

## Ages & Stages

Cognitive age	Their understanding	Typical reactions & behaviors
0-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No understanding of death</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May try to look for the person who has died</li> <li>Become clingy</li> <li>Have disrupted sleep and feeding patterns</li> <li>Possibly cry inconsolably</li> </ul>
2-5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May see death as reversible</li> <li>May feel they caused the person to die</li> <li>Have fantasy thoughts - they may construct fantasies and stories to fill in the gaps of knowledge surrounding the death</li> <li>May think that they caused the death and/or that they can 'magic' them back</li> <li>Generally don't understand that death is final and that it is universal (all living things will eventually die)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regression of behaviours and skills</li> <li>Loud and angry outbursts</li> <li>Sleep difficulties</li> <li>Unhappy with any changes to their routines</li> <li>Fear of being separated from their main caregivers</li> <li>Lots of questions</li> <li>Anxiety over being left, even for a very short period of time</li> <li>May become anxious about the dark</li> <li>May require reassurance that dead people feel no pain</li> <li>No understanding of the permanence of death</li> </ul>

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6-12 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tend to think of death as a 'character'. A shadowy being that can be defeated as long as you know how</li> <li>Coming to realize that death is permanent</li> <li>At the top of this age range they normally understand what death means and think about how death can occur and even consider things such as "Is there an after life?"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May develop an obsession with death and dying</li> <li>Angry, guilty, sad, withdrawn, depressed, lonely</li> <li>Possible problems at school</li> <li>Sleeping difficulties</li> <li>Nightmares</li> </ul>
12+ years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Know death is permanent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May lose some of their independence, be more reliant on adults than they were previously</li> <li>Angry, guilty, sad, withdrawn, depressed, lonely</li> <li>Insecure, have low self-esteem</li> <li>May feel rejected</li> <li>May use jokes and sarcasm as a means of coping</li> <li>May become involved in risk taking behaviour</li> </ul>

