

Grief and Loss

helping your child

- **Encourage your child** to be open about their feelings.
- **Allow your child space** to start a conversation.
- **Talk openly** with your child about their mum or dad.
- **Tell your child that you understand** they must have a lot of big feelings and that you'd like to help.
- **Some children prefer to speak** to someone outside of the family. Give them opportunities to do this. This could be a teacher, school counsellor, family friend or relative.
- **Remember to be very gentle** and don't push. Some children need to be alone while thinking and feeling their emotions, and this is okay for them.
- **Most children need to feel safe** and secure before discussing their feelings. It would be best if you were patient, calm and relaxed.
- **Support your child by spending time together.** Some children will not want to talk about it but will feel supported if you spend time with them doing activities they enjoy.
- **It is important for your child to keep connected** to their mum or dad (when this is safe) even if you decide to stop having a relationship with this family member.
- **Help your child feel in control** of their life by allowing them to make appropriate choices and decisions. This could be picking dinner or something to do on the weekend or which book to read at night.
- **If you have more than one child**, they might want to talk to you without their brother or sister listening.
- **Remember, it's not your or your child's fault** that a loved one is in custody.
- **Chances to play and have new experiences are important** for your child to start healing. Your child has no reason to miss out on having fun and friends.

