undergone? Do they know that the person will not get better? Do they know that the person will die?

If they know about the illness and treatment so far- what is the language the family have used? Medical jargon is difficult for children to understand and remember so simpler words may need to be used.

Young children are very good at giving the impression of having understood and only later is it found that they have quite the wrong idea.

The issue of anticipating the death of someone is additionally difficult for a young child to understand for it is full of uncertainty. Time scales of how long a person has left to live are only estimates, so for a child to be told someone is going to die is hard to comprehend because it is not concrete. Things that help children such as predictability and routine become difficult for families at the time of serious illness.

Many children will be pre-occupied with wanting to know what will happen next and will need reassurance about who will be caring for them each day and what the plans are for the future. They may have separation difficulties when their carer is leaving them at the beginning of a session at Pre-school.

Life at home may be difficult and sad so children may appreciate the safe haven and routine that the pre-school can offer. Young children may want to talk about it a lot or just enjoy the time of being a carefree child playing with friends. It is not uncommon for children to present with similar physical symptoms to the terminally ill person and they may need reassurance that their tummy ache is not the same as Daddy's cancer.

If the family is receiving support from other organisations at this time e.g. Cancer nurses, the local Hospice and Doctor's surgery, these services may also be able to advise and support the family about talking with any young children. They may also be able to help them say 'goodbyes' in whatever ways are suitable.

If children have not been told of the anticipated loss they may not know what is going on. However, they may well have picked up on the emotions at home and be aware that something is wrong. They may present with worry, anxiety and a sense of fear, but find it hard to express as they don't know what they are worried about.

Many of the strategies included in other sections of this support guide may be appropriate when communicating with the child and family. In addition, activities to explore feelings may also be appropriate.

For More Information

- [Talking to children and teenagers booklet | Macmillan Cancer Support](#)
- [Talking to children and teenagers when an adult has cancer audiobook | Macmillan Cancer Support](#)
- [How to tell children and young people that someone is seriously ill | Winston's Wish \(winstonswish.org\)](#)

16. What can I do if I'm still worried?

It is hard to see anyone grieving let alone watch a young child having to cope with so much. However, with support, children are remarkably resilient and most do seem to manage but, if you are still worried about a child:

- Talk to your colleagues to share your concerns and listen to any they may have.
- Talk with the family, not to burden them, but because you are helping to support their child and it may be helpful to get the whole picture of the child and not just how they are responding whilst at your setting.
- Contact the Child Bereavement UK 0800 02 888 40 or Winston's Wish 08088 020 021 for support for parents or professionals.
- Undertake an Early Help Notification for the child or contact your local Children's Centre for information about local organisations that may be able to help.
- Contact other organisations who may be able to offer specialist advice (See Appendix 3b)

17. How can I look after myself?

Caring for a grieving young child and supporting their family can be emotionally draining and may leave you feeling low. It is important to find ways of coping so that you are well and can continue to offer support.

BE AWARE: Talking with a family about death can spark your own feelings of mortality and reawaken past losses for you and your colleagues. This is normal. Try to recognise when you need to step back and allow your colleagues to support for a while.

SHARE: Remember to look after yourself and each other in your setting. Make time to talk and 'off load' to each other rather than presuming that everyone else is ok.

Contact someone else e.g. someone from Early Help, your local Children's Centre or a bereavement charity for support and reassurance.

TAKE CARE: Find ways that help relieve stress for you e.g. a soak in the bath, a walk in the woods, a chat with a friend, a bar of chocolate. Giving yourself a little 'time off' may recharge you for the next day.

Appendix 1

A Sample Policy for Bereavement and Loss

Rationale

Bereavement and loss are an inevitable part of living and growing. Early Years practitioners will provide opportunities within their settings for children to develop their own appropriate range of emotional, spiritual and intellectual responses to manage these experiences.

We believe that the ethos of the pre-school, based on openness and mutual support, provides a framework in which these experiences can be realised in an enriching manner.

Process

In the event of a death the pre-school will act in a planned and agreed manner, so that all staff know what is expected and can contribute their part in a way that is consistent with the values that have been adopted.

