

DEVELOPMENTAL AGES AND POSSIBLE REACTIONS TO DEATH

AGE	THINK	FEEL	DO
3-5 years (preschool)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Death is temporary and reversible -Finality of death is not evident -Death mixed up with trips, sleep -May wonder what deceased is doing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sad -Anxious -Withdrawn -Confused with changes -Angry -Scared -Cranky (feelings are acted out in play) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Cry -Fight -Are interested in dead things -Act as if death never happened
6-9 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -About the finality of death -About the biological processes of death -Death is related to mutilation -A spirit gets you when you die -About who will care for them if a parent dies -Their actions and words caused the death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sad -Anxious -Withdrawn -Confused about the changes -Angry -Scared -Cranky (feelings are acted out in play) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Behave aggressively -Behave withdrawn -Experience nightmares -Act as if death never happened -Lack concentration -Have a decline in grades
9-12 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -About and understand finality of death -Death is hard to talk about -That death may happen again, and may feel anxious -About what will happen if their parent(s) die -Their actions and words caused the death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Vulnerable -Anxious -Scared -Lonely -Angry -Sad -Abandoned -Guilty -Fearful -Worried -Isolated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Behave aggressively -Behave withdrawn -Talk about physical aspects of death -Act like it never happened, not show feelings -Experience nightmares -Lack concentration -Have a decline in grades
12 years and up (teenager)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -About and understand the finality of death -If they show their feelings they will be weak -They need to be in control of their feelings -Only about life before or after death -Their actions and words caused the death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Vulnerable -Anxious -Scared -Lonely -Confused -Angry -Sad -Abandoned -Guilty -Fearful -Worried -Isolated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Behave impulsively -Argue, scream, fight -Allow themselves to be in dangerous situations -Grieve for what might have been -Experience nightmares -Act like it never happened -Lack concentration -Have a decline in grades