



# Guy's Gift

**Support for children and young people  
in Coventry and Warwickshire**

• bereavement • change • loss • separation

Call **0845 467 3035** or email [info@guysgift.co.uk](mailto:info@guysgift.co.uk)



# Explaining a Death to young children

## Explaining a Death to Children

While it may not be necessary for children to know all the details of a death immediately, we should be mindful that they may hear details from other people, the news or the playground.

It is important that they are told a truthful account by someone they know and trust.

- Explaining a death that is traumatic needs to be viewed as a process that is built upon. It is unlikely to be achieved in one go.
- The news needs to be told in a way that they can understand;
  - o Taking into account age and maturity
  - o Providing opportunities to ask questions and to talk about it
- It may not be possible for them to take everything in in one go so information will probably need to be repeated. They will most likely ask questions and want to talk again. It is important that they know this is okay to do so. At the same time, there should be no pressure to do so.
- Children need to be able to 'make sense' of what has happened. Being able to talk about the person who died can help to build a 'story' that is understandable to them. This can take time and may develop as they mature so being able to build on their understanding can be useful.
- Within a family, the information given to siblings should be such that can be shared, bearing in mind that older children may have a more mature understanding.