- The pre-school will have identified, through access to appropriate training, a lead worker in bereavement support for their setting. This person will be aware of the needs of bereaved children and will have collated resources in order to support them.
- The pre-school bereavement lead worker, in partnership with the practitioners will co-ordinate the pre-school's response and be fundamental in liaising with bereaved family.
- As far as possible, all staff should be told together by the named person. By creating a list of people to be told, the pre-school can be sure that no one close to the situation will find out by chance.
- All the parents/carers will be told in writing at the same time and as promptly as circumstances will allow.
- Following this the children in pre-school will be told at a time previously notified to the parents.
- Staff will be consistent in their use of terminology to ensure clear understanding of the concept of death.
- Absentees from pre-school will also need to be informed at the earliest opportunity. The pre-school will have procedures to track who is informed, when and by whom, to ensure that no one is missed.
- The pre-school will have a range of strategies that it may adopt in the days and weeks that follow any significant loss. Decisions about which to undertake will be determined following discussions with the family concerned and will take into account the cultural/religious beliefs of the family.
- The child's key person or other named member of staff will be identified to keep in touch with the family so contact from the family's perspectives is manageable. This person will co-ordinate the sending of a card.
- Attendance at the funeral and other forms of remembering will be agreed by the staff team. If you decide to close the setting in term time, this will need to be with the prior agreement of KCC due to funding regulations and please remember to inform Ofsted that this is your intention.
- Staff will have ongoing opportunities for peer support in order to maintain their well-being.
- The pre-school bereavement lead worker will take responsibility for recording details of a bereavement on the child's Record of Transfer and ensuring this information is passed to the next setting, with parent's permission.

Curriculum

In the event of bereavement or significant loss the pre-school has identified activities that will support the child/children to explore their feelings and memories. Some opportunities may include:

Telling the Story

- Use puppets
- Use photographs
- Use the home corner or small world toys e.g. Lego or Playmobil
- Use stories
- Use playdough
- Use sand tray

Expressing feelings

- Feelings biscuits
- Mad and sad box
- Water balloons
- Wooden spoon feelings faces or feelings pebbles

Remembering

- Memory box
- Memory jar
- Play dough model memories
- Photo albums

Coping strategies

- Worry dolls
- Handprints
- Special dates
- Friendship Bands
- Feather comforts

Parents/carers

In acknowledging the role of the pre-school in supporting children with bereavement and loss, the pre-school will work alongside the parents/carers in this process.

The parents/carers remain the most significant support to young children in understanding death. The pre-school can support parents/carers in this by:

- Sharing with parents/carers the intentions of the pre-school to act in a particular way in the event of a death.
- Offering guidance to parents/carers on how they might support their child.
- Sharing information with families about other sources of support e.g. Winston's Wish Helpline, or support from a bereavement specialist where appropriate.
- Keeping parents/carers fully informed about the actions of the pre-school throughout the immediate period of grieving.
- Parents/carers will be invited to be involved in any pre-school response that occurs after the death, e.g. a remembering time. The format of this will take into account the beliefs and wishes of the bereaved family.

Outcomes

By adopting a planned and considered approach the pre-school can with some degree of confidence support the emotional well-being of the child. As a result:

Staff will:

- Feel equally valued.
- Have an opportunity to prepare themselves for the supportive role they adopt.
- Be given time and space to work through their own feelings.
- Become aware of the needs of bereaved children, and be offered training, to develop strategies to support them.

Children will:

- Be offered support by sensitive, trained staff working together.
- Have the opportunity to tell their story, express their feelings, share their memories and develop coping strategies.

