



Grief and Loss

Policy Statement

This policy acts to ensure that:

- Educators, families and children are offered support and understanding when during times when they may be 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 childcare 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 childcare professional or regular babysitter

Roles and Responsibilities

Approved Provider & Coordinators

- Provide support to Educators 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

Policy Created
February 2016

Policy Last Updated
October 2021

Policy Review Date
April 2023



Educators

- Provide support to children and families when they are dealing with grief and/or loss
- Inform Service Coordinators if they are experiencing grief and/or loss themselves so that they can be offered support
- Inform Service Coordinators 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

LINKS TO:

- Education & Care Services National Law
- Education & Care Services National Regulations: 155, 168
- National Quality Standards/Elements: 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2
- Child Safe Standards: 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10

Families

- If the child or family is dealing with grief and/or loss let Educators 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
- Approved Provider and Co-ordination Unit Staff accessing current relevant information
- Approved Provider, Co-ordination Unit Staff and Educators accessing current and relevant training
- Internal evaluation of incidences and the improvement of systems

SOURCES

Education and Care Services National Regulations, October 2020

Education and Care Services National Law, February 2018

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations, October 2017

Guide to the National Quality Standard, January 2020

Implementing the Child Safe Standards: A Guide for Early Education and Outside School Hours Care Services, NSW Department of Education, 2021

A Guide to the Child Safe Standards, NSW Office of the Children's Guardian, 2020

Be You – www.beyou.edu.au

Extract from *Putting Children First*, the magazine of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC), Issue 27 September 2008 (Pages 22-25)

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES:

- Communication
- Inclusion & Diversity
- Interactions with Children