



BACK TO SCHOOL BLUES & GRIEF

Back to school can be a challenging time for any family. Add a global pandemic to the mix, and grieving families may find themselves stressed out and overwhelmed.

Starting school for the new year requires adjusting to new routines, changes in bedtimes, and adapting to remote learning while also juggling your own professional and personal responsibilities. Very often, paying attention to yours and your child's grief can fall through the cracks.

So, What Can You Do to Help?

- Help your child attend their grief support group consistently.
- Children and teens grieve in unique ways and share several common characteristics. Many elements of the COVID-19 pandemic further intensify these characteristics. For example:
 - Grieving children may have trouble concentrating, leading to academic problems. They may experience flashbacks about the death during school hours. Remote learning might make this even more difficult. Be sure to let their teachers know they are grieving and ask for tutoring when needed.
 - Grieving children typically fear their own death, or an additional death of someone they love. During the pandemic this may actually occur.
 - Grieving children feel isolated. Friends and even teachers may withdraw, not knowing what to say or do. In the COVID-19 world, physical distancing causes children and teens to feel even more alone. When possible, arrange Zoom playdates or in-person meet ups with physical distancing and masks.
- When your child or teen experiences problems in two or more areas such as academic and social problems, or trouble sleeping along with isolating from family and friends, that's an indication that they may be suffering from depression and need professional help. Call **OUR HOUSE Grief Support Center** for referrals to therapists who specialize in working with grieving families.
- You and your family may be experiencing secondary losses due to the death, the pandemic, and the economic downturn. These may include housing and food insecurity, unemployment, and loss of health benefits. Seek support to help cope with the stress caused by these additional losses.

(Adapted from the NCSCB handout: Back-to-School During the COVID-19 Pandemic: How Educators Can Support Grieving Students)

Please contact **OUR HOUSE Grief Support Center** for consultation and professional referrals.

www.OurHouse-Grief.org

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