

<p>be more significant in terms of future physical, social, and emotional growth than at any subsequent age.</p> <p>Toddlers are egocentric and can only think about events in terms of their own frame of reference—living. Their egocentricity and vague separation of fact and fantasy make it impossible for them to comprehend absence of life. Instead of understanding death, this age group is affected more by any change in lifestyle.</p>		
Preschool Children		
<p>Preschoolers believe their thoughts are sufficient to cause death; the consequence is the burden of guilt, shame, and punishment.</p> <p>Their egocentricity implies a tremendous sense of self-power and omnipotence.</p> <p>They usually have some understanding of the meaning of death.</p> <p>Death is seen as a departure, a kind of sleep.</p> <p>They may recognize the fact of physical death but do not separate it from living abilities.</p> <p>Death is seen as temporary and gradual; life and death can change</p>	<p>If they become seriously ill, they conceive of the illness as a punishment for their thoughts or actions.</p> <p>They may feel guilty and responsible for the death of a sibling.</p> <p>Greatest fear concerning death is separation from parents.</p> <p>They may engage in activities that seem strange or abnormal to adults.</p> <p>Because they have fewer defense mechanisms to deal with loss, young children may react to a less significant loss with more outward grief than to the loss of a very significant person. The loss is so deep, painful, and threatening that the child must deny it for a time to survive its overwhelming impact.</p> <p>Behavior reactions such as giggling, joking, attracting attention, or regressing to earlier developmental skills indicate children's need to distance themselves from tremendous loss.</p>	<p>Help parents deal with their feelings, allowing them greater emotional reserves to meet the needs of their children.</p> <p>Help parents understand behavioral reactions of their children.</p> <p>Encourage parents to remain near the child as much as possible to minimize the child's great fear of separation from parents.</p> <p>If a parent has died, encourage having a consistent caregiver for child.</p> <p>Promote primary nursing.</p>