

# HELPING CHILDREN DEAL WITH THE LOSS OF A PET



**P**ets are more than just animals; they are valuable members of the family. Our furry friends give us unconditional love and quickly become an integral part of our lives.

Unfortunately, the joys of being a pet owner inevitably cannot last forever as our pets eventually pass away because of old age, illness, or an accident.

Although it is impossible to shelter kids from the harsh reality of death there are several things you can do as a parent or carer to help little ones navigate through the stages of grief.

## BE HONEST

Everyone grieves in their own unique way. For children, the death of a pet can be an especially confronting experience as they oftentimes have little experience with death. Like any difficult topic, try to gauge how much information your child can handle based on their age, maturity level and life experience.

Don't be afraid to use words like "death" or "dying" as this helps a child understand the meaning of death. Be as honest as possible with your child. Not only will they grow to appreciate your honesty, but it saves you, as a parent or carer, from lying to your child.

## ENCOURAGE OPEN DISCUSSION

Like yourself, the special child in your life may be experiencing a range of different complex emotions. It is

important that as a parent or carer you encourage your child to talk about how they're feeling and prompt them to ask as many questions as they need to help understand. It is not uncommon to feel like you don't have all the answers, but by simply listening to your child, you are ultimately aiding in the development of their emotional intelligence and ability to overcome difficult situations.

By making it apparent that you will always be there for your child, especially providing emotional support, you are strengthening the already existing bond you share with them.

## INVOLVE YOUR CHILDREN

It has become increasingly popular for pet owners to hold funerals or special remembrance ceremonies for their beloved pets as it allows the family to see the pet in a peaceful state ahead of their final farewell. Involve your children in the process, as much as you feel they can handle. This allows them to feel like they were not excluded from the decision-making.

At Pet Angel Funerals, it is common for family members to call ahead and request their pet be placed in our remembrance room so children can say goodbye to their animal with flowers, cards, photos and most importantly, pet treats. A funeral of this nature is incredibly helpful in the grieving process as it puts the child's mind at rest that the pet is in good hands.

Losing a beloved pet is hard enough, the team at Pet Angel Funerals will help you during this difficult time.