

## Supporting Grieving Kids and Teens: The Beginning of the School Year

The beginning of the school year can be a challenging time for kids and teens who are grieving. Some things to keep in mind:

- Starting a new school year brings up a variety of conflicting responses for kids and teens: excitement, anxiety over a new routine, and questions about how they will fit in with their peers. For the child or teen who is grieving, these responses can reactivate the confusion that often accompanies losing someone who is important.
- Physical responses play a big role in how a child or teen experiences grief. It is common for grieving children to have changes in eating and sleeping routines. These changes can contribute to increased distractibility in the classroom, headaches and stomach aches, and poor peer relationships.
- Some of the signs that a grieving child or teen may need more support are increased outbursts, being more easily overwhelmed by stress or emotional situations, increased withdrawal, and/or increased need for adult attention.

### How You Can Help

- Kids often just want to “get back to normal” and don’t tell their teachers about losses. It is important to gather information about a child’s loss history when you are getting to know your new students.
- Grieving kids and teens are often not aware that their behaviors are connected to their loss. Provide support by offering to listen, being a compassionate presence, and by helping make connections between this transition and the child's loss.
- If you know of a significant loss but the child is no longer in your class, don’t hesitate to pass that information on to the child’s new teacher. This could make all the difference in the child’s success in the new school year.
- Assist the family in accessing additional community resources, such as a grief support group. Also, reach out for support and education for yourself. Know that the Healing Circles staff is available to provide you with resources, as well as professional consultation.

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**For more information, contact Grief Services at 303.604.5300 or [grief@hospicecareonline.org](mailto:grief@hospicecareonline.org)**



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