



# HOPE RISING

FRISCO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

## HELPING YOUR CHILD THROUGH GRIEF

Grief is an extremely difficult and engaging process. One must focus on him/herself during this period, and rightly so. Many times, however, we overlook the fact that grief reactions comes in all sizes and ages. Therefore, children are often ignored during mourning, with the rationale that “they wouldn’t understand”. Children become forgotten grievers. The grieving process in children is highly complex, since much depends upon each child’s stage of development. For instance, a child age 3 understanding of death and the mourning process will be quite different from that of a 10- year- old. Both of them would be different from a 16-year-old. Yet, there are many fundamental similarities between a child’s grief, teen grief and the adult mourning process. It is important to understand that grief work provides an opportunity for growth for all ages. Following are a list of suggestions helping your child through the grief process:

- Set time aside to talk with your child - explain the events occurring, why you are crying, etc.
- Use basic words like “die” and “dead” to convey the message.
- Use the deceased person’s name when referring to him/her.
- Avoid phrases that soften the blow : phrases such as “sleeping”, “went away”, “God took them” etc. such statements will only confuse and scare a child.
- Let your child ask questions— answer truthfully. Be honest, simple and direct. If you do not understand something, let your child know that too.
- Be sensitive to the age of your child, and his/her level of understanding— do not offer information beyond the child’s level of comprehension, as it will only confuse matters.
- Tell stories that will increase the child’s awareness.
- Read or have your child read children’s books related to death, ( many are available ).
- Play with the child, ( Dolls, drawings, imagining) in ways will allow the child to express his/ her feelings.