

My Pet Has Died ...How Can I Help My Kids?

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT KIDS AND GRIEF

Pet Loss is often trivialized and misunderstood, but it is a significant loss. When your pet dies, you deserve sensitive, compassionate care. Honesty is the guiding principle when talking with children about the loss of a pet. Feeling they are being lied to or left out is harder for kids than hearing the facts. Pet loss is often a child's first experience with death. It's not a dress rehearsal for the real thing. It is the real thing. Even a goldfish death requires sensitive care.

Grief is natural and normal. Everyone grieves. Some show it often and openly. Others grieve privately. There is no wrong way to grieve.

The very best friend is a childhood pet.

Children grieve as deeply as adults. However, with shorter attention spans, they may seem to grieve in shorter spurts. Teens often feel too self-conscious to grieve openly. Yet, if they suppress grief, they can become depressed.

Even very young children can view a pet's body or be present when a pet dies if they are well prepared and supported by attentive adults. Most need and want to say good-bye.

Moms, Dads and kids can cry and grieve together.

Young children engage in magical thinking, believing they cause events to happen. This thinking can lead to a belief that a pet's death was their fault. Tell children how and why a pet died and reassure them they were not responsible for their pet's death.

How Kids Grieve

Infants feel the stress of loss and are reassured through cuddling and normal routines.

Toddlers & Preschoolers don't understand the finality of death and are often confused by grief.

School Age kids realize death is permanent around 8 years old. Provide kids with honest information and include them in decisions. Let them see you grieve and teach them how to cope with loss.

Teens are self-conscious and may prefer to grieve in private. Friends are often their best support.

Young Adults experience the end of an era when a childhood pet dies. Acknowledge the significance of this loss and help them find a way to say good-bye.

Inform the significant adults in a child's life – teachers, coaches, church and scout leaders – so they understand any changes in mood or behavior that may occur in a child.

We are sorry for the loss of your pet.

For further information or support, visit our website at www.cedarwayvet.com and click on the Pet Loss – Grief Help button.

We would like to thank **World by the Tail, Inc** – *caring for people who care for pets* for the above information.

For more information visit www.petpeoplehelp.com