



# The Grieving Student: A Teacher's Guide

*David Schonfeld MD, Marcia Quackenbush "MS MFT CHES"*

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Death and grief will affect the lives of almost all children at some point, often leading to struggles with academic performance, social relationships, and behavior. Teachers can be a critical lifeline for a grieving child—and now they have a practical guidebook to help them provide sensitive support to students of all ages.

Author David Schonfeld is the national go-to expert on childhood bereavement and school crisis—a veteran consultant to school crisis teams, he has trained thousands of professionals in the wake of events such as 9-11 and Hurricane Katrina. Partnering with family therapist Marcia Quackenbush, he guides teachers through a child's experience of grief and loss, illuminates the classroom issues that grieving may trigger, and empowers teachers to undertake the rewarding job of reaching and helping their students. Educators will get the real-world tips, strategies, and insights they need to

- explain the major concepts of death in age-appropriate ways
- respond constructively to children's common feelings and behaviors after a death
- initiate and maintain positive, helpful communication
- learn what to say and what not to say when a child or family is grieving
- use simple commemorative activities at school to help students cope with their feelings
- address children's responses to different causes of death, including suicide, illness, and violence
- help a child who is "stuck" in a difficult phase of grief
- provide ongoing assistance when triggers of grief renew a child's sense of loss
- notify and support students after a death that affects the whole school community

Throughout the book, powerful vignettes and examples give teachers a vivid inside look at what their students may be feeling and how an educator's words and actions can make a difference. And because teachers may struggle with their own emotions as they help their students, the book shows them how to manage a wide range of feelings, from discomfort with discussing death to personal identification with the child's loss.

With this how-to guide to one of the most delicate issues an educator will encounter, teachers will give students the support they need to cope with grief and work their way back to full participation in academic and social life.

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