

THE GRIEF BRIEF



Emma's Place
Staten Island Grief Center for
Children and Families

Support ~ Community ~ Hope

HELPING A GRIEVING CHILD DURING THE HOLIDAYS

"Happy Holidays" is a phrase we hear over and over again during this time of year as people cheerfully rush around making plans, buying gifts and looking forward to visiting family. Unfortunately for a grieving child, the holidays can be far from happy, and presents its own unique challenges. Adults in a bereaved child's life can play a significant role in helping them through this difficult time by keeping the following in mind:

- It is important that any feeling a grieving child has is acknowledged and is helped to express these feelings in a healthy way. It is more helpful to a child in processing their grief to be given the space to feel feelings instead of being talked out of them in an effort to try to help them feel happier.
- Don't force a child to accept invitations to parties or other activities that they don't want to go to. Find out what they would prefer to be doing and offer your time to be with them.
- Find a way to incorporate the lost loved one in this year's holiday traditions. One thing difficult about the holidays after losing someone is that those that are grieving feel that the holidays will never be the same, and they think that means they will never enjoy the holidays again. It is helpful to show children that while the loved one is not physically here, they can still feel their presence and continue a relationship with them. These can become new holiday traditions that will honor the lost loved one. Some suggestions are: lighting candles in memory of the lost loved one, creating special frames for the loved ones pictures and putting them near other holiday decorations, writing a holiday card to the loved one, at a holiday meal have everyone share a special memory about the lost loved one. Allow children to be part of the decision making process of how to honor the lost loved one.
- Sometimes watching holiday movies where everyone's lives seem happy and perfect can enhance feelings of sadness and loss for a grieving child. Remind your children of the difference between fantasy and reality. Sitting with them and asking them to draw a picture about something real and something that's a fantasy can help them understand this, and also help them express their feelings.
- Teachers, or parents having their children's friends visit should be aware of doing holiday activities that assume every child has a parent to give a gift to. Instead of saying, for example, we will make picture frames for your moms or tie-clips for your dads, have a choice of gifts to make, and ask children who they would like to make a gift for.

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Inside this issue:

Helping a Grieving Child During the Holidays	1
Emma's Place Schedule	2
Healing Activity	2
Questions and Answers	2



At Emma's Place you will

- Be supported by those who have journeyed through their own path of grief.
- Find a community of welcoming, caring and committed individuals who will listen.
- Learn healthy grief processing in a private, safe-setting which facilitates healing while offering the hope and tools to move forward to a meaningful life.

*"What is to give
light must endure
burning."
-Victor Frankl*

**Emma's Place
Staten Island Grief & Loss
Center For Children and
Families**

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Staten Island, NY**

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We rely on you.

Our Center is supported through donations, grants, memorials and bequests; which will allow us to provide these services at no cost to the children and families it serves.

There are a variety of ways to support Emma's Place and to help reach grieving children and families. Currently Emma's Place receives no government grants and relies entirely on community support to sustain the organization. We are currently looking for a permanent, cozy home for Emma's Place. Anyone with knowledge of a safe, house or building for rent or as a donation would be greatly appreciated.

Donations can be made out directly to Staten Island Grief Center and mailed to Emma's Place, 276 Watchogue Road Staten Island, NY 10314 . Emma's Place staff members are available to make presentations or talk further on the phone – please contact us at 347-850-2322 or info@emmasplacesi.com

We greatly appreciate your generosity!

Read more about Emma's Place at:

[Staten Island Live Column](#)

or [See our Facebook page!](#)

Emma's Place Schedule

CHILDREN'S GROUPS

1st & 3rd Mondays

Ages 4-9yrs 4:00PM

Ages 10-14 5:00PM

Ages 15-19 6:30PM

ADULT GROUPS

1st & 3rd Tuesdays,

7:00PM

UPCOMING EVENTS

Grief & Loss
Training for
Volunteers TBD

Holiday Activity You Can Do With A Grieving Child

Materials needed:

Gift Boxes
Wrapping Paper
Ribbons and Bows
Clay
Drawing Paper
Crayons
Markers
Stickers



Have children create a present for themselves filled with all the gifts that their loved one gave them. Explain to children that gifts can be a certain quality like kindness, understanding or something the loved one taught them, like how to play baseball.

- 1. These presents can either be drawn, made out of clay, or stickers can be used on paper to represent the gift.**
- 2. Children will wrap the gift, and save it to open when they want to during their holiday. When they open it, they will be reminded of all the gifts they received from their loved one.**

Questions and Answers

My child's 2nd grade classmates' mother died. My child didn't know the child or parent very well, but is there anything I should be doing for my child in relation to the loss?

Even though your child may not be directly affected by the loss, they can still be indirectly affected when they see someone close to them or

someone they identify dealing with a difficult loss.

You can use the loss as an opening to have an honest discussion about death with your child. Answer questions truthfully, without using euphemisms like, it's like she is sleeping, or away on vacation, as these statements cause more.

confusion and fear in children than when you answer them openly in language they can understand. Also remind your child to not treat the classmate any differently. Reassure your child of how many people they have in their life who love and care about them.