

CHILDREN, GRIEF AND ANGER



Pathways to
Permanence 2

Parenting
Children
Who Have
Experienced
Trauma
AND LOSS

Session 2

Lifelong
Issues in
Permanence

Homework
Optional
Reading

Children's responses to grief, loss, abandonment, and rejection are typically much different than that of an adult. Due to their social, emotional, cognitive, and brain development, most children have not yet attained the skills necessary to be able to verbalize their feelings. Subsequently, we see more acting out of their distressed internal states. Here parents are asked to interpret behaviors, and attune with the child's internal emotional state.

Painful and distressing feelings in children are typically repressed and/or displaced. This most often leads to reactive behavior.

Children who have suffered significant, life-altering losses, often express distress and anger in response to the loss. New parents can easily misread the child's grief and adjustment response, and respond to the child by being punitive, angry, withholding, and reactive. It is necessary for parents to understand that it is typical for children to feel overwhelmed, angry, sad, and distressed by the overwhelming losses they have endured. The child needs reassurance that their new parent understands and is there to help. The child needs to know that their new caregiver will help them learn ways to explore their feelings, and learn more effective ways to express their emotions.