

Grief and Loss Policy

Published	June 2018
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Sources	<p>Education and Care Services National Regulations, October 2017</p> <p>Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations, October 2017</p> <p>Guide to the National Quality Standard, February 2018</p> <p>Extract from <i>Putting Children First</i>, the magazine of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC), Issue 27 September 2008 (Pages 22-25)</p>

Aim:

To offer support and understanding to Educators, Educators Families, Children and Families when they are experiencing grief and/or loss.

Explanation:

Grief and loss can be experienced through a variety of ways, and can differ from person to person depending on the circumstances.

Grief can be experienced when:

- A parent or a close family member such as a sibling or grandparent dies
- Parents separate or divorce
- A friend moves away
- A parent is away for a long period of time, for example due to hospitalisation or work
- Moving to a new house and/or to a new school or child care setting
- A pet dies
- A favourite toy or comfort item is lost
- Significant changes in their life routine due to illness or accident affecting either themselves or those who care for them
- They lose a familiar carer, such as a child care professional or regular babysitter

Responsibilities:

In relation to Co-ordination Unit Staff:

- Be aware of the requirements of the current Education and Care Services National Regulations and the relevant National Quality Standard in regard to grief and loss
- Provide support to Educators and Educators Families when they are dealing with grief and/or loss
- Provide support to Educators when they are dealing with children or families who are coping with grief and/or loss
- Provide resources to Educators on how to deal with situations involving grief and/or loss for themselves, their family, children and families
- Provide details to Educators for counselling if required
- Be sensitive and realise that each individual will deal with grief and/or loss differently

In relation to Educators:

- Be aware of the requirements of the current Education and Care Services National Regulations and relevant National Quality Standard) in regard to grief and loss
- Provide support to children and families when they are dealing with grief and/or loss

- Inform Co-ordination Unit Staff if they or their family are experiencing grief and/or loss themselves so that they can be offered support
- Inform Co-ordination Unit Staff if a child or family in their care is experiencing grief and/or loss so that they can be offered support
- Be sensitive and realise that each individual will deal with grief and/or loss differently
- Create a supportive grieving environment for children through:
 - Communicating with families about grief and asking them how they would like their child to be supported
 - Reassuring families that it is normal for children to show changes in behaviour, but that with support and time they can heal from grief, loss and trauma
 - Letting children know that it is okay to be sad and to cry
 - Keeping routines steady and predictable
 - Being available to repeatedly reassure children
 - Being genuine and consistent in showing affection to and supporting distressed children
 - Responding sensitively to children's questions and explaining death and loss in simple terms
 - Providing opportunities, resources and books that encourage children to express their thoughts and feelings
 - Ensuring that there are quiet, private spaces available where children can go if they want some time away from the group
 - Using everyday experiences with children to discuss death and loss as a normal part of life
 - Being clear about your own thoughts and feelings so you can stay calm and support children. It is important that adults avoid being seen by a grieving child as responding in an overly dramatic way to the loss the child has experienced
 - Seeking support for families (and staff if needed) from professionals such as counsellors, doctors or health specialists
 - Avoiding being overly solicitous toward a child who is grieving, and ensuring that they continue to have appropriate boundaries for behaviour

In relation to Families:

- If the child or family is dealing with grief and/or loss let their Educator know so that they can work with the family and child to help and offer support

Continual Monitoring and Improvement:

Continual improvement and monitoring will occur in the following ways:

- Incidental and planned consultation with families
- Co-ordination Unit Staff accessing current relevant information
- Co-ordination Unit Staff and Educators accessing current and relevant training
- Internal evaluation of incidences and the improvement of systems

Policy Review

Date Revised	Comments
April 2014	Scheduled Policy Review – No changes made
October 2015	Scheduled Policy Review – No changes made
April 2017	Scheduled Policy Review – No changes made
June 2018	Update of Sources