

telling the kids

some advice on how to tell your little ones the difficult news

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WHAT TO SAY

Just as women all react to miscarriage in their own individual way, so too will children vary in their reactions to the news, depending on their ages and stage of development.

Even if you haven't yet told your other child/ren of your pregnancy, they are sure to notice if you are upset or crying and may ask why. They may notice if their routine changes and you aren't able to pick them up from preschool or school, or if you need to go into hospital.



If your children knew about the pregnancy, or if they were with you when you began to miscarry, you should offer them some sort of explanation and reassure them that you are ok. How much detail you go into is up to you, but obviously an age appropriate explanation is best.



TODDLER/YOUNGER CHILD

A toddler/younger child will probably not grasp the full meaning of the situation, and nor should they need to. If they knew mummy had a baby in her tummy, you can let them know that the baby died and isn't in mummy's tummy anymore. Some children may ask questions, and if they do, answer them as best you can for their age. Likewise, other kids may not seem overly phased and will simply get on with whatever they're doing. If your children were unaware you were pregnant and you don't want them to know about the miscarriage, you can let them know that mummy isn't feeling well and is a bit sad. Reassure them that it's nothing they've done and that you love them very much - and give them a big hug.



AN OLDER CHILD

An older child may ask questions such as, 'Why did this happen?', 'Am I going to die too?', 'Can we have another baby?', 'How did the baby get out of your tummy?' No matter what the question, answer it as honestly as you can in an age appropriate way. If your child was excited about becoming an older brother or sister, the news may be upsetting for them. Give them lots of hugs and reassure them how much you love them. Your child might like to draw a picture or write a letter for the baby as a way of saying goodbye and expressing their feelings.

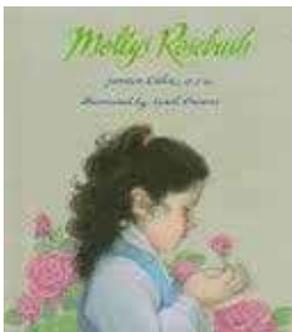
Kids in their teens will be able to tolerate a more direct explanation. You can talk with them about the reasons miscarriages happen, and if you know the reason for yours, you can explain it to them. Answer any questions they may have honestly. It might also be good to let them know you may be upset for a while and if you are inadvertently short tempered, it's nothing to do with them.

There is no right or wrong way to address a miscarriage with children, but in general straightforward, simple explanations are best. Always reassure them that the miscarriage was not their fault and that you love them very much.



RESOURCES

A few books exist to help discuss the subject of pregnancy loss with younger children. Here are two examples:



Molly's Rosebush

Authors: Janice Cohn & Gail Owens

This book targets children ages 4 to 7 and offers an anecdote in which a young girl named Molly is sad about her mother's miscarriage. Molly's grandmother gently reminds her of an unhatched robin's egg and that not all babies are born in nature either, so Molly and her grandmother buy a pink rosebush to help everyone feel better.

We were gonna have a baby, but We had an angel instead

Authors: Pat Schwiebert and Taylor Bill

This is a 24-page picture book that aims to help parents explain pregnancy loss to children.



Talking-to-Children, Is it called a miscarriage because we miss the baby?

Authored by: Miscarriage Association organisation - UK

This is written mostly for parents, but we hope it will also be useful if you are a relative or friend, or if you work with children.

