



Recognizing Grief Awareness Day in Your School

Children's Grief Awareness Day is held each year on the third Thursday in November. In 2026, it will be marked on November 19. Most children—[about 50-90%](#)—will experience the death of a close family member or friend.

Grieving children are vastly overlooked both in society at large and in schools. Schools have a critical role to play in the grief journeys of children who have lost a loved one. Educators' and classmates' responses to a student's grief can either serve as a source of support and stability during a difficult time, or as an additional hurdle to overcome.

Moreover, grief can have a serious impact on learning for school-age children. Bereavement can lead to decreased academic performance, social withdrawal, and behavioral problems.

Educators have an enormous opportunity to improve outcomes for students by demonstrating an awareness of grief experiences and offering support. Talking with grieving students about their loss helps them cope.

Increasing all students' awareness of the impact of loss can also help those who are grieving. Peers who don't know what to say or do may isolate or tease a grieving classmate after a death. This can worsen the isolation grieving students already feel. When educators equip all students with the skills to support a peer, they help create an environment that is beneficial for the entire school.

SAMPLE SCHOOL ACTIVITIES FOR GRIEF AWARENESS DAY/MONTH

- >> Pledge to become a [Grief-Sensitive School](#)

- >> If you are already a Grief-Sensitive School, encourage your district or other schools in your district and region to become [Grief-Sensitive](#) as well.

- >> Provide a school staff training during November on ways to support grieving students. You can utilize these [educator training modules](#) and [training videos](#) or invite your [local children's bereavement program](#) to provide the training.

- >> Meet with a local children's bereavement support program to discuss setting up school-based grief support groups (you can use [this guide](#) for best practices to establish your own support group in your school), training for school staff, and/or a mechanism for referring grieving students for support services (You can locate programs/centers at <https://elunanetwork.org> and <https://childrengrieve.org/find-support/>).

- >> Inform/remind school staff about the free materials at the [Coalition to Support Grieving Students](#).

- >> Meet with your parent teacher organization during November to make them aware that you are a Grief-Sensitive School. Let them know about the resources of the Coalition to Support Grieving Students. Note: The National PTA is a member of the Coalition.

>> Order or download free resources for your school community including:

After a Loved One Dies: How Children Grieve and How Parents and Other Adults Can Support Them

This booklet explains how children grieve and the ways parents and other caring adults can help them understand death better. The PDF is available for download in [ten languages](#).

What to say and what not to say: Tips for Talking to Grieving Students

This tip card offers valuable advice on how to speak with children who have experienced the death of a loved one.

-[English](#)

-[Spanish](#)

Free print copies of these materials, as well as other materials, are available at the [New York Life bereavement support resource site](#).

>> Review your school or district policies and practices related to supporting grieving students. View some of the [guidance documents](#) on the Coalition's website for ideas.

>> Inform your school staff about National Children's Grief Awareness Month and invite them to choose one of the following options:

1. Encourage educators to reach out to at least one grieving child in their classroom.

<https://grievingstudents.org/modules/conversation-support/>

2. Have school mental health staff reach out to a grieving family from the school community.

<https://grievingstudents.org/module-section/connecting-with-families/>

3. Conduct an age-appropriate classroom lesson for children about grief and the needs of peers who are grieving

(<https://grievingstudents.org/module-section/peer-support/>). Invite students to develop an appropriate classroom or schoolwide project for National Children's Grief Awareness Day.

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The Coalition to Support Grieving Students created a free school practitioner-oriented website, <https://grievingstudents.org>, with over 20 video training modules on topics ranging from how to talk with grieving students to responding to a school crisis event. Endorsed by over 150 professional organizations and free to download, the website provides module summaries, handouts, reference materials, and guidance documents that provide step-by-step practical advice. Free resources for parents and other caring adults are also available.