

## 8 Myths About Children and Loss

*Myth 1: Children do not grieve.*

**Reality: Children of all ages grieve.** The child's development and life experiences affect the grieving process.

*Myth 2: The death of a loved one is the only major loss children and adolescents experience.*

**Reality: Young people experience a variety of losses.** These include losses of pets, separations caused by divorce or relocations, losses of friends and relationships, as well as losses due to illness or death. All of these losses generate grief.

*Myth 3: Children should be shielded from loss.*

**Reality: It's impossible to protect children from loss.** Adults can teach ways of adapting to loss by including young people in the grieving process.

*Myth 4: Children should not go to funerals. OR Children should always attend funerals.*

**Reality: Allow young people to make their own choice.** They should decide how they wish to participate in funerals or other services. Adults must provide information, options and support. If a child decides to go to the funeral, a special relative or adult friend can be assigned to stay with the child during the service and leave with him or her if the child prefers.

*Myth 5: Children get over loss quickly.*

**Reality: No one gets over significant loss.** Children, like adults, will learn to live with the loss. They may revisit that loss at different points in their lives and experience grief again.

*Myth 6: Children are permanently scarred by loss.*

**Reality: Children are resilient.** By providing solid support and strong consistent care, adults can help children cope with loss.

*Myth 7: Talking with children and adolescents is the most effective approach in dealing with loss.*

**Reality: Different approaches are helpful to young people.** It's important to talk openly with children and adolescents; it's also helpful to let young people use creative approaches. Play, art, dance, music, and ritual are all valuable modes of expression that allow them to say what words cannot.

*Myth 8: Helping children and adolescents deal with loss is the family's responsibility.*

**Reality: Other individuals and organizations can share this responsibility.** Hospices, schools, and faith communities can all offer necessary support.

From Hospice Foundation of America, [www.hospicefoundation.org](http://www.hospicefoundation.org)