

SIBLINGS AND CHILD LOSS

Holding Family Love, History, and Grief Together

Siblings | Family | Memory | Love

When a child dies, the loss touches every sibling relationship in the family. Surviving siblings may grieve their brother or sister in ways that are not always easy to see, while parents are grieving the child who died. Each person may need something different: space, conversation, routine, tears, memories, or quiet. There is no single way for a family to move through this loss. Making room for every sibling's experience can help love and connection remain present.

Siblings may grieve differently, but shared love and memory can remain.

1 A SHARED LOSS

- Siblings may share memories no one else has.
- They may miss the ordinary role their brother or sister held.
- The family story feels changed for everyone.
- Their grief deserves attention and care.

2 DIFFERENT WAYS OF GRIEVING

- One sibling may want to talk; another may grow quiet.
- Some may show grief through anger, behavior, or busyness.
- Different reactions do not mean different love.
- There is no correct way to be a grieving sibling.

3 THE MISSING RELATIONSHIP

- Siblings may miss a playmate, protector, confidant, or friend.
- They may miss the future they expected to share.
- Ordinary routines can make the absence feel close.
- Their relationship remains part of the family story.

4 AGE AND UNDERSTANDING

- Young children, teens, and adults may understand loss differently.
- Questions may change as a sibling grows.
- Simple, honest conversations can help them feel safe.
- They may return to grief in new ways over time.

5 MAKING ROOM TO TALK

- Invite siblings to share memories and feelings without pressure.
- Listen more than you try to fix.
- It is okay if they do not want to talk right away.
- Let them know their grief matters.

6 KEEPING THEM INCLUDED

- Speak the child's name in family conversations.
- Share photos, stories, and rituals when it feels right.
- Include siblings in choices about remembrance.
- Their place in the family does not disappear.

7 PROTECTING CONNECTION

- Grief can bring family members closer or create distance.
- Patience can help when everyone is carrying pain.
- Try to avoid comparing how anyone is grieving.
- Support outside the family can be helpful, too.

8 LOVE CARRIES FORWARD

- Surviving siblings may carry their brother or sister with them.
- The bond can continue through stories and shared memory.
- Life can grow around the loss without erasing it.
- Love remains part of the family.

A GENTLE REMINDER

Every sibling's grief matters, and love can remain part of the family story.

