

Explaining Cremation to your Child

Before any discussion with a child occurs, parents should consider the age of the child, the personality of the child, and the needs of the child. The younger the child, the simpler the explanation needs to be. The older the child, the more complex, complete and abstract the answers to their questions may be.

<p>Allow children to ask any questions they want answered, and then be prepared to answer them honestly.</p>	<p>Some children are filled with curiosity and will want to know all kinds of things about death, bodies, funerals, etc. Other children are more introverted and will do their grief work internally.</p>	<p>Children need honesty, communication, and inclusion in funeral rituals.</p>	<p>Above all, always communicate that you and the child are going to be safe and cared for- and that life will not always be this sad.</p>
<p>One way to facilitate healthy grieving is to have a time to say goodbye to a body before it is taken away for cremation or preparation for burial.</p>	<p>Before you show a child the cremated remains, it would be wise to view them yourself so that you are not taken back at the sight of the remains yourself. If you have viewed them, you can describe to the child what he will see. You might then ask if the child is sure he wants to see the remains.</p>	<p>Children should be asked if they wish to view the body, and their wishes should be respected. Never force the viewing of a body.</p>	<p>Define cremation for children as "putting a dead body in a room with lots of heat until it turns to ashes."</p>
<p>To explain cremation to a child, you may wish to exclude details about heat or burning, choosing instead to explain that cremation helps the body to return to dust as is natural following death.</p>	<p>Educate a child to know that a dead body does not feel pain, so cremation does not hurt. Also, tell them that the people who handle the body are very respectful and will take care of the body until the remains are returned to the family.</p>	<p>Adult cremated remains weigh six to eight pounds, while an infant's remains may only weigh a few ounces.</p>	<p>Children should be prepared for what they will see when viewing the body or attending a memorial. Children should also be supervised.</p>