



KEY POINTS TO HELP YOUR CHILDREN AFTER A LOSS

Dealing with your child's response to your pregnancy loss is emotionally taxing. Children of all ages might experience mood and behavior changes after a loss. You can help your child by explaining about the baby's death in simple, frank terms and by being truthful about your own sorrow. Children need opportunities to express their anger and anxieties as they gradually come to terms with the loss. Here are some suggestions that can help your child after a pregnancy loss:

- Tell your child about the loss as soon as possible, simply and directly. Try to avoid euphemisms such as "The baby is sleeping" or "We lost the baby," as a young child in particular may take these statements literally and may fear going to sleep or expect the baby to be found.
- Your youngster might feel sad and vulnerable after your loss and need lots of love and attention. Parents, other relatives, close friends and familiar sitters can all help.
- Assure your child that nothing she or anyone else thought about, said or did caused the pregnancy loss. Explain that the rest of the family is healthy and that the problem the baby died from is different from other sicknesses.
- If you hold a funeral service or other ritual for the baby, and your child wishes to attend, you may want to give her that option. Children four and older are more likely to show an interest in these rituals, but again, this is very individual.
- Try to get your child's routine back to normal as soon as possible. Planning special time or activities together, when you feel ready, can help both of you during this difficult period.
- Be prepared for your child to ask the same questions over and over, or for different questions to arise as she grows and matures. Try to respond to your child's concerns so she feels free to talk about this significant event in her life.
- If your child has symptoms or behavior changes that continue for many weeks after a loss, she may need additional help. Be sure you have adequate support for yourself, and consult a qualified psychotherapist if your child's difficulties continue.

Kuhn, Ingrid and Moffitt, Perry-Lynn with Wilkins, Isabelle. "A Silent Sorrow-Pregnancy Loss: Guidance and Support for You and Your Family." (2000): 171.

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