

Kids and Funerals/Memorial Services

As adults, we often wish we could protect children from sad and tragic events. Thus, when a friend or loved one of a child dies sometimes adults wonder if children should attend the funeral or memorial service.

Children should be given a choice whether or not they wish to attend a funeral. Giving children choices displays respect and compassion. Children that are not allowed to attend a funeral may feel “robbed” of their opportunity to say goodbye. Alternatively, children that feel forced to attend a funeral may feel angry and resentful.

If a child makes the choice to attend a funeral, they must be prepared for what they will see and hear and then lovingly supported during the event.

Give clear, direct and concrete explanations and cover the “basics”, such as:

- Who will be at the funeral?
- What kind of things will happen at the funeral?
- Where will the service/funeral be held?
- When is the funeral going to be held?
- Why do we have a funeral?
- Will the casket be open or closed?

A funeral or memorial service of a loved one may be a part of a child’s memories for the rest of their lives. Caring and supportive adults can assist a child during this experience so that children feel cared for and not forgotten in the midst of adults’ grief.