Bereavement and Loss
Children with Special Educational Needs
Rainbows Bereavement Support GB

- Structured age related programmes
- Facilitated by trained adults in a safe setting
- Support to write bereavement policy and procedures
- Support for those experiencing a significant LOSS in their lives
Sudden death

Grief is a universal emotion and applies to all human beings regardless of their abilities or disabilities.

It is difficult to predict anyone’s reaction to a sudden death.

Children with special/additional needs are no different.

Each person’s reaction will be unique to them.
The Challenges

- Understanding and expressing feelings
- Making ‘wrong connections’
- Abstract thinking
- Change
- Practical needs being met
ALL children need to:

- Have their questions answered
- Be listened to
- Be given appropriate information
- Be in a safe situation
- Have people that they trust
Children with Additional Needs:

- All the previous points plus particular attention to their individual needs and understanding
- Clear language - ‘gone to sleep’
- Developmentally appropriate involvement - not age
- Explanation of death words – funeral, dead, coffin
- Pen portrait of child – what will help and what will hinder understanding
Be prepared to repeat an explanation until it is processed and understood

Routines help all children feel safe

Practical arrangements – will there be a change in living arrangements, who will cook tea

Their emotions maybe difficult for them to understand
- Need to know that it is ok to be happy
- Acceptance of unfamiliar displays of grief
- Help to express their grief – visual support where necessary
- Help to understand that death is not like on TV or computer games
Support over time

- Schools, agencies and social settings accessing training in bereavement and loss

- Being prepared for ‘When Somebody Dies’

- Having support programmes in place, Rainbows

- Grief has no time scale; anniversaries, special days may always be difficult
SunRise

A new programme developed to assist those with learning disability access bereavement support

- 12/13 week programme
- Rainbows structure
- Additional resources and ideas
- For use in mainstream and special schools
SunRise

- Available for the school year 2016/17

- Allows all children, young people and adults to receive the support they need

- Uses the skills, knowledge and resources that support staff, tutors, cares and teachers already have