Dear families,

Our classroom pet, <name of animal>, died this Saturday. <Explain in minimal detail what happened.> Big ideas, such as death, can often be confusing and abstract for children. For this reason, tomorrow the children will be able to look at her body, ask questions about what they see, offer ideas for what they think may have happened, and paint a special rock for her burial. We will bury her, and I will continue to answer the children’s questions in the upcoming days.

Many times adults view death from a very complex and mature lens and worry that preschoolers will be overly distressed or confused by such events. Often times, due to children’s developmental and cognitive abilities, they approach death in a manner quite different from what we might expect. Children can be curious about what death is, what it looks like, and how it happens.

If you have any questions about how to discuss this subject with your child, I have attached an article I have found helpful in the past. It is geared towards helping teachers, but explains how preschoolers often react to death. Overall, when “big issues” such as death come up, it is best to be honest with children while being mindful to provide simple, easy to understand explanations with limited details.

As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have.

Sincerely,

<your name>