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# Passing Paws

SUPPORT BEYOND THE SERVICE

## How to Explain Loss to Children



## *Euthanasia*

There are no rules when it comes to deciding whether or not your children should be in attendance when you say your final goodbyes to your pet. If your child does decide to stay, let them know that they can leave at any time. Perhaps arrange for someone to be with them so that they are not alone and so that your personal involvement in your pet's passing is not interrupted.



## *Supporting your Child's Grieving Process*

It's true that children are very resilient and can resolve their grief and often bounce back more quickly than adults. However this does not lessen the initial impact of losing a furry friend. Depending on their age and experience, a child may not understand the concept of death and what it means. The passing of their pet may be their first experience with a personal loss.

Your child will look to you as a model for how to deal with painful losses throughout their life.

- Let your child know that it's ok to feel sad. We need to hurt in order to heal.
- Resist the temptation to distract them from their painful feelings, for example, "We're going on holidays in a few weeks, why don't you think about that instead?"
- Invite your child to talk about their feelings and to ask questions.
- Encourage your child to help create a memorial for their pet, such as a photo album or planting a rose bush in the garden where they can visit and reflect.

