THE Grieving Student

A Guide for Schools

Second Edition

David J. Schonfeld & Marcia Quackenbush

The Grieving Student

A Guide for Schools

Second Edition

by

David J. Schonfeld, M.D., FAAP
Director, National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement,
Children's Hospital Los Angeles
Professor of Clinical Pediatrics, Keck School of Medicine,
University of Southern California
Los Angeles

and

Marcia Quackenbush, M.S., MFT, MCHES
Advisor, National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement
Los Angeles, California

·P A U L·H·
BROOKES
PUBLISHING CO®

Baltimore • London • Sydney

Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.
Post Office Box 10624
Baltimore, Maryland 21285-0624
USA

www.brookespublishing.com

Typeset by Absolute Services Inc., Towson, Maryland.
Manufactured in the United States of America by
Sheridan Books, Chelsea, Michigan.

The information provided in this book is in no way meant to substitute for a medical or mental health practitioner's advice or expert opinion. Readers should consult a health or mental health professional if they are interested in more information. This book is sold without warranties of any kind, express or implied, and the publisher and authors disclaim any liability, loss, or damage caused by the contents of this book.

The individuals described in this book are composites or real people whose situations are masked and are based on the authors' experiences. In all instances, names and identifying details have been changed to protect confidentiality.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Schonfeld, David J., 1959- author. | Quackenbush, Marcia, author.
Title: The grieving student : a guide for schools / by David J. Schonfeld and Marcia Quackenbush.
Other titles: Grieving student
Description: Second edition. | Baltimore : Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., 2021. | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2020048280 (print) | LCCN 2020048281 (ebook) | ISBN 9781681254579 (paperback) | ISBN 9781681254586 (pdf) | ISBN 9781681254593 (epub)
Subjects: LCSH: Grief in adolescence. | Grief in children. | Teacher-student relationships.
Classification: LCC BF724.3.G73 S37 2021 (print) | LCC BF724.3.G73 (ebook) | DDC 155.4/124--dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2020048280
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2020048281

British Library Cataloguing in Publication data are available from the British Library.

2026 2025 2024 2023 2022 2021

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Contents

About the Authors

David J. Schonfeld, M.D., FAAP, Director of the National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement (NCSCB) at Children's Hospital Los Angeles and Professor of Clinical Pediatrics at Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California, has provided consultation, technical assistance, and training in the areas of pediatric bereavement and school crisis preparedness and response for more than 3 decades. He has provided more than 1,000 presentations on the topics of crisis and loss, including presentations at national and international meetings throughout the United States and abroad (including Europe, the United Kingdom, Asia, the Middle East, Scandinavia, Latin America, and Africa). In 1991, Dr. Schonfeld established the School Crisis Response Program at Yale University School of Medicine, where he provided training to tens of thousands of school-based personnel throughout the country and technical assistance in hundreds of school crisis events. Dr. Schonfeld has consulted with schools during the aftermath of numerous school and national crisis events. From 2001 to 2004, he consulted with the New York City Department of Education and coordinated training for school crisis teams in the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and provided training to more than 1,000 district- and school-level crisis teams within the system. In 2005, Dr. Schonfeld was awarded funding by the September 11th Children's Fund and the National Philanthropic Trust to establish the NCSCB. Dr. Schonfeld has worked with schools and communities coping with large-scale natural disasters, including flooding from hurricanes Maria in San Juan, Sandy in New York and New Jersey, Katrina in New Orleans, and Ike in Galveston, Texas; tornadoes in Joplin, Missouri, and Alabama; wildfires in Butte County, California, Sonoma County, California, and the Great Smoky Mountains in Sevierville, Tennessee; and the 2008 earthquake in Sichuan, China. He has assisted schools and communities as they recover from episodes of violence, including school and community shootings in Santa Clarita, California; Parkland, Florida; Newtown, Connecticut; Benton, Kentucky; Las Vegas, Nevada; Thousand Oaks, California; Spokane, Washington; Marysville, Washington; Osaka, Japan; Corning, California; Aurora, Colorado; Platte Canyon, Colorado; Chardon, Ohio; and Townville, South Carolina. Dr. Schonfeld also served as a member of the National Commission on Children and Disasters and the Sandy Hook Advisory Commission; he is a member of the

National Biodefense Science Board and the Executive Committee of the American Academy of Pediatrics Council on Children and Disasters. He is a developmental-behavioral pediatrician and a former president of the Society for Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics. Dr. Schonfeld has authored more than 150 scholarly articles, book chapters, and books and has conducted school-based research (funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the National Institute of Mental Health, the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, William T. Grant Foundation, and other foundations) involving children's understanding of and adjustment to serious illness and death and school-based interventions to promote adjustment and risk prevention.

