

## Grief and Loss Policy

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<b>Review Date</b>	<b>December 2023</b>
<b>Sources</b>	<p>Education and Care Services National Regulations, October 2020</p> <p>Education and Care Services National Law, February 2018</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 Framework, January 2020</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 Law, 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 Law, 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