



## Supporting Children When Someone They Love Has a Serious Illness



Created by Hospice of Santa Cruz [Hospice of Santa Cruz](#)

Everyone in a family is affected when one family member has a serious illness. All are dealing with the unknown and must use strengths they don't even know they have. Most of us haven't been taught how to manage when someone we love is very ill, let alone how to support children and teens during this time. Yet time and again, parents and caregivers find the strength within themselves and learn new coping and parenting skills along the way.

This booklet will help guide you during this difficult time. It describes how children of different ages understand and react to changes in the sick person, in you, and in themselves. In addition, it offers suggestions about how to talk with your children and ways to help your children prepare for the death of a loved one.

As you read this booklet, keep in mind that you are the expert on your child. What works for one child doesn't necessarily work for another. Learn from the experts, but also trust yourself, your child, and your instincts. We hope you come back to this booklet again over time as you travel this journey.

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