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## Tips for Helping Grieving Children Handle the Holidays

1. The first holidays following the death of a loved one are usually the hardest due to the traditions that surround holidays. Sometimes the anticipation of the day is worse than the actual day, but planning ahead is important.
2. Even though children can experience very intense grief emotions on a holiday, they may be able to put their grief aside and be very excited. This is the normal in childhood grief.
3. The magic of the holidays is usually more exciting for children than for adults. Children still need holiday fun and family traditions, but don't try to act as if no one is missing.
4. Family traditions do not have to be celebrated exactly as you've always done them. They can still be meaningful but less painful with small modifications.
5. Talk to your children about what they would like to do for the holidays. Get their ideas about what to change and how to commemorate the memory of the person who is gone. Talking & planning ahead helps everyone.
6. Simple ceremonies such as lighting a candle in memory of the person or hanging a special angel on the tree can be very meaningful.
7. Don't be afraid to talk about the person who died; share some holiday memories about them. This process can be sad and painful, but it can also lead to happy memories and even laughter.
8. Let your children know you may not be in the best physical or emotional condition, that day. Explain that if you are upset, angry or sad, it is not because of anything they did, grief bursts can come at anytime.
9. Do not put too many demands on yourself or your children for the day. Your energy is limited because of grief, so this may be the year to scale back.
10. If you don't like the changes you made this year, evaluate & try something different the following year.

No one should  
grieve alone!