CAREGIVER INVOLVEMENT:
A Key To Healing

Research indicates that children and teens whose caregivers are actively supportive in the grief process are able to heal more quickly from a loss than those whose caregivers had little to no involvement. How can you become more engaged in your child’s grief process?

- Plan to meet with your child’s Kids Path counselor on a regular basis to check-in
- Ask your child questions about their feelings related to the loss and transitions they face
- Educate yourself: learn about the grief process and what to expect of a grieving child or teen

RETURNING TO ROUTINE AFTER A LOSS

As a new school year approaches many caregivers wonder how to support their grieving child through the transition back to routine. The following steps may help ease the transition:

**Step 1: Communication with the child**
- Engage in a conversation with your child. Review the following:
  - What worries or concerns do they have about returning to routine?
  - What helps them to feel safe and secure when grief feelings become overwhelming?

**Step 2: Make the child’s world safe for grieving**
- Work with your child to prepare for the return to routine:
  - How will they notify an adult of their needs?
  - How will they avoid any unnecessary/unwanted attention?
  - How can you help communicate this plan to the adults at school, daycare, after-school activities, etc…?
- Help your child identify a comforting, discrete item they can keep with them such as a small stone, a soft toy, or a family picture that brings comfort.
- Determine an “Escape Plan” for your child. This plan is a clearly defined process the child can follow should they become overwhelmed with feelings related to their loss.
- Talk with your child about how to contact you in an emergency and identify a back-up emergency contact so that they can always reach someone for support and reassurance.

**Step 3: Communication with Others**
- It is important to prepare adults and caregivers who will interact with your child for their return to routine:
- What happened? Share the circumstances surrounding the loss – this information can help the caregiver feel prepared to best support your child.
- How is your child coping? What triggers their “grief bursts”? (“Grief bursts” are moments of feeling overwhelmed by grief. They are a normal part of the grieving process and can happen at any time – they are not time-limited).
- What helps your child to feel safe and secure when grief feelings become overwhelming?
- Be sure to communicate your child’s “Escape Plan.”
- Share emergency contacts in case of grief bursts.

**Step 4: Partnering with the School**
- The school counselor and/or social worker can be an advocate for your child.
- Offer education related to children and grief.


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AUGUST
Make-a-Memory Bear Workshop
Thursday, 8/16 (6pm-7:30pm)
$10 Materials Fee
A creative workshop for children and teens (ages 5-18) coping with the death of a loved one. Participants will create a keepsake bear to memorialize their loved one.

RTime2B, August
Tuesday, 8/21 (6pm-7:30pm)
Grieving teens (6th-12th graders) are invited to join us around the campfire at Kids Path for a back-to-school celebration in the garden. S'mores provided.

SEPTEMBER
RTime2B, September
Tuesday, 9/18 (5:30pm-7pm)
Our monthly gathering for grieving teens (6th-12th graders) coping with the illness or death of a loved one.

Connecting Rainbows
Tuesdays, 9/25, 10/2, 10/16, 10/23, 10/30, and 11/6 (6pm-7:30pm)
$15 Materials Fee
A support program for K-5th graders and their caregivers coping with the death of a loved one.

OCTOBER
Pathfinders Support Group
Wednesdays, 10/3, 10/10, 10/17, and 10/24 (5:30pm-7pm)
$10 Materials Fee
A grief support program for teens (6th-12th graders) coping with the illness or death of a loved one.

Thrive Group Kick-Off Series
Thursdays, 10/25, 11/1, 11/8, and 11/15 (6pm-7:30pm)
A monthly reunion gathering for teens living with chronic illness who attended the Thrive Support Group.

NOVEMBER
RTime2B, November
Tuesday, 11/13 (5:30pm-7pm)
Our monthly gathering for grieving teens (6th-12th graders) coping with the illness or death of a loved one.

DECEMBER
Thrive, December
Thursday, 12/6 (6pm-7:30pm)
A monthly gathering for teens living with chronic illness.

Hope at the Holidays
Thursday, 12/13 (6pm-7:30pm)
$15 Materials Fee
A special holiday memory-making event for families grieving the death of a loved one.

RTime2B, December
Tuesday, 12/18 (5:30pm-7pm)
Our monthly gathering for grieving teens (6th-12th graders) coping with the illness or death of a loved one.

How do I initiate Kids Path counseling services for a child or teen?
Anyone can refer a child or teen for counseling services, groups, and other special events. To start the process, simply call Kids Path at (336) 544-5437.