



Back to School Tips

for Children and Teens when a Loved One has Died

Starting a new school year can be hard. It can be even harder if someone you loved has died. It is normal for grieving kids to wonder about how to handle situations that come up at school with teachers, coaches, classmates, and friends. Sometimes it can feel scary, uncomfortable, or awkward to talk about your loss with other people. *If you feel that way, you're not alone!*

Below are some challenges that other grieving kids have faced and a few ideas for coping. We hope that reading this list might help you know how to react if you face any of these situations. You may recognize some of the coping strategies as ones that have helped you in the past, and hopefully you will find some new ideas, too!

Challenges when you're grieving:

1. You must fill out a school form that asks for the name and information of someone that died.
2. New teachers or classmates don't know about the death and ask you about them.
3. Your friends ask questions about the loss.
4. Teachers, coaches, or classmates say something insensitive.
5. You have a grief burst in class.
6. You get too upset or overwhelmed and want to go home.
7. A holiday is coming up and you know there will be activities focused on family.

Ideas for how to cope:

1. Ask your parent or guardian to tell the school and your teacher about your loss.
2. If you feel comfortable, talk to your teacher privately about the loss.
3. Create a special symbol or movement with your teacher to signal when you need a break. For example, tapping on your heart or wrist when your teacher is watching.
4. Ask a trusted adult if you can come to their room or office when you need a break.
5. Tell your friends you would prefer not to talk about the loss right now. Or maybe if you want to talk about the person that died, you can ask your friends just to listen.
6. Arrange to call a parent or guardian if you are really upset.
7. Keep a special notebook to write or draw in when you get upset or think about the loss.
8. 8. Ask to include your loved one in the holiday family assignments.
9. 9. Talk to your guidance counselor or social worker about the loss or when you feel upset.
10. 10. Attend a grief support group at your school if one is offered.
11. 11. Ask your parent/or guardian if you can attend a youth night at Big Bend Hospice.

Are there any other ideas you can think of?

Remember, you are not alone. If you need help, it's okay to ask for it from a trusted adult.

Additional Resources:

[Tips for Going Back to School-What's Your Grief?](#)

[National Alliance for Children's Grief Resource Library](#)

[2-1-1 Big Bend](#)



Big Bend Hospice
bigbendhospice.org