The pre-school will:

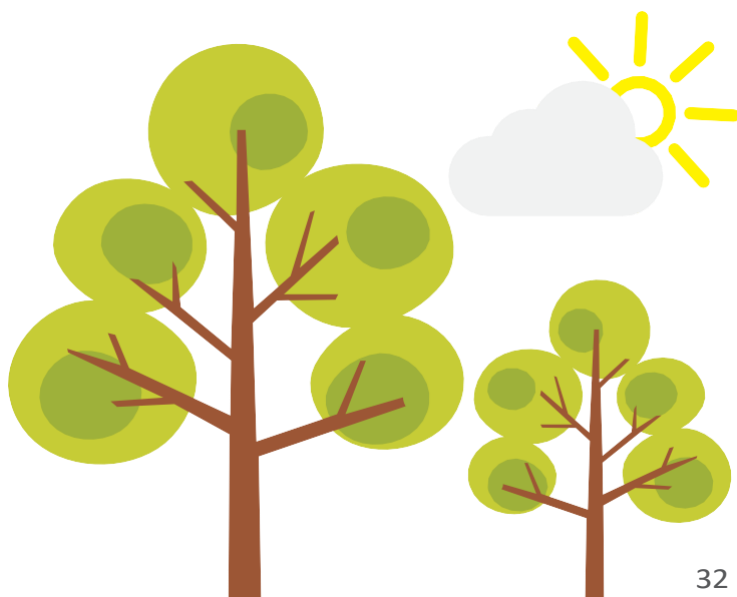
- Have clear expectations about the way that it will respond to the death, not simply react.
- Provide a nurturing, safe and supportive environment where there are no expectations in their responses to the children's grief.

The family will:

- Feel supported.
- Be given an opportunity to express their feelings of loss.
- Have opportunities to understand and communicate with their child about their loss as a result of the activities provided by the pre-school.

The parents/carers will

- Be given guidance on how to support their child/children.
- Be aware of the support offered and understand the processes that will follow bereavement.



Appendix 2 a

Sample letters

When a child has died

Setting address:

Date:

Dear Parent/carer

You may have already heard the very sad news that Jack, one of the pupils at our Pre-school sadly died at the weekend, after being involved in a car collision. We are in touch with Jack's family and have passed on our condolences to them.

We will be talking to all the children over the next few days, giving them the opportunity to talk about their friend and ask any questions they may have. We will be using clear language to prevent any confusion about Jack's death. We are informing you as you may wish to talk to your child at home first.

We will be keeping all other pre-school routines as normal as possible whilst allowing children to express their feelings in their own way and in their own time.

We will keep you informed about the funeral details when we know them and will in time consider a permanent way to remember Jack at the Pre-school.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 2 b

Sample letters

When a staff member has died

Setting address:

Date:

Dear Parent/carers

You may have already heard the very sad news that Jack, one of the pupils at our Pre-school sadly died at the weekend, after being involved in a car collision. We are in touch with Jack's family and have passed on our condolences to them.

We will be talking to all the children over the next few days, giving them the opportunity to talk about their friend and ask any questions they may have. We will be using clear language to prevent any confusion about Jack's death. We are informing you as you may wish to talk to your child at home first.

We will be keeping all other pre-school routines as normal as possible whilst allowing children to express their feelings in their own way and in their own time.

We will keep you informed about the funeral details when we know them and will in time consider a permanent way to remember Jack at the Pre-school.

Yours sincerely,

Manager/ Head of setting

Appendix 2 c

Sample letters

When having a special time to remember someone who has died

Setting address:

Date:

Dear Parent/carer

You will remember that last year one of our pupils Jack tragically died in a road traffic collision. Having discussed with the children and other staff here we would like to have a permanent reminder of him and have decided on a small garden area with a tree planted in his memory.

We will be preparing the area for the tree planting next Tuesday afternoon at 2pm and would invite any of you to join us with your children if you wish to be involved. The tree planting will be with Jack's family on Friday at 4pm and again you would be welcome to join us to remember Jack.

If you wish to donate any plants for the garden area then please bring them in over the coming days.

