

The Death of a Grandparent

The death of a grandparent may be one of the first experiences a child has of death in their family. As well as feelings of sadness the death may also result in feelings of insecurity as children realise that people they love can die.

There are a number of factors that can affect the way in which a child responds to the death of a grandparent, these include:

- The age of the child and the length of the relationship with their grandparent
- The nature of the relationship
- The role the grandparent played in the child's life
- The way other family members cope with their grief
- The cause of death
- Whether the death was sudden or anticipated

Grandparents often play a unique role in their grandchildren's lives and children of all ages can be affected by their death. Many children see grandparents as people they can talk to and share their worries with. They may have provided regular childcare and in the case of single parents they may have taken on the role of the absent parent. For younger children grandparents are often the people who gave them special treats and lots of attention.

Children express their grief in different ways to adults, they can move from displaying intense sadness to laughing and playing in a short space of time. Adult grief can be more overwhelming and it is important for parents to be aware that the way they deal with their emotions will have an impact on how their children cope.

Children may find it helpful to express their emotions in a variety of ways, these could include:

- Making a memory book or box
- Drawing
- Reading stories
- Writing

Parents who are concerned about their children can contact Daisy's Dream for advice.

