

# Infants (birth to 12 months old)

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## Understanding of Death

Infants experience death as a separation.

## How to Help an Infant

An infant's world is built on trust. Infants trust their adults to comfort and care for them. Changes in their routine upset this sense of security. Help infants by keeping their routine as normal as possible. Make sure they eat and sleep around the same time each day. Hold them often and give them extra cuddles. Infants are sensitive to adult emotions. During times of high stress, have the calmest adult hold the baby.

## Signs of Poor Coping

Poor coping may show in how the baby eats and sleeps. They may wake up more often. It may be harder to get them to sleep. They may show less interest in eating. If you have concerns that your infant is coping poorly, call the baby's doctor for advice.



## Memory Making & Keepsakes

These are personal items that children can hold. They help children to feel closer to a loved one who died. With infants, always keep safety in mind. Small items can be a choking hazard. Save fragile or small items for when the child is older.

- Familiar Scents – Infants love familiar scents. Your baby may enjoy a blanket or shirt that carries their loved one's scent. Always follow safe sleep practices. Never leave loose blankets or other items in the crib with a sleeping baby.
- Arts and crafts made with their loved one's fingerprints or lock of hair.
- Letters from a loved one – If there is time, a loved one can create a collection of letters. For example "a letter for my daughter's graduation." Or "a video for my son's wedding." These can be done as letters or drawings. Audio or video recordings work, too.
- Recordable story books – Some children's books include a built in microphone. You can record a loved one reading the story. Play it for the infant to hear their loved one's voice. (Read the instructions carefully!)
- If possible, take some pictures of the baby and their loved one together.

## Resources

*No Matter What* by Debi Gliori

This board book tells the story of family love. Together or apart, the love you share with a child lasts forever. Infants may not understand the words, but adults may find comfort in reading this sweet book to them.

## Websites:

- <https://www.sesamestreet.org/toolkits/grief>
- [www.centerforloss.com](http://www.centerforloss.com)
- [www.dougy.org](http://www.dougy.org)
- [www.urmc.rochester.edu/childrens-hospital/bereavement](http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/childrens-hospital/bereavement)