Yours sincerely,

Manager/ Head of setting

Appendix 3a:

Books about bereavement for young children

Title	Author	Details
Information or Workbooks for young children		
Someone I know has died Someone I Know has Died book Child Bereavement UK	Trish Phillips	A workbook for young children who need help in understanding the death of someone special and how they are feeling (available from www.childbereavementuk.org)
I Miss You A first look at death Amazon.co.uk : i miss you first look at death	Pat Thomas	A simple picture book explaining the concept of death. Although you may not wish to share this book in its entirety it is a useful tool for finding words and phrases to explain death.
What does Dead mean? Amazon.co.uk : What does Dead mean?	Caroline Jay and Jenni Thomas	A simple book with questions and answers for young children. Also ideal to help adults in knowing how to answer the many questions young children may pose.
When Uncle Bob died https://www.amazon.co.uk/When-Uncle-Died-Talking-Through	Althea	A thoughtful book exploring the feelings and concerns of young children.
Remembering Mum https://www.amazon.co.uk/Remembering-Mum-Ginny-Perkins	Ginnie Perkins	A real story with photos of two young boys remembering their mum.
I Miss my Sister	Sarah Courtauld	A short picture book about a young girl grieving after the death of her sister (available from www.childbereavementuk.org)
Story books		
No Matter What	Debi Gliori	A reassuring story about being loved even when someone has died. Also useful if the family have used the idea of the person now being star.
Always & Forever	Alan Durrant	A lovely story about grieving animal friends and their memories; the good times, the sad times and the funny times.
A Place in my Heart	Annette Aubrey	A helpful story about a little boy trying to understand his feelings after his Grandad has died.
Is Daddy coming back in a minute?	Elke and Alex Barber	An honest autobiographical story of a little boy trying to make sense of his Daddy's sudden death from a heart attack.
What happened to Daddy's body?	Elke and Alex Barber	Following on from the title above this text is to help young children understand about funerals, burials and cremation.

Title	Author	Details
Story books		
My Dad has wings	Retold by Jude Coupland	A story written by a real family trying to make sense of the death of their dad and imagine him now as an angel. (available from www.mydadhaswings.co.uk)
Goodbye Mog	Judith Kerr	A story about when the family's adored cat Mog dies. Be aware that death is described as 'sleeping forever' - whilst this is not a not a helpful association it can create a useful point for discussion.
Up in Heaven	Emma Chichester Clark	A story about the pet dog dying. The dog goes to sleep and wakes up in heaven – as with Goodbye Mog sleep and death would need explaining to children as entirely different.
Granpa	John Burningham	A subtle picture book exploring the relationship between a grandpa and his granddaughter until his death.
Fred	Posy Simmons	A cartoon strip book about two children mourning for their pet cat Fred. Good for talking about funeral ceremonies.
Silly Billy	Anthony Browne	A picture book about worrying rather than bereavement. The story features Billy using some worry dolls to help him.
Goodbye Mousie	Robie Harris	The story of a young boy whose pet mouse dies and how his parents try to explain death to him. (Currently out of print but worth trying to get hold of)
The Heart and the Bottle	Oliver Jeffers	A beautiful picture book following a story of a girl whose grief hurts so much she puts her heart in a bottle to protect it.
The Scar	Charlotte Moundlic	An honest, emotional and powerful story featuring a young boy telling his story of his mother dying.
Missing Mummy	Rebecca Cobb	A moving and sensitive story about a girl missing her mum and making sense of her grief.
Badger's Parting Gifts	Susan Varley	A classic picture book of how Badger's forest friends are finally able to remember him and the things he taught them. May be better for slightly older children.
The Memory Tree	Britta Breckentrup	After Fox dies his friends gather to grieve and tell their stories about him and in the middle a memory tree grows to shelter and protect them all.

Title	Author	Details
Story books		
We Were Gonna have a Baby but we had an Angel Instead	Pat Shwiebert	The story follows a child whose sibling is stillborn and gently tells how it feels to get an Angel instead of a baby. This might be appropriate for families where it fits their belief system.
Dogger	Shirley Hughes	A lovely picture book useful for getting young children talking about their feelings when they lose something special e.g. a favourite toy.
Sad Book	Michael Rosen	A fantastic book exploring the feelings of sadness when someone is bereaved. Quite long for little ones but you can pick out some key pages to share.
Books for adults working with bereaved young children:		
Grief in Young Children: A handbook for Adults	Atle Dyregrov	An accessible guide full of practical advice and suggestions for supporting young children.
Children and Grief: When a parent dies	William J Worden	A good theoretical book detailing understanding children's grief.
A Child's Grief	Winston's Wish	A guidebook for parents and professionals on explaining death to children and helping them manage their grief.
Beyond the Rough Rock	Winston's Wish	A guidebook for parents and professionals supporting a child bereaved by suicide.
Hope Beyond the Headlines	Winston's Wish	A guidebook for parents and professionals supporting a child bereaved by murder or manslaughter.
As Big as it Gets	Winston's Wish	A guidebook for parents and professionals supporting a child when someone is seriously ill.
Grief Encounter	Shelley Gilbert	A workbook with many accessible activities (some for slightly older children) to encourage conversations about loss between children and adults. A useful 'grown ups' section too!
Muddles, Puddles and Sunshine	Winston's Wish	A book detailing lots of activities a bereaved child can do to help them explore their feelings and hold on to memories.
Someone very important has just died	Mary Turner	A book offering immediate support for adults caring for children following a bereavement. Very useful in finding language and terms to use to explain concepts surrounding death.

