

Listen for Their Presence.

 stillstandingmag.com/handbook-to-surviving-the-loss-of-a-child/

These handbooks are collective lists of statements from other bereaved parents who have also lost one, and some, more than one child.

Please download the handbooks below. Click the images to download to your computer. Each image will print out to 8.5"x11".

SURVIVING THE LOSS OF A CHILD *h a n d b o o k*

Make no apologies ❖ There are no guidelines for grief ❖ Someone will say something stupid, hurtful and have the best intentions at heart - try not to listen to their comments ❖ Surround yourself with people you are comfortable being around ❖ Don't feel forced into social events ❖ Cry ❖ Scream ❖ Make all the memories you can with your child ❖ Take photos, dress them, bathe them, look them over. It's your one real chance to parent them ❖ Be kind to yourself ❖ Don't let anyone put a timetable on your grief ❖ Be open about how you feel about certain situations or words said that might be hurtful to you ❖ Breathe ❖ Hold each other ❖ Don't be afraid when a smile breaks across your face for the first time ❖ You deserve happiness ❖ You are not alone ❖ Collect things that remind you of their child ❖ Look for signs or 'hello's' from Heaven ❖ Be angry ❖ Embrace grief, for the ugly beast it is ❖ It will not always be this raw ❖ Look for hope, and when you find it, don't let it go ❖ There is no right or wrong way to grieve ❖ To grieve is to love ❖ Be gentle on yourself, grief is hard work ❖ Talk about your child to whomever will listen ❖ Accept help ❖ Ask for help in the big and little things ❖ Don't underestimate the weight you are carrying ❖ Don't blame yourself ❖ You are worth it all ❖ Make a scrapbook or keep a memory box with the mementos and possible photos you might have ❖ Don't be surprised if you can't cry ❖ Don't feel guilty if visiting the cemetery becomes unbearable ❖ This feeling will not last forever ❖ Women and men grieve differently, they just do ❖ Find the support that works for you, whether that it is a local meet-up, an online forum, or real life friends ❖ Don't be afraid to let the anger and sadness go when you feel ready ❖ Your love for your child is not measured by your sadness or tears ❖ Your child will not be forgotten ❖ Don't feel guilty if you cannot cry at first, this might just be due to shock ❖ The tears will come, and when they do, let them fall ❖ It will not always be like this ❖ When you wonder if what you are feeling is "normal", the answer is a resounding yes ❖ Make a place in your home for your child ❖ Find a place or activity that makes you feel close to your child ❖ The pain of losing a child is not just emotions, it literally aches ❖ Respect your grief and give it time ❖ Give your body rest, grief is some of the hardest work you will ever do ❖ Avoid those that are not supportive of your grieving process, when possible ❖ Grief is hard enough without being judged ❖ When you find laughter and pieces of joy again, it will be sweeter than it ever was before loss ❖ Embrace these moments, you deserve them ❖



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WHEN YOU KNOW YOU WILL BE SAYING GOODBYE

h a n d b o o k

Take pictures ❖ Take videos ❖ You may not feel comfortable or want them now, but one day you will
❖ Contact NILMDTS, Heartfelt or ask your hospital if a volunteer can take pictures for you ❖ Get
close up pictures, of hands, feet and face ❖ Get your support system in place, even if it is one person
❖ You need at least one person to get it and not judge you ❖ Write your baby a letter ❖ Plan a
memorial service, whatever that means to you, have ideas in place. That is the hardest thing to do, but
it's even harder after you lose your child ❖ Consider having a photographer and videographer at the
service ❖ Cherish every moment you have, they are not gone until they are gone ❖ If possible, make
a mold of your baby's hands and feet ❖ Have a photographer or even a family member or friend take
maternity pictures ❖ Get a recorded sonogram ❖ Give your baby a bath (even after they pass away, if
needed) and use a scented lotion so you have a smell associated with your baby that you can go back
to afterwards ❖ Keep everything from the hospital from hats to blankets to wristbands ❖ Get
footprints and hand prints ❖ Play music in the room with your baby during those last few hours and
minutes, so you can have music to associate with your child ❖ You may want a scented candle for
similar reasons ❖ Go places you would have wanted to take your child, if possible ❖ Read a story to
them ❖ Get a recorded heartbeat at an ultrasound appointment ❖ Put used blankets and worn outfits
in plastic baggies and seal ❖ Have an artist of a belly cast on you ❖ Purchase a special outfit for your
child ❖ Don't be afraid to hold your child for too long ❖ Save a lock of hair if possible ❖ Hold your
baby close and don't let anyone tell you when your time is up ❖ Sing to your child ❖ Get a special
blanket and wrap them in it those last few moments ❖ Keep the blanket and store it in a sealed bag so
you can savor the scent for years to come ❖ Don't watch the monitors ❖ Be present with your child
in the moment ❖ Create a specific birth plan ❖ Consider seeking the aid of a bereavement doula ❖
Have a 3D/4D ultrasound ❖ Ask a nurse for heated blankets to wrap your baby in to keep them warm
during your time with them ❖ Kiss your baby ❖ Study your baby's toes, fingers, lips, hands, belly
button, eyes, nose ❖ Breathe ❖



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These handbooks are something you might even consider sharing with your friends and family who sometimes do not know how to help or *be there*. We hope this can also serve as an eye opener to those just wanting to be a support. You might also share this with your doctors, nurses and any other medical professionals who might be interested in passing this out.

Other helpful links: [Resource Page](#) and [Ways to Honor Your Child](#).