

Serving Siblings of Children with Cancer

SuperSibs!

Powered by: Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation



Comfort & Care Mailing Program

Grief and Loss Parent Toolkit

Dear Parents,

One of the things Alex taught me in her life was how to be happy despite hardship—she even said once at a particularly difficult time in her life that she was happy for what she had, not unhappy for what she did not have. This was a gift she gave me that I carried forward in my life after her death.

I feel so fortunate every day to have my three healthy boys, and through the years, I have tried to balance my need to grieve and remember Alex with their needs to do the same, in their own way. I think my kids know how important they are to me, because I have always tried to make sure they feel like I am here for them and that they are my priority. However, I am sure I didn't do everything just right for them (no one can!) — but I know I did the best I could do at any given time. And you will too!

Of course I still miss Alex, and still have some pretty intense moments of grief, but one of the most important things I have learned is that I can be happy again. Take it one day at a time. In the beginning you may need to take it one hour at a time. There's always help, and there's always hope to hold onto — which helps you move forward.

Best regards,
Liz Scott

Patrick, Alex, Eddie and Joey's Mom



Jay, Patrick, Liz, Eddie, Joey and Alex

What to Expect from the Comfort & Care Grief and Loss Mailing Program

Over the next two years, your SuperSib(s) will receive eight postcards, four per year, with activities designed to provide gentle ways for your child to cope with their grief and feelings about their sibling's death. The activities promote memory-making, creativity and opportunities to honor their sibling and the special bond they share. All activities are adaptable to your SuperSib's age, skill and comfort level. Younger children will benefit from gentle guidance and may need assistance in completing some activities.

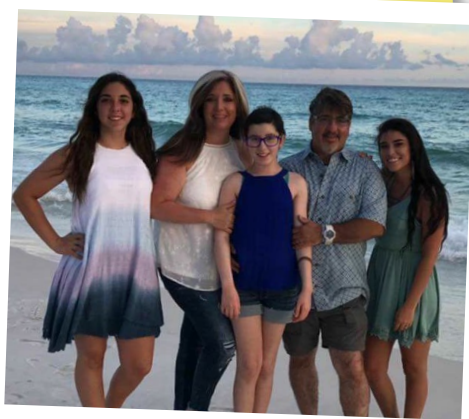
Checking in with your child as they go through these activities is a great way to understand what they are experiencing and observe whether additional support is needed.

- Ask what they received from SuperSibs or read the postcards together.
- When possible, work through the activity together.
- Talk about the activity when it's complete, reflecting on shared memories with their sibling.
- Revisit the postcards and activities — your SuperSib's responses may change over time.

Please know you can discontinue the program at any time by reaching out to us at SuperSibs@AlexsLemonade.org or 866-333-1213.

Additional Resources

Visit SuperSibs.org for activities, book recommendations, and support services for you and your SuperSib(s).



SuperSib Corey, Michelle, Hero Chloe, Matt, and SuperSib Courtney
(Chloe, 2/1/04-7/26/17)



Family Quotes

"No parent knows exactly what to say to their child after something like this has affected their family, but knowing that my parents have been patient and open to listening has definitely made our relationship stronger."

-MaryGrace A., SuperSib

"No one is 'strong enough' to lose a child and resume full time parenting of siblings in the same moment. It is instinctual, because you need to mother your other children through their grief even as you try to navigate your own grief. But ask for help, demand help. You may not find it in the first or second place you seek it, but persist. After all, you could use some mothering too in those dark, confusing early days."

-Megan R., Hero Mom

"I guess what helps me get up in the morning is knowing that my brother is in a better place, wherever that may be, and he is always with me. No, it was not fair that he was taken away, but I have to go on with my life. Now, I think of the fun times that we had together growing up, instead of dwelling on those things that I wish I could change."

-Andrea, SuperSib

Connect With Us:

✉ SuperSibs@AlexsLemonade.org

☎ 866-333-1213

🌐 SuperSibs.org

📘 [Facebook.com/SuperSibsALSF](https://www.facebook.com/SuperSibsALSF)

Helping SuperSibs Grieve

Losing a sibling can have a deep, lasting impact. Because death is difficult for children to understand, they look to the adults in their lives to help guide them in grief and coping. Like adults, children grieve in different ways, so patience, honesty, and ongoing comfort are essential.

As a parent, it can be challenging to support others while you are grieving, too. Putting your own support system in place will help provide strength and openness to meet your SuperSib's needs.

- Don't be afraid to lean on those that you feel are capable of providing the unique comfort you need.
- Make a list of the positive support and existing networks you have, and revisit that list when you need to recharge and feel encouraged.
- Seek outside assistance, including your primary care doctor, counselors, your SuperSib's school administrators, places of worship, or grief retreats and camps.
- Talk about your child with your SuperSib—bringing up memories and sharing thoughts you may have will give your SuperSib permission to talk about their sibling and provide reassurance that they will not be forgotten.
- Take a break from grief when you can. It's ok to laugh, enjoy happy moments, and let children be children. It's not disrespectful to the memory of your child, and it is a healthy part of your SuperSib's grieving process.
- Remember that you are never alone! Your friends at Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation are here for you. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us at SuperSibs@AlexsLemonade.org with any questions, feedback, or for help locating additional resources.



Understanding Common Reactions

The following are common reactions that children have to death that you may notice in your SuperSib(s), with subsequent suggestions for understanding and helping your child through them:

If your child becomes upset by discussions about death...

- Pause the conversation and provide support and comfort. Let your children know it's OK to show their feelings and even show them your own.

If your child is reluctant to talk about a recent death...

- Avoid forcing the issue, but continue to invite your children to talk on several occasions over time, acknowledging that the conversations can be difficult. For older children and teens, seek out another adult that they may feel comfortable talking to, whether it's a teacher, counselor, or chaplain.

If your child feels guilty after a death has occurred...

- Explain that when painful or "bad" things happen, people often wonder if it was because they did something wrong. Reassure your child that they are not responsible for the death.

If your child wants to express their feelings in other ways besides talking...

- Offer your child opportunities to play and do creative activities. Make sure you ask them to tell you about their work and the meaning behind it.

If your child appears to think only about themselves when confronted with a death...

- Continue to show care and concern for your child. Their own needs must be met before they can fully tend to their grief. Although they may seem to ignore the death at times, they are still grieving.

Sources

- "Death and Loss: Helping Children Manage Their Grief" Scholastic, by Bruce D. Perry MD, April 2006
- "Children and Loss: An Overview" <https://www.scholastic.com/childrenandgrief/pdfs/Educators/NYLifeBrochure.pdf>

