With Elementary Students Remember:

Don't Use Child Talk

Children depend on their world having specific, reliable, and predictable expectations. The are dependent. You are an adult. Talk like an adult. Adjust your vocabulary to their level. Slow down your communication.

Watch and Liste

Listen to what they are saying. They will guide. If you listen you will know their needs. Consider the child in the context of the family. They mirror what is going on in the family. BE PATIENT.

Grief Outlets Often Take Concrete Forms

Children are more sensitive to change. They do not have the cognitive skills to deal with changes. Maintain routine and stability. Let the children make cards, a memory box, write letters, and color pictures. Allow the child to comfort others. Children cannot sustain long periods of grieving, plan for "chunks" of grief over a longer period of time.

They May Not Follow Your Thinking

Be open and honest. Avoid clichés, or euphemisms. Adults logic does not match a child's. Especially feelings and wants (egocentric). Death is not contagious, help them differentiate. Children especially enjoy stories. Allow them to see and feel emotions of others through stories. With your guidance let them construct meaning.

Let Them Teach You

Be willing to 'sit in the back seat and let them drive.' Don't always be the expert. Do not reject their emotions.

Talking with a Bereaved Student

- Be There
- Listen-Let them tell it over and over
- Resist the urge to "fix," minimize, or give advice
- Be honest, concise, complete, and factual
- Re-establish a sense of safety, predicibility and control. Don't be afraid to be directive

Immediate Emotional Signs Requiring Referral

WHEN		BECOMES
Upset, crying	→	Hysteria
Anger, self-blame	→	Threat to others, self
Anxiety	→	Panic
Fatigue, slowness	→	Physical shock
Dulled response	→	No response, rigidity, fetal position