Marcia Quackenbush, M.S., MFT, MCHES, is a licensed family therapist and certified Master Health Education Specialist. She has more than 20 years of clinical mental health experience, much of which has been focused on children, adolescents, and families of people living with life-changing conditions or people coping with terminal illness in themselves or family members. Ms. Quackenbush has written extensively in the health education field, publishing numerous articles, curricula, and books.

About the National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement

The NCSCB was founded in 2005 with generous support from the September 11th Children's Fund and the National Philanthropic Trust and currently receives generous support from the New York Life Foundation. The Center has provided support to schools and communities across the country and abroad. The goals of the NCSCB are to promote an appreciation of the role schools can serve to support students, staff, and families at times of crisis and loss; to link efforts to provide trauma-related and bereavement support services within school settings; to collaborate with professional organizations, governmental and nongovernmental agencies, and community groups to further these goals; and to serve as a resource for information, training materials, consultation, and technical assistance. Learn more at www.schoolcrisiscenter.org.

Foreword

I have spent more than 16 years working in America's urban school districts. For almost half of that time, I served in a variety of roles in the Chicago Public Schools and am now in my ninth year as superintendent of Broward County Public Schools, Florida—the nation's sixth largest school district. When I was in Chicago, gang activity and shootings occurred far too often in high-poverty ZIP codes that have been historically deprived of investment and opportunity. Although we had no in-school shootings, we witnessed more than 300 students shot each year outside of school within certain neighborhoods. In any given year, we may have seen as many as 30 to 40 of our kids under the age of 18 die from gun violence.

In Broward County, we've had a host of other crises affecting our schools, from hurricanes to the global COVID-19 pandemic. In 2018, we also suffered the tragic shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. Seventeen people were killed and another 17 injured. This created an indescribable level of pain, grief, and heartache that still echoes through our community today.

Arne Duncan (who later became U.S. Secretary of Education) was one of my mentors in Chicago. Watching him taught me that leadership is not about what you do when things are going well. It's about how you respond, stay strong, and lead during times of challenge and crisis. Always do the right thing even when it's not popular or politically expedient.

The Parkland shooting certainly gave me the ultimate challenge to put these convictions to the test. As painful and difficult as it has been, I know that true leaders don't walk away from such a crisis. So, I have worked tirelessly with district staff to provide support and hope in the midst of fear and anger—to find our way forward and heal as much as possible, while realizing that there will always be broken pieces that can never be mended.

There is something else noticeable about the Parkland tragedy. Although the nation gave tremendous attention and focus to the pain and grief of Parkland, it doesn't seem to give the same level of attention and weight to similar kinds of losses that are just as tragic when they happen in communities of color in places like Chicago, Detroit, Baltimore, and elsewhere—home to our most vulnerable and marginalized populations. Places where it seems the country has normalized violence and hopelessness.

As Dr. Schonfeld and Ms. Quackenbush affirm in their well-researched book, I can assure you that wherever your community is and whoever your students are, there are some who have experienced the death of a loved one or some other traumatic event. Wherever you have community violence, domestic violence, parents divorcing, poverty and homelessness, or social media bullying, you will have grieving students in your schools.

My own family came to this country from Jamaica when I was six. We settled in Poughkeepsie, New York, in a working-class neighborhood of apartments and duplexes. Many of these units were occupied by immigrant families like ours. We lived a quiet and basic life. My parents were hard-working, blue-collar, and prayerful people who taught us to live by the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

One summer afternoon when I was eight, my mother was on the porch reading her Bible as she always did. I was moving about the house with my brother and sister. It was a beautiful, peaceful day. Then in a moment, a neighbor from one of the apartment units walked across the street carrying a shotgun. Suddenly he started shooting at us. I watched all of this unfold before me. My mother was shot in the face. She nearly died and was in the hospital for almost a month. When the police apprehended the man and asked him why he had done this, he told them he was tired of immigrants coming over here and taking away American jobs.

What I have taken away from that tragedy is how my parents dealt with it. They did not prolong this painful experience with us. Instead, they taught us the power of forgiveness in lifting the pain and burden of hate and anger. That gave me and my siblings the psychological freedom to focus on the future and pursue our hopes and dreams.

