WHY FUNERALS ARE IMPORTANT:
- Provide a safe place for the physical and emotional expression of grief.
- Gives others a chance to support the grieving family.
- Gives the bereaved time to reflect on the life of the person who died.

We know it is very important that children not be left out of the family grieving process after someone loved has died. Not allowing a child to participate isolates the child from the rest of the family, perhaps even hindering his or her grieving process.

BUT...WHAT ABOUT DURING THIS COVID-19 OUTBREAK??
In our current reality where physical distancing is a new way of life, funeral planning is certainly more challenging but is not impossible! The question then arises: how can we involve children? Although a child may not completely understand the ceremonies and rituals that surround the death of their loved one, being involved helps the child to establish a sense of comfort, inclusion within their family and teaches them how to honor life.

SUGGESTIONS FOR INVOLVING KIDS...
Whether the services take place now or in the future ask the child how they want to participate. You can share with them what normally happens at a funeral. Children often have great ideas and we just have to hear them out. This is a time you can remind them of the current limitations and why those are in place. Be careful that you don’t let yourself get caught up in an "all or nothing" attitude! Now is the time to be creative!

How kids can be involved with services:
- Have the child help with funeral arrangements, viewing, burial, etc.
- Let children pick out songs that will be played at the funeral.
- Let the child help select the pictures for the memorial folder.
- Have them help design a picture board and as you put them together share stories and memories about your loved one.
- Let them help pick out pictures for a slide show.
- Draw a picture to go in the casket or be cremated with their loved one.
- Write a letter that can be read at the funeral and/or placed in the casket or cremated with their loved one.

If you are unable to attend services:
- View recording/live broadcast of the funeral together as a family.
- Light a candle at a designated time.
- Visit the grave site after the funeral services and leave a keepsake.
- Create your own service led by the children at home and have each person share favorite memories about their loved one.

For more information, please contact Hamilton’s Academy of Grief & Loss
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