

# Do's and Don'ts

## Grief in the Classroom

### Do's :

**Follow daily routines.** Routines provide stability and predictability. Kids thrive on predictable structure and even more so when they are grieving. Provide options for when they feel overwhelmed (i.e. a safe space in the classroom, a “cool down” corner, or a hall pass to see the guidance counselor).

**Clear and consistent limits.** Children who are grieving want to be treated like they were before they were grieving. They may experience big emotions and that is okay, but reinforce what your limits are and clearly define behavioral expectations.

**Listen to the student.** Oftentimes, children develop strong bonds of trust with their teachers. Listen with empathy and reinforce that it's okay for them to feel whatever they are feeling.

**Identify other adults** in the school (guidance counselor, librarian, school nurse, school counselor, etc.) that the student can talk to when they are overwhelmed and need a break from the classroom.

### Don'ts :

**Act like nothing has happened.**

Acknowledge their grief and their pain. You can say, “I’m so sorry you’re sad about...What can I do to help?” or “I’m so sorry about..., it’s okay to feel however you feel. What can I do to help?”

**Expect the student to fully participate.**

There may be good days and bad days. Give them time and support.

**Dismiss their grief and pain** or think they should be over it. Grief has its own timeline and each person's process may look different.