

Helping Your Child Cope with Losing a Pet

Kids Path

- Allow your child to grieve his or her loss.
- Understand that the magnitude of the loss may be different for your child than it is for you.
- Allow your child to experience all of the emotions and reactions that accompany the grief process.
- Children in the same family faced with loss may express their grief in very different ways. Allow children to grieve in whatever way is best for them.
- Just as an important person cannot be replaced, neither can a pet.
- Don't push your child into getting a new pet in an attempt to divert his or her grief. Let your child decide when the time is right for a new friend.
- Help your child remember the pet that died by establishing a memorial. Place a special marker at the site where the pet is buried or plant a special flower or shrub to mark the site. Having a memorial service or funeral may also help your child say goodbye.
- For many children, losing a pet is their first experience with death. Use this opportunity to speak with your child about death and dying.
- Being open with your child about death now, will help prepare him or her for other losses in the future.



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