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South Texas ISD
RIO GRANDE VALLEY | GRADES 6-12

Supporting children and teens with compassion, consistency, and connection



Children's Grief Awareness Month

Supporting children and teens with compassion, consistency, and connection

Mental Health Resource| November 2026

For families, educators, and school staff.

An Introduction to Grief

Grief is a natural, individual response to loss. There is no single correct way to grieve, and each child or teen may respond in their own time and language.

Children and teens may show grief through emotions, behavior, body symptoms, questions, changes in school engagement, or periods of play and normal activity. Adults can help by being present, listening, maintaining routines where possible, and connecting students to support.

Start with connection

You do not need perfect words. A calm presence, honest listening, and reliable follow-through can help a grieving student feel less alone.

What grief can look like at school

At school, grief may be visible, quiet, or change from day to day. Look with curiosity rather than judgment.

Changes in concentration or attendance	**Irritability, sadness, worry, or anger**
Physical complaints or fatigue	**Increased need for reassurance or connection**
Moments of play, humor, or normalcy can coexist with grief.	

Grief is not linear. Responses vary by child, relationship, culture, age, and circumstance.

How adults can help

Small, steady actions can communicate safety and care.

- [ ] Listen without rushing to fix.
- [ ] Use clear, age-appropriate language.
- [ ] Invite questions and allow silence.
- [ ] Keep predictable routines while offering flexibility.
- [ ] Coordinate with caregivers and school support staff.
- [ ] Notice changes over time.
- [ ] Connect the child to professional help when needed.

Try saying

- “I’m here with you.”
- “You can ask me questions.”

“We can find support together.”

A grief-informed school day

Educators can support belonging while responding to changing needs.

Notice	Respond	Connect
Look for changes in behavior, participation, and connection.	Check in privately, offer choices, and reduce unnecessary pressure.	Coordinate with the counselor, caregiver, and appropriate mental-health supports.

Educator reminder

Protect student privacy and avoid requiring public disclosure. Offer private, respectful ways to check in and ask for support.

Rio Grande Valley Resource

Children's Bereavement Center of the Rio Grande Valley (CBC-RGV)

Website: https://cbc-rgv.org/

Phone: 956-368-4065

Free grief support groups, counseling, workshops, and school-based education are available through the organization.

Contact the organization directly for current eligibility, schedules, locations, and enrollment details.

National resource

The Dougy Center

Website: https://www.dougy.org/

The Dougy Center provides grief resources and support for grieving children, teens, young adults, caregivers, and school communities, including toolkits, training, activities, and educational materials.

Visit the website for current programs and resources.

Family conversation starters

Use these prompts to open a door, not to force a conversation.

"What has been the hardest part of this week?"	**"What helps you feel supported?"**
"Would you like me to listen, help solve a problem, or just sit with you?"	**"Who at school feels safe to talk with?"**

Follow their lead

Avoid pressuring the child to talk. Listening, quiet company, and checking back later can all be supportive.

When to connect with additional support

Families and staff may want to consult a school counselor, pediatrician, licensed mental-health professional, or community grief provider when grief is interfering with daily functioning, school participation, sleep, safety, or relationships, or when concerns persist or intensify.

Reaching out is a caring step

It is okay to ask for guidance early. Seeking support is not a judgment about how a child is grieving.

District support contacts- Identify your support network:

Reach out to your School Counselor for additional support. We are here to help!

If someone may be in immediate danger, call 911.

For emotional distress or crisis support in the United States, call or text 988 or visit https://988lifeline.org/

Sources: https://cbc-rgv.org/ · https://www.dougy.org/ · https://988lifeline.org/