



# Grief Support for Children & Teens During the COVID-19 Global Pandemic

Social distancing and the COVID-19 global pandemic have impacted our lives in many ways. Grieving children are likely to experience a shift in routine after the death of someone important in their lives, and now that new routine has changed in some pretty big ways with social distancing and other regulations. In these uncertain times, grieving children may experience increased fear about the safety of themselves, friends and family members.

In addition to grieving the death of someone special In their lives, children and teens are grieving the loss of their routine during these unprecedented times

Consider the child's safety, schedule and your parenting dynamics while caring for grieving children and teens during times of uncertainty like the Coronavirus pandemic:



## Safety

- Ask the child if they have any questions and what they understand about what's happening. Use clear, age-appropriate language and a calm tone to talk with them about the ways to protect ourselves and those we love through good hygiene and social distancing.
- Have a plan for what might happen if you do become very ill or die, and share it with your child. Communicate that you do your best to stay safe and healthy, but there is a plan for who will look after them if you're no longer able to.

## Routine

- Schools and public places, including playgrounds, are closed in many parts of the world. The world's routine has changed. Establish routine in your home through things like: committing to a certain bed/wake-up time or creating a schedule of dinners for each night of the week. Some families use a weekly dry erase board schedule or online calendar to schedule blocks of activities and breaks.
- If you're working outside of your home and your child stays home during the day, consider leaving notes for each other in the morning/evening as a way to stay connected throughout the day. Save the notes to preserve a positive outcome from this time.

## Boundaries

- Continue to appropriately discipline children even though you may sympathize with them for the loss of their previous normal. For many children, school is a place where they feel safe, comfortable and supported, so they may be acting out some frustration at home either alone or with sibling(s). Your job as their caregiver is to point out behaviors that are inappropriate, whether one is grieving or not.

Joel's Place for Children is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that provides grief support for school-aged children and their families who have experienced the death of someone special in their lives. Founded in 2003, Joel's Place believes that children can express feelings, share memories, and honor their loved ones in a supportive and hope-filled environment. Our bi-monthly sessions typically take place on Tuesdays during the school year. We also offer a support group for the adults who bring children to Joel's Place. Find more grief support resources at: [joelsplaceforchildren.org/resources](https://joelsplaceforchildren.org/resources)