

PET LOSS AND CHILDREN

When children experience loss, it can be traumatic and confusing. Although children tend to grieve for shorter periods of time, their grief is no less intense than that experienced by adults. Children also tend to come back to the subject repeatedly; so extreme patience is required when dealing with the grieving child. Some helpful tips for helping the grieving child include:

1. Giving the child permission to work through their grief.
 - tell their teacher how they are doing at home.
 - encourage the child to talk freely about the pet.
 - give the child plenty of hugs and reassurance.
 - discuss death, dying and grief honestly.
2. NEVER say things like the pet was "put to sleep."
 - The child will become afraid of going to sleep.
3. Give simple, age-appropriate factual information when your child asks questions.

Sometimes there are no words, you cannot fix emotional pain, but you can give comfort by being near and available. Your presence is the gift you give.