










Talking to Your Children about the Death of Your Baby

It's important to remember that children of all ages grieve. They may be afraid, act out or need special attention and extra time with people they love and trust. Some children may think that they're going to die too. They can cope better with grief when they know what's happening. Here are some ways you can help them understand the baby's death:

-  Talk with them about death using simple, honest words that they understand. You can say things like, "the baby didn't grow," or "the baby was born very tiny." Don't use words that may confuse or scare them, such as "the baby is sleeping," or "mommy lost the baby."
-  Read them stories that talk about death and loss. Resources for children's books include your local library or school. Children's books may help them understand death and learn that other children have had the same experience.
-  Encourage them to ask questions. Give as much information as your child needs. Remember that children think differently than adults and they may have questions over time rather than right away.
-  Be aware of changes in your children's behavior. They may be hurt, confused and angry, just like you. Younger children may be clingy or cranky. They may act in ways or do things that they haven't done in a long time (such as wetting their bed or pants, getting into fights at school, being scared of the dark, etc). Older children may be more worried about school, friends or sports; or they may show no reaction at all to the baby's death. They also may ask questions that you think are rude or uncaring. These are normal reactions. Be as patient and loving as you can.
-  Tell them they are not going to die.
-  Tell them that no one is to blame for the baby's death.

-
- 
-  Ask them to find their own ways to remember the baby. Older children may want to go to the memorial service or funeral. Younger children can draw a picture or make a keepsake for the baby. These keepsakes can be included in a memory kit or scrapbook.

 -  Ask a counselor to meet with you and your children to help all of you understand your feelings. Enclosed are resources available in your community.

 -  Tell your children's teachers and other caregivers what has happened.

Adapted from http://www.marchofdimes.com/pnhec/572_15999.asp

