

BILL OF RIGHTS FOR GRIEVING CHILDREN

Modified from Dr. Alan Wolfelt

1. THE CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO HAVE HIS/HER OWN FEELING.
The child may feel mad, sad or lonely. He/she may feel scared or relieved. The child may feel numb or perhaps nothing at all.
2. THE CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO TALK ABOUT HIS/HER GRIEF WHENEVER.
The child will find someone who will listen and allow them not to talk if they don't want to.
3. THE CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO SHOW HIS/HER FEELINGS OF GRIEF IN THEIR OWN WAY.
When they hurt sometimes they want to play so they'll feel better. Some like to laugh, get mad and even scream. When children behave in this way they are telling us how scared they are.
4. THE CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT TO EXPECT HELP FROM ADULTS AT HOME, SCHOOL, AND CHURCH.
They really need someone to pay attention to them; what they are feeling and saying, and to know they will be loved no matter how they behave.
5. THE CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO GET UPSET ABOUT NORMAL EVERYDAY PROBLEMS.
They will have their grumpy days and have difficulty getting along.
6. THE CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO HAVE "GRIEFBURSTS."
The child may exhibit sudden, unexpected feelings of sadness at anytime, even late in the grief process. They can be strong, scary feelings and the child may be more clinging than usual.
7. THE CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO USE HIS/HER BELIEF SYSTEM TO DEAL WITH GRIEF.
Praying may make the child feel closer to the person who died. The child should never be forced to pray.
8. THE CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO QUESTION THE CAUSE OF DEATH.
"Why" questions regarding death are the hardest of all questions. It's okay to ask.

9. THE CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO TALK ABOUT THEIR MEMORIES OF THE PERSON WHO DIED.
Memories help the child to keep alive the love he/she had for the person.

10. THE CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO EXPERIENCE HIS/HER GRIEF EVEN WHEN OTHERS THINK THEY SHOULD "BE OVER IT."
At every developmental phase the child will re-grieve the death of a loved one. He/she may not grieve as acutely as when the death occurred, but they will always miss that special person.

