

Bereavement Policy

Rationale:

We believe that bereavement and loss are an inevitable part of living and growing. Early Years practitioners will provide opportunities within their settings for children to develop their own appropriate range of emotional, spiritual and intellectual responses to manage these experiences.

We believe that the ethos of the pre-school, based on openness and mutual support, provides a framework in which these experiences can be realised in an enriching manner.

Process

The pre-school will act in a planned and agreed manner, so that all staff know what is expected and can contribute their part in a way that is consistent with the values that have been adopted.

The pre-school will have identified, through the process of a one day bereavement conference, a named pre-school bereavement contact. This person will be aware of the needs of bereaved children and will have collated resources in order to support them.

The pre-school bereavement contact, in partnership with the practitioners will co-ordinate the pre-school's response and be fundamental in liaising with bereaved family.

As far as possible, all staff should be told together by the named person. By creating a list of people to be told, the pre-school can be sure that no one close to the situation will find out by chance.

All the parents/carers will be told in writing at the same time and as promptly as circumstances will allow.

Following this the children in pre-school will be told at a time previously notified to the parents.

Staff will be consistent in their use of terminology to ensure clear understanding of the concept of death.

Absentees from pre-school will also need to be informed at the earliest opportunity. The pre-school will have procedures to track who is informed,

when and by whom, to ensure that no one is missed.

The pre-school will have a range of strategies that it may adopt in the days and weeks that follow any significant loss. Decisions about which to undertake will be determined following discussions with the family concerned and will take into account the cultural/religious beliefs of the family.

The child's key worker or other named member of staff will be identified to keep in touch with the family so contact from the family's perspectives is manageable. This person will co-ordinate the sending of a card.

Attendance at the funeral and other forms of remembering will be agreed by the staff team. If you decide to close the setting in term time, this will need to be with the prior agreement of KCC due to funding regulations

Staff will have ongoing opportunities for peer support in order to maintain their well being.

The pre-school bereavement contact will take responsibility for recording details of a bereavement on the child's Record of Transfer and ensuring this information is passed to the next setting, with parents permission.

The pre-school will provide ongoing support and will ensure that the anniversary of the death is remembered.

Curriculum

In the event of bereavement or significant loss the pre-school has identified activities that will support the child/children to explore their feelings and memories. Some opportunities may include:

Telling the Story

- Use puppets
- Use toys
- Use stories
- Use playdough

Expressing feelings

- Feelings biscuits
- Volcano/mad box
- Water balloons
- Bag of feathers

Remembering

- Memory box
- Memory jar
- Photo albums
- Memory bracelets
- Bookmarks

Coping strategies

- Sad box
- Worry dolls
- Handprints
- Special dates

Parents/carers

In acknowledging the role of the pre-school in supporting children with bereavement and loss, the pre-school will work alongside the parents/carers in this process.

The parents/carers remain the most significant support to young children in understanding death. The pre-school can support parents/carers in this by:

Sharing with parents/carers the intentions of the pre-school to act in a particular way in the event of a death.

Offering guidance to parents/carers on how they might support their child.

Sharing information with families about other sources of support e.g. Winston's Wish Family Line, participation in a Slide Away pre-school workshop.

Keeping parents/carers fully informed about the actions of the pre-school throughout the immediate period of grieving.

Parents/carers will be invited to be involved in any pre-school response that occurs after the death, e.g. a remembering time. The format of this will take into account the beliefs and wishes of the bereaved family.

Outcomes

By adopting a planned and considered approach the pre-school can with some

degree of confidence support the emotional well being of the child. As a result:

Staff will

Feel equally valued.

Have an opportunity to prepare themselves for the supportive role they adopt.

Be given time and space to work through their own feelings.

Become aware of the needs of bereaved children, and be offered training, to develop strategies to support them.

Children will

Be offered support by sensitive, trained staff working together.

Have the opportunity to tell their story, express their feelings, share their memories and develop coping strategies.

The pre-school will

Have clear expectations about the way that it will respond to the death, not simply react.

Provide a nurturing, safe and supportive environment where there are no expectations in their responses to the children's grief.

The family will

Feel supported.

Be given an opportunity to express their feelings of loss.

Have opportunities to understand and communicate with their child about their loss as a result of the activities provided by the pre-school.

The parents/carers will

Be given guidance on how to support their child/children.

Be aware of the support offered and understand the processes that will follow bereavement.