



when families grieve™

Within each section, you'll find:

- **Story Summary:** Read this before you begin to get familiar with the video.
- **Watch It, Talk About It:** Use the video and the questions that follow to encourage conversation and explore tips and strategies.
- **Print Connections:** Go deeper into each subject and find valuable resources to share and explore with parents.

we find strength Sesame Workshop has created *When Families Grieve* to help both adults and children cope with the death of a loved one. As someone who provides direct support and services, you can adapt these ideas for use in group settings or to help you provide one-on-one support. These multimedia resources include video material, a guide for parents and caregivers, and a children's story. *When Families Grieve* addresses:

- talking with children about death,
- helping children to express different emotions,
- remembering loved ones together, and
- beginning the process of moving forward.



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The *When Families Grieve* resources include:

- **videos** featuring the Sesame Street Muppets and live-action footage of families coping with death,
- **a guide for parents and caregivers** offering tips, strategies, activities, and
- **a children's story** highlighting how one child remembers a loved one who died.



coping together

Explore the different ways that children process death.

Story Summary: Elmo is excited to see his cousin and especially his uncle Jack at the upcoming family picnic. Elmo's dad, Louie, explains that Elmo will not be seeing Jack because Uncle Jack died. His body stopped working. That means Jack *is not alive anymore*.

At the picnic, Elmo and his family reconnect with Aunt Jill and Cousin Jesse, but Jesse doesn't want to talk about her father. When Louie has some quiet time with his niece Jesse, he comforts her and explains that when someone you love dies, "you need to give your heart a little time."

Watch It, Talk About It: Show the online video and pause after the first song, "Give Your Heart a Little Time." Or choose *A Family Picnic* using Select a Scene on the DVD.

Pause the video after the song. **Ask:**

- What are some ways that Elmo is confused about death?
- What are some behaviors that Jesse displayed?
- What actions seemed to give her mother concern?
- How did Louie talk with Elmo and Jesse?

Then ask:

- What questions have your children raised about death?
- What behaviors have you noticed in your children?
- What feelings have your children expressed?
- How have you responded?

Print Connections: Turn to pages 4–5 of the parent/caregiver guide to find information on ways to discuss death with children. Page 8 of the guide has information on behaviors that may need special attention. Turn to page 9 to find strategies for helping children share their feelings.

Special Note: It's important to note that some children's behaviors, such as not wanting to talk about the death or the deceased person at all, might signal a need for professional help.



Visit sesamestreet.org/grief for free downloads of the *When Families Grieve* materials, printable activities, and additional resources.

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remembering together

Discover ways to honor and celebrate a loved one.

Story Summary: Together, the family remembers Jack. Elmo shows how Jack taught him to swing a baseball bat, and Jesse shares some of the special items that she has put in the memory box about her father. The family discovers that it feels good to laugh together, and they make plans to celebrate Jack by going to a game of baseball, Jack's favorite sport.

Watch It, Talk About It: Restart the online video after the first song, "Give Your Heart a Little Time," by clicking on the video, and watch until the end. Or, choose the scene *The Memory Box* by using Select a Scene on the DVD.

Pause the video when the scene ends. Ask:

- What are some ways that the family remembered Jack?

Then ask:

- What are some ways that your family has remembered your loved one together?
- Have you faced any challenges when trying to help your children discuss memories? How have you overcome these challenges?

Print Connections: Read the children's story together and discuss some of the things that Jesse does to remember her dad. Turn to page 17 of the parent/caregiver guide for ideas on how to honor a deceased loved one and begin to move forward as a family.

♥ family page

The following Memory Chain activity provides a hands-on way for families to express difficult emotions and remember a loved one.

After reading the story *Something Small*, photocopy the Memory Chain page and give it to families to use together at home.

talk, listen, connect

a part of Sesame Workshop's initiative helping families cope with difficult transitions

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memory chain

Cut out the strips on this page. Then enjoy spending time together writing or drawing a memory on each one. Now link these strips by looping them to one another, using tape or glue to create a chain of memories. Hang up your memory chain or keep the memory strips in a box, adding new memories and occasionally reading through them together.

