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## Including Children

Children need to be included in the experience of caring for a dying loved one. They have active imaginations and if they are excluded, may imagine the situation to be much worse than it is.

Explain what is happening in a way that is appropriate for their age and tell them what to expect. Don't give them more information than they need or ask for.

Tell them that you are open to their questions. Answer them honestly and be prepared to listen. It's okay to acknowledge that you don't have all the answers. There are some mysteries that we cannot explain. They will be watching you to see how you are coping and taking their cues from you.

Let them know that death is a natural part of life. Everything that is alive must die one day. Explain their feelings and offer them your love and support. Use words like *dead* and *died*, not *passed on*, *expired* or *went to sleep*. Include them in funeral planning if they wish.

