

A Special Note for Teachers of Grieving Students

- Acknowledge the death quickly.
- Provide an environment where the children feel comfortable in discussing his or her thoughts and feelings about the death.
- Prepare the class for the return of the bereaved child by discussing what to say and what not to say.
- Have the class write and discuss a condolence note.
- Dedicate an issue of the school newspaper to the family.
- Help prepare your classes for deaths that may happen in the future by providing learning opportunities within the curriculum. Some possibilities are:
 1. In “Current Events,” discuss a death currently in the news and talk about how that death might impact the family and friends of the deceased. This is a good opportunity to introduce concepts of grief and bereavement.
 2. Include words such as “death,” “dying,” “grief,” “mourning,” and “bereavement” on vocabulary lists.
 3. In Math, talk about the average life span of men and women and how they differ.
 4. In Science, discuss the life cycle of plants and animals. Use the seasons as examples.
 5. Ask the school nurse to come and speak of the differences between terminal and non-terminal illness.
 6. Discuss cultural and religious differences in funerals and other rituals.
 7. If a class member attends a funeral, ask if he or she would mind describing the event and what went on to the class.