

## **Parent Tips for Helping Children Handle Tragic Events**

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- Children sense the anxiety and tension in adults around them.
- Each child responds differently to tragic events, depending on his or her experiences, understanding, and maturity.
- Children will interpret the tragic event as a personal danger to themselves and those they care about.
- Your child needs to talk about his or her feelings.
- Remember that our children are more vulnerable to stress due to our continued reactions to events of September 11, 2001, and their aftermath.

### **Signs of Stress**

Parents should be alert to these changes in a child's behavior now or in the future:

- Persistent fears related to the incidents (such as fears about being hurt or being permanently separated from parents)
- Sleep disturbances such as nightmares, screaming during sleep, and/or bed wetting which persist more than several days after the event
- Loss of concentration and irritability
- Change in activity level
- Behavior problems, such as, misbehaving in school or at home in ways that are not typical of the child
- Physical complaints (stomachaches, headaches, dizziness) for which a physical cause cannot be found
- Withdrawal from family and friends, sadness, listlessness
- Preoccupation with the events of the incident