

The overall message to staff about supporting bereaved children

- Try to maintain the child's feelings of **security**, of being cared for, of being loved.
- Try to maintain all the necessary **practical care** for the child. (e.g. ensuring that they are eating, caring for themselves, sleeping etc.)
- Keep up the **routines** (of home/and school) so that "life goes on", but be prepared to accommodate some outbursts or extreme reactions by providing "time-out".
- Be **honest** with yourself and the child (at the child's own level of understanding).
- Continue to **listen** (even if the same question reappear), to talk and communicate.
- Do **not pretend to believe** what you don't believe, about what has happened.
- Try to **understand the child's feelings** (as a child of their particular age) and reassure where possible that their reactions are perfectly normal.
- Don't be afraid to say "**I don't know!**" You can't be expected to have all the answers.
- Don't be afraid to **share your own feelings**, even if you get a bit upset. It will help to explain that adults also have these deep and confusing feelings (which we normally keep private).
- Remember there are **others who can help**. Find another adult to offload to on a regular basis (i.e. person who can listen, understand and comment). Supporting a child can be upsetting and emotionally very demanding, and it is very important to get this personal support.
- Don't be afraid to **admit** to colleagues, family and managers that **you can't cope** at any particular time.
- **Support** for you or the child can come from inside and outside agencies.