



## DEVELOPMENTAL AGES AND POSSIBLE REACTIONS TO DEATH

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-Withdrawn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