<p>The Little Book of Bereavement for School</p>	<p>Ian Gilbert</p>	<p>This bestselling author writes a concise and helpful book on how schools (or settings) can be most helpful to bereaved families, drawing extensively on what helped and didn't help his own family.</p>
--	--------------------	--

Appendix 3b

Useful Contacts (In alphabetical order)

Beck Ferrari

Supporting bereaved children, their families and schools in Kent
beck.ferrari@gmail.com

07824 347 889

BRAKE

Road safety charity supporting the victims. Has some useful resources on supporting children bereaved by road traffic collisions
www.brake.org.uk/support

0808 800 0401

Child Bereavement UK

National charity.
Helpline for advice for families and professionals and wide range of resources.
www.childbereavementuk.org

0800 02 888 40

Childhood Bereavement Network

Part of the National Children's Bureau
Useful for looking up bereavement services for children in other parts of UK
www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk

Child Death Helpline

The national Freephone helpline staffed by volunteers all of whom have experienced the death of their child.
www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk

0800 282 986

The Compassionate Friends

An organisation which offers understanding and support to those affected by the death of a child or children
www.tcf.org.uk

0345 123 2304

CRUSE

Bereavement counselling support for adults and children with local branches nationwide
Website has advice for families on what to do following a death
www.cruse.org.uk

0808 808 1677

The Lullaby Trust

(Formerly FSID) this organisation supports those who have been affected by the loss of a child to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome
www.lullabytrust.org.uk

0808 802 6868

Grief Encounter Project

Helping children through bereavement (London)
Useful website to refer to as well as Grief Encounter workbook
www.griefencounter.org.uk

0808 802 0111

Appendix 3b

Useful Contacts (In alphabetical order)

Heart of Kent Hospice (Maidstone area)

Support for a person with a terminal illness, their family and carers
www.hokh.org

01622 792200

Holding on, Letting Go

A Kent and Medway based charity offering weekend activity programmes for bereaved children and their families.
www.holdingonlettinggo.org.uk

03445 611 511

Hospice in the Weald (Tonbridge and Malling area)

Support for a person with a terminal illness, their family and carers
www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk

01892 820500

Much Loved

Enables you to make a website tribute in memory of someone who has died
www.muchloved.com

Pilgrim's Hospice

Providing specialist palliative care to the people of east Kent
www.pilgrimshospices.org.uk

01233 504133

SAMM

Support after Murder and Manslaughter
www.samm.org.uk

Call: 0121 4722912
Text: 07342 888570

Sands

Stillbirth and Neonatal death charity
Supporting families affected by the death of a baby
www.uk-sands.org

0808 164 3332

Slide Away

Helping bereaved young people get back on their feet. Kent based charity supporting school aged children

www.slideaway.org

denise.ross@slideaway.org

07970 597715

Survivors of bereavement by suicide

A self-help organisation for those bereaved by suicide
(uksobs.org)

0300 111 5065

Appendix 3b

Useful Contacts (In alphabetical order)

