

Signs That a Child Needs Professional Help

Any of these signs may be present initially in grief... pay attention if these persist over time. If you are concerned about a child, talk with the school counselor and parents to see if they are seeing the same signs. Try not to over state your case. Most parents will welcome the honest observations and concern. It is helpful to have a list of resources for them, should they concur and wish to seek professional help.

Physical Signs:

- Changes in eating (less or more)
- Changes in sleep (less or more)
- Significant loss of energy
- Nausea
- Headaches
- Stomach Aches

Emotional Signs:

- Persistent anxiety
- Hopes of reunion with deceased
- Desire to die
- Clinging to others
- Absence of all grief
- Strong resistance to forming new attachments
- Inability to concentrate
- Confused or distorted thinking
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Cognitive Signs:

- Inability to concentrate
- Confused or distorted thinking
- Expression of only negative or only positive about the deceased

Behavioral Signs:

- Aggression, displays of power
- Withdrawn, regression
- Overachieving syndrome
- Inability to focus, concentrate
- Self destructive
- Excessive daydreaming
- Compulsive care-giving
- Accident-prone
- Stealing, other illegal activities
- Use/abuse of drugs/alcohol
- Unable to speak of the deceased

Any signs of long-term or clinical depression are red flags, as are your own "gut feelings" about whether a child is really struggling with more than just the profound sadness that typifies "normal" grief.