Over the years, I have grown to understand that there is no successful individual in history who hasn't gone through some sort of painful struggle to get to where they are. Success depends on our capacity to grow through our pain and disappointments, to become a stronger person, and to develop a greater sense of purpose in life.

Talking with students and educators about their own lives and challenges has shaped my perspective on public education. I am absolutely convinced that we must do more than prepare our students with the academic and technical skills that will allow them to contribute to our complex society. That's only half our job.

We must also give them "true life skills"—the social-emotional learning and mental health skills that are essential for anyone to succeed and become a good person and citizen of the world. Our young people need to learn how to face challenges, cope with stress, manage grief, and find healing and meaning after a traumatic experience. We must help them transcend hardship and use what they learn from these difficult experiences to become well-adjusted people who lean toward hope and love rather than fear and hate.

The majority of our nation's students are impacted by some form of adverse childhood experience. These students can learn, and learn well, but only when we address their emotional needs. Coping with issues such as death and bereavement is a vital part of this. Educators must acquire a solid foundation in supporting students who have experienced violence or the loss of a family member or friend. This is a fundamental step in preparing to work effectively with students from all backgrounds and in all communities.

The Grieving Student is an outstanding resource that will help educators and schools formulate real strategies to address student heartache and loss. It offers professional development opportunities for individuals, groups, and even an entire school or district. The guidance in this book has been helpful to Broward County educators at Marjory Stoneman Douglas and at other schools in our district.

I encourage you to read it and put its principles to work in your setting. I believe you will find it as valuable as we have. It may be the greatest gift you ever give to your children.

Robert W. Runcie
Superintendent, Broward County Schools

1

Why Schools and Educators? Isn't This Someone Else's Job?

INTRODUCTION

The emphasis of this book is to help students who are grieving. One of the most effective ways to do this is to help *all* children understand more about death as part of their ongoing learning about life. Virtually all students will, at some point, deal with the death of a family member or friend. Offering anticipatory guidance provides them with the understanding and resources that will allow them to better cope when such losses occur, whether in their own lives or in those of friends or classmates.

Schools and educators are an important influence in the lives of children. The relationship they have with children is distinct—different from families, neighbors, faith-based organizations, or clubs. As we will point out, teachers and other educators are uniquely qualified to help students understand more about death. They can play an essential role in supporting children who are grieving.

One of the most effective ways to support students is to help all children understand more about death as part of their ongoing learning about life.

Educators are uniquely qualified to help students understand more about death.

What Is a Child? What Is a Parent?

As mentioned in the Introduction, in this book the term *children* refers to children and/or students of all ages, including teens, except when we mention a specific age. The term *parent* refers to parents as well as both legal and informal guardians.

SCHOOLS ARE A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Students look to educators for support and guidance with a variety of issues. For example, teachers help children understand the academic elements of their world, such as how to do long division, choose a good topic for a report, or understand the steps in mitosis. School counselors may help students learn about social and emotional skills. Coaches might help students practice goal setting or understand more about personal responsibility. Students might also make special connections with parent volunteers, bus drivers, members of the custodial staff, or lunchroom employees. It is not surprising, then, that all types of educators are a resource to whom children naturally turn when they are trying to cope with a death.

Often, students who have concerns regarding death are more comfortable turning to a trusted teacher or other educator whom they feel they know well than to a community-based provider or clinician. Similarly, families are frequently more comfortable receiving support and services in a school setting, which is more familiar and accessible than a local mental health service.

What Is an Educator?

Throughout this book, we use a broad definition of the term *educator*. Each member of the school staff community plays a unique role in students' education and well-being. However, students may look for support from any adult with whom they feel an authentic connection. Staff and volunteers in any role within the school may observe changes in children's behavior or be asked questions about death or grief. This is why we believe it is essential that every member of the education community within a school or district understand the basic foundations of supporting grieving students.

The following list includes reasons why schools are meaningful settings for children to learn more about death and how to cope with a loss:

- *Schools are familiar.* They provide a safe and known setting, which makes them ideal for learning more about topics that are unknown, even if those topics might evoke confusion or anxiety.
- *Schools offer a variety of trained staff.* For example, classroom teachers can check with other teachers, administrators, or a range of student support personnel—including school counselors, nurses, psychologists, or social workers—or others for guidance in addressing the complex issues of death and grieving. Students can also be assisted directly by a range of these qualified, knowledgeable professionals.

- *Students spend a good deal of time at school.* There are many different opportunities during the school year to address death and related issues.
- *Large numbers of children can be served.* Schools remain the best setting in which to reach the largest number of children.

Who Are "Student Support Personnel"?