The Samaritans

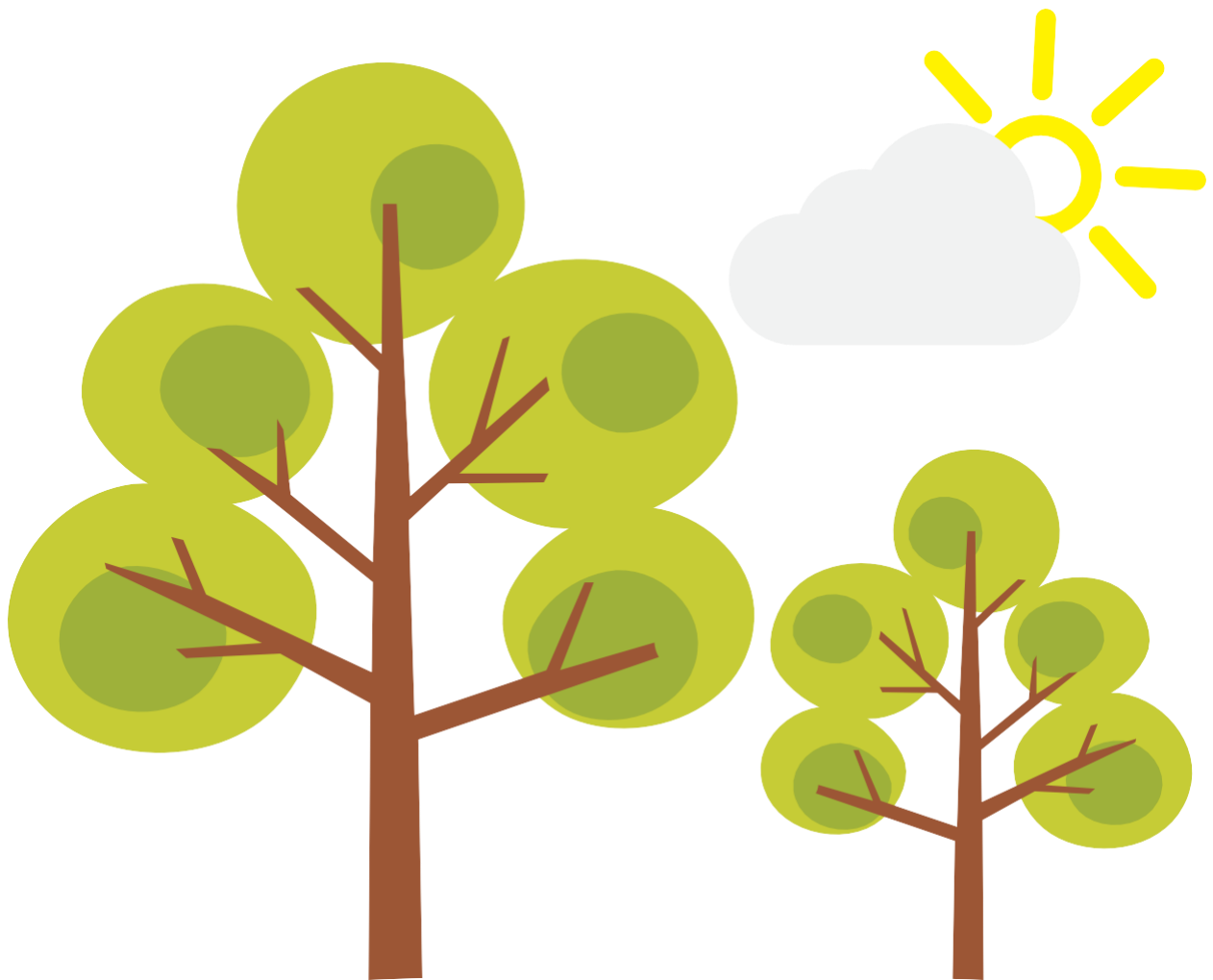
Provides confidential emotional support 24 hours a day, by phone, text or email
www.samaritans.org 116 123

The WAY foundation

Support for those who are widowed and young including local support networks
www.wayfoundation.org 0300 210 0051

Winston's Wish

The charity for bereaved children
Helpline for advice for families and professionals
Has wide range of publications and very useful website for additional information
www.winstonswish.org.uk 08088 020



Developed by
Kent Educational Psychology Service
Email: educationalpsychology@kent.gov.uk



