

Policy Statement

This policy acts to ensure that:

- Educators, families and children are offered support and understanding 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
April 2023

Policy Review Date
April 2025

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

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

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

Continual Monitoring and Improvement

Continual improvement and monitoring will occur in the following ways:

- Incidental and planned consultation with families
- Approved Provider and Coordinators accessing current relevant information
- Approved Provider, Coordinators and Educators accessing current and relevant training
- Internal evaluation of incidences and the improvement of systems

SOURCES

- Education and Care Services National Regulations - December 2021
- Education and care Services National Law - January 2022
- 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
- ACECQA – FDC Approved Provider compliance responsibilities – October 2017
- Be You
- My Time Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia
- The Early Years Learning Framework
- ECA Code of Ethics
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Putting Children First, NCAC Council, Issue 27

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES:

- Child-Safe Environment
- Communication
- Inclusion & Diversity
- Interactions with Children