***Children in General***

* Will act out their grief through play or behavior
* Need to be told the truth in plain terms (following the parents’ lead)
* Fear of abandonment--validate their feeling and reassure the child that they are loved and will be taken care of

***Infants - 2 Years Olds***

* Will sense the loss
* Will pick up on grief of a parent or caretaker
* May change eating, sleeping, or toilet habits

***2-6 Year Olds***

* Have no understanding of time or death
* Can’t imagine their world without mom or dad because the parents are the center of their world and are confident that they will always be there to take care of their needs
* Pick up on nonverbal communication
* Think that people who have died continue to eat, drink, etc., but are in the sky somewhere
* Magical thinking--you wish it and it happens (bring someone back or wishing someone was dead), which brings confusion and possibly guilt

***6-9 Years Olds***

* Still has magical thinking, yet begins to see death as final, but difficulty in believing it is real
* Struggle to accept that death will happen to them, or to anyone they love, although, they are beginning to suspect that it will

***Adolescents***

* May express their grief through anger or humor
* Need support from peers
* Fear vulnerability--respect their privacy, but offer opportunities for them to express their sadness
* Validate their feelings and suspend judgment

***Elderly***

* May be stunned and somewhat resigned about the loss
* Need respect and understanding
* Fear helplessness.--take extra time to patiently explain details
* Consider diminished hearing and eyesight when talking to them
* Use titles, such as, Mr. and Mrs. when addressing them