

SUPPORTING GRIEVING SCHOOLS

Teachers, counselors and administrators play an important role in the lives of children, and have many opportunities to help children after a death occurs. Schools should have a crisis response plan to rely upon in the event a student experiences a loss or there is a student death. In addition to the information in this Grief & Emotional Support section on how to support a child, the plan should consider the following:

- How and when teachers will share information with their classes.
- Educating students on how grief affects people, what their fellow classmate(s) may be experiencing and how they can help.
- Consider the various religious and cultural backgrounds of the students and how that may impact the situation.
- Special considerations for high-risk students.
- Support for teachers in grief, including offering substitute teachers.
- General information on how children and teens grieve and what behavior changes can be expected.
- A policy on handling media inquiries and a designated spokesperson who can handle interviews, if appropriate.
- Support for grieving students upon their return to class.
- Professional counseling for students and faculty.
- How the school will memorialize or remember the student who has died. Ideas for commemoration include planting a tree on school grounds, fundraising for a scholarship in honor of the student's favorite activity, dedicating a page in the yearbook to the student, or holding a community memorial service.