

SIBLINGS & CHILD LOSS

When a Brother or Sister Dies

Memory • Tenderness • Support • Hope

Siblings grieve too.
Their love and loss
deserve to be seen and
supported.



When a child dies, their brothers and sisters lose someone woven into their everyday life, family identity, memories, and future. Siblings may grieve in ways that look different from parents or from one another. Every response deserves patience and care.

There is no right way for a sibling to grieve.
Love can look quiet, loud, confusing, or all of these at once.

1 A SIBLING'S UNIQUE LOSS

- A sibling loses a companion and shared history.
- They may feel the family has changed forever.
- They may grieve the future they expected together.
- Their loss is real, even if it looks different.

2 FEELINGS THEY MAY NOTICE

- Sadness, anger, fear, guilt, or confusion.
- Loneliness or feeling left out of adult grief.
- Worry about other family members.
- A need to protect parents or hide their feelings.

3 DIFFERENT WAYS OF GRIEVING

- Some siblings talk; others become quiet.
- Younger children may ask the same questions again.
- Teens may pull away or become more emotional.
- Grief can change as a sibling grows older.

4 MAKING SPACE TO REMEMBER

- Speak the child's name in family conversations.
- Invite stories, photos, and favorite memories.
- Include siblings in traditions when they want to be.
- Let each person remember in their own way.

5 WHEN THEY NEED WORDS

- "I miss my brother/sister."
- "I am worried about our family."
- "I do not know what to feel."
- "Can we talk about them?"

6 HOW ADULTS CAN HELP

- Listen without correcting or rushing feelings.
- Offer honest, age-appropriate answers.
- Keep routines while allowing flexibility.
- Let them know they do not have to grieve alone.

7 CARING FOR THE FAMILY

- Parents and siblings may grieve differently.
- Different expressions do not mean less love.
- Make room for quiet and connection.
- Seek support when grief feels too heavy.

8 HOPE FOR TOMORROW

- The sibling relationship remains part of the story.
- Love can continue through memory and tradition.
- Growth does not mean forgetting.
- Every family can find its own way forward.

