

235 Johnston Street  
PO Box 5540  
Kalgoorlie WA 6430  
Phone 08 9091 9097  
Fax 08 9091 9116  
Email [o'connor.ps@det.wa.edu.au](mailto:o'connor.ps@det.wa.edu.au)  
[www.oconnorps.wa.edu.au](http://www.oconnorps.wa.edu.au)



## *Helpful Hints explaining death to children*

The ABC radio afternoon programme put the question to parenting educator Maggie Dent, who has supported many children and parents when someone they love has died.

This is what she advises.

1. State the facts, children can't deal with loss until they know what it is.
2. Use words like death, and died, not words like passed away or went to sleep.
3. Explain when we lose something we love and our hearts hurt, it's normal. Validate it.
4. Let them know we need soothing, (hugs and cuddles or a teddy bear) to get through it.
5. Help them create a special memory, which might be a letter or a drawing.
6. Get your kids pets like fish and guinea pigs so they can experience death as they grow up.
7. Don't worry if your kids are sad, it's normal. Don't worry if they cry or you cry. It's normal.
8. Children hold grief in shorter pockets than adults.
9. If your kids don't bring it up, if the child isn't talking about it, don't bring it up. Wait until they come to you or they are showing signs of distress.

You can read Maggie's article on the subject here on her wonderful website, it's called [Death Through the Eyes of a Child](#)

Listed below are some books that may be helpful to assist children under 12 to better understand death and loss, or illness (particularly cancer).

Roses Are Blue by Sally Murphy  
Molly's Memory Jar by Norma Spaulding  
The Balloon Cloud by Clare Hanlon  
Waterbugs and Dragonflies by Doris Stickney  
The Invisible String by Patrice Karst

Please access the school if you:

- wish to make an appointment for your child to see the chaplain or school psychologist
- would like to speak to admin.

Kind regards

Allison Hunter  
Deputy Principal

O'Connor Primary School