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<th>Ages</th>
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| 2 - 5 years | - Magical, fantastical thinking.  
- Active fantasy life  
- Highly egocentric  
- May blame self for bad things.  
- May not be able to verbalize needs and fears  
- Reversibility of concepts. Need to repeat things | - Confusion. Agitation at night; may be afraid to go to sleep.  
- Child may be able to appreciate a profound event has occurred, but may not understand permanence of death.  
- May seem unaffected.  
- Repeated questions. | - Simple honest words, and phrases.  
- Reassurance.  
- Secure and loving environment  
- Drawing, reading, books, playing together, active play.  
- Support play as form of expression.  
- Include in the funeral rituals |
| 5 – 8 years | - Child can think concretely and logically.  
- Ability to use language increases.  
- Increased memory capacity, both long and short term.  
- Increased awareness of feelings and expectations of others.  
- Peers important. | - Want to understand death in a concrete way.  
- Denial, anger, sorrow  
- Distress.  
- May act as though nothing has happened.  
- Desire to be like peers.  
- May repeat questions.  
- May need physical activity regularly. | - Answer questions simply and honestly.  
- Look for confused thinking.  
- Offer physical outlets.  
- Reassurance about the future.  
- Drawing, reading, playing together.  
- Include in funeral rituals. |
| 8 - 12 years | - Enjoy games, and competing.  
- Begin to have increased understanding of self and relationship to world.  
- Increased propensity for language.  
- Able to reason through situations using problem solving skills. | - Shock, denial, anxiety, distress.  
- Try to cope.  
- Understand finality of death.  
- May have morbid curiosity, or want to know specifics about death and dying.  
- May need regular physical activity.  
- Want to be like peers. | - Answer questions directly and honestly.  
- Reassurance about the future.  
- Create times to talk about feelings and questions.  
- Offer physical outlets.  
- Reading.  
- Include in funeral plans and rituals. |
| 12 – 18 years | - Need independence.  
- Can think abstractly.  
- Puberty usually has begun by now.  
- May have false sense of immortality.  
- Peer group important.  
- May begin to have intimate relationships. | - Shock, anger, distress.  
- May become depressed or withdraw.  
- May react similar to adult, but have less coping mechanisms.  
- May feel isolated, especially from peers. | - Allow and encourage expression of feelings.  
- Encourage peer support.  
- Groups may be helpful.  
- Utilize other adults.  
- Maintain consistent environment.  
- Include in funeral plans and rituals. |

*Adapted from Dougy Center Handbook*