



**CHANDLER UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM**

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***WHAT TO DO WHEN DEATH ENTERS THE LIFE OF A  
CHILD***

Inappropriate Message	Childs Response	Appropriate Message
“Grandpa went to sleep last night And is now in heaven.”	Fear of sleep. Fear of the dark. Nightmares	“Grandpa died last night. This Will be a said time for all of us, But we will get through it together.”
“God loved Daddy so much that he took him to heaven to live with the angels.”	Fear of God, fear mother Will die. Fear of love. Rejection of spiritual values.	“We believe that Daddy is in Heaven with God and that God Knows how very much we miss Daddy.”
“Grandma went on a long trip and won’t be coming back.”	“Why didn’t Grandma say goodbye before she left.” Doesn’t Grandma love me?” Is that why she left without saying goodbye? Where did she go? Fear of loss as Mommy and Daddy leave for awhile. (i.e., to work or shopping). This is basic abandonment.	Grandma was very sick and the sickness made her die. We believe that because she was such a good Grandma. God said she could come and be with him.
(Overheard after the death of a child) “Well you know only the good die young.”	“If the good die young, I don’t want to die so I won’t be good.” Or “Does that mean I am bad?”	“How sad that such a young child died. I wonder if there is anything I can do to help the family.”
“You must always be a good little girl/boy, because Daddy is watching you from heaven.”	Paranoia. Fear of making mistakes. Extreme guilt feelings when they are naughty coupled with an inability to “make it up” to the deceased parent. Feelings of loss of privacy (i.e.), everything is open to scrutiny.	“Daddy’s love for you can never die. He is not with us like he used to be, but we will always remember and love him very much.

Source: Sister Teresa M. Mcintier, CSJ, RN, MS, Phoenix, Arizona

In binder – CRT members resource to be used as needed – handed out to teaching staff/parents as appropriate