

HOW TO SUPPORT NEWLY BEREAVED PARENTS



Dealing with grief is highly individual and there's no best way to do it. We are continually learning from affected families and finding new ways to support them. The important thing is being present, available and sensitive to their needs. Here are a few examples of different things grieving parents have found helpful:

- Reassurance that they are not alone.
- Check-ins from friends, family and medical providers. Don't assume they don't want to be bothered. Parents of medically complex children often develop close relationships with their child's providers; losing these relationships after your child dies can feel like a double loss.
- Being there and having difficult but thoughtful conversations with parents and families soon after the death of an affected child. The anticipated experience is often different from the actual experience, for example reassuring them that their child wasn't in pain nor suffering can deliver lasting positive effects.
- Reaching out after the initial wave of support and condolences means a lot. Within a month of a death, most people move on, but grieving parents have barely begun to heal. Set a reminder to show parents you're thinking of them on a regular basis, especially key dates like birthdays, holidays or anniversaries.

By being empathetic and supportive, you can help make this incredible difficult process easier for affected parents and families.