

Supporting Children born after the death of a baby or child

Children who are born after the death of a baby or child are often called Rainbow babies. The name “rainbow baby” comes from the idea of a rainbow appearing in the sky after a storm, or after a dark and turbulent time. Some people love this term and others do not like it at all. Children born after the death of a baby or child are likely to need some support to understand what it means to have a brother or sister who has died. Children may also experience feelings of grief as they begin to understand that they will not be able to meet their sibling.

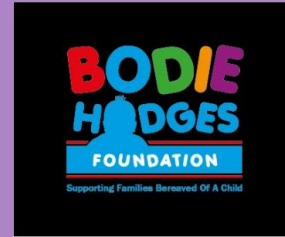
Around the age of 3 children may start to ask questions and try to understand why they can only see their brother or sister in a photograph or look at their hand or footprints. It is important to use simple language that helps them to understand death.

- Your brother or sister died
- When someone dies their heart stops beating and they do not breathe
- Someone cannot come back to us once they have died but we can always love them in our hearts and talk about them
- We cannot be with your brother or sister, but we can remember them

Bonding with their sibling

In time it’s likely that children will form a bond with their brother or sister and may ask questions about how they died and why they died. This can be difficult, but it is helpful to be able to answer your children’s questions honestly and appropriately for their age. Again, simple language will help your child to understand.

Often children born after will openly share that their sibling is dead to others. It can feel shocking to hear this as a parent, and even harder when they tell strangers. They might draw pictures of their siblings or include them in pictures of family. You could think about telling teachers so that when they take part in family activities their brother or sister is included, and teachers know that it is ok to talk about them.



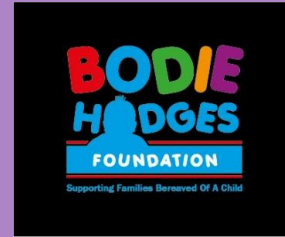
Understanding Feelings

It is common for children to try and work out how to get their brother and sister back and to go through a period of 'missing them'. This can be worrying but remember they are just learning how to love their sibling even though they never got to meet them. Some children do struggle with this and you may feel that they need some help to talk through their feelings and emotions with a professional. Bodie's Treasured Memory bags are designed to help children explore grief.

There is no right or wrong in how families choose to share their child in everyday life and as bereaved parents it is important to work out what feels comfortable for you and your family. Having a family tradition to remember your child might help you and your living child or children to feel that they are never forgotten. Taking a lead for how your living child or children want to include their sibling at special events or occasions can also be empowering and supportive too.

Ways to Remember

- **Show them photographs and share memories**
- **Say their name often**
- **Involve children in remembering birthdays and anniversaries and visiting graves, resting places or special places.**
- **Plant a flower or tree**
- **Buy a windmill or wind-socks**
- **Tie ribbons to a tree or plant**
- **Light a candle**
- **Have a family day out**



Books

Ethan's Butterflies, A spiritual book for young children and parents after the loss of a baby. Jonas Simpson.

To my Rainbow baby with love, Tamika McCauley

The Dragon Fly Story: Explaining the death of a loved one to children and families. Owen Kelly

I Miss You: A first look at death. Pat Thoma

Let's Talk about When Someone Dies. Molly Potter

Bodie's Treasured Memory Bags are available to support children born after the death of a sibling and are available free of charge for children aged 3-18 years.

Visit www.bodiehodgesfoundation.co.uk/bodiestreasured-memory-bags/ to request a bag.