

# DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF GRIEF



**0-3 YEARS**

**ACTIONS:** Cry, cling, regressive behaviors

**INTERVENTIONS:** Hold the child, give extra attention, reassure calmly

**THOUGHTS:** Loved one will return; they are just away

**FEELINGS:** Confused, anxious, fearful, separation anxiety, sad, angry

**ACTIONS:** Cry, temper tantrums, nightmares, regress, cling

**INTERVENTIONS:** Hold the child, give extra attention, reassure calmly

**3-5 YEARS**

**6-8 YEARS**

**THOUGHTS:** Can my loved one return? Is it my fault?

**FEELINGS:** Confused, anxious, separation anxiety, sad, or angry  
I'm afraid that I will die too.

**ACTIONS:** Cry, temper tantrums, nightmares, regress, cling, difficulty concentrating

**INTERVENTIONS:** Hug the child, give extra attention, tell the truth appropriately, reassure they are not responsible for death, and encourage physical or artistic expression of grief.

**THOUGHTS:** Understand that death is final. May believe their actions or words caused the death.

**FEELINGS:** Sad, confused, anxious, withdrawn, lonely, guilty

**ACTIONS:** Aggressive, impulsive, risky, or dangerous behaviors, drop in grades, difficulty concentrating

**INTERVENTIONS:** Hug the child, give extra attention, tell the truth appropriately, reassure that they are not responsible for the death, encourage the physical or artistic expression of grief, and maintain structure, limits, and rules.

**9-12 YEARS**

**12-18 YEARS**

**THOUGHTS:** Understand that death is final. May believe their actions or words caused the death.

**FEELINGS:** Sad, confused, anxious, withdrawn, lonely, guilty

**ACTIONS:** Aggressive, impulsive, risky, or dangerous behaviors, drop in grades, difficulty concentrating

**INTERVENTIONS:** Hug the child, give extra attention, tell the truth appropriately, reassure that they are not responsible for the death, encourage the physical or artistic expression of grief, and maintain structure, limits, and rules.