A range of school staff may be available to offer guidance to teachers and administrators working with grieving students, as well as to provide support to students themselves. These include school counselors, psychologists, nurses, and social workers. In some schools or districts, there may be others who can play a role in providing support and guidance, including community volunteers with professional training (such as family counselors), staff or volunteers from nonprofit organizations, or representatives of other organizations who play a role in students' lives.

Schools are also a particularly effective environment for supporting children who are grieving; classroom teachers can often monitor these students more easily than counselors or other professionals because they have ongoing contact with them. Teachers spend more time with students on a daily basis in a natural environment and are often more familiar with students.

A student's grief may exhibit itself in a variety of ways that emerge in school settings rather than at home. For example, a child may begin acting out, put less effort into lessons and homework, or have conflicts with classmates. Grieving students who find themselves unable to concentrate may become frustrated or anxious. Educators may be able to compare how a student's behavior differs before and after a loss. They can also evaluate a student's behavior considering the many other students with whom they have worked. This gives educators a strong basis for comparison and helps them determine whether a child needs additional support or services.

Most of the time, families appreciate the additional support that educators and schools can provide. They view teachers and other school staff as reliable sources of information about their children. Grieving families may be too overwhelmed to see or accurately assess the effects of grief on their children. Families respect educators' expertise and look to them for advice during challenging times.

When a family is touched by a death, children also need support beyond the family.

EDUCATORS' DISTANCE FROM THE LOSS CAN BE A BENEFIT

Schools and educators must balance many demands during the school day. Classroom time is committed to required subjects and test preparation, which leaves little time for addressing other needs. Many educators, however, feel that they are also being asked to act as social workers. Some, quite reasonably, might ask, "Shouldn't families be taking on this role of helping children understand death and cope with grief?"

The answer, of course, is that families *do* need to give their children opportunities to understand life and death. When families have experienced a loss, their children will look first to them for emotional support. Families have a unique and essential role in helping children through these experiences. However, when a family is touched by a death, children also need support beyond the family. Children learn quickly that grief places burdens on family members. A child knows, for example, that if he talks with his mother about how much he misses his father, she will feel sad. Some parents, struggling with their own grief, simply cannot give their children full support. Even parents who are able to be emotionally present and supportive with their children cannot fulfill all the needs children have at such times.

Educators, therefore, have something to offer children that their families cannot—a perspective informed by a distance from the loss. In most instances, an educator is not as personally involved in the death, even though the child's questions may bring up sadness and even personal memories of loss. However, children experience an immediate quality of personal grief that is part of their interactions with family after the death of a family member or friend. This personal grief is not part of students' communication with their teacher or a school administrator, for example. It can be an immense relief for children to ask their questions and seek support without feeling that they have to protect the educator's emotions. This distance—in addition to educators' understanding of child development, their familiarity with students' day-to-day behavior, and their experiences responding to children's questions and needs—makes it clear how powerful this support can be.

Educators have something to offer that families cannot—a perspective informed by a distance from the loss.

UNDERSTANDING WHAT TO DO

The introduction to this book acknowledges that death *is* a challenging topic. Educators may feel apprehensive about having conversations with students concerning death for valid reasons. The same strategies and skills that allow educators to be effective in other areas of teaching, however, work very well when talking with children about death and grief. These strategies include having a basic understanding of the topic and a framework for addressing the

subject in ways that make sense to students. This book provides both. The information here allows educators to address issues relevant to children's understanding about death and apply strategies that align with their own approaches to teaching.

Often, these interventions can be quite brief. In most cases, supporting grieving children and helping all students learn more about death provides impressive benefits with a very modest investment of time. To do this well, however, educators need to understand more about how children understand death, how to talk to them about it, and how to determine what to do if a grieving child is having problems.

Why should educators make these efforts? For the same reason they do everything they do—because good educators don't just teach the basics, they make a difference in children's lives.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK: HELPING ALL STUDENTS

The foundation for helping children understand death begins with all students, not just grieving students. Educators can use three approaches when addressing grief and loss: 1) planned coursework, 2) teachable moments at the class level, and 3) teachable moments with individuals or small groups. These approaches give students opportunities to address misconceptions and gain a greater understanding of the topic. What they learn in these exchanges will help them at any point in the future when they experience the death of a family member or friend. These approaches can also help students make sense of a death they may have already experienced or allow students to be better supports for friends and classmates who are experiencing a loss.

Helping All Students

Educators can use three approaches to help all students understand death.

1. Planned coursework
2. Teachable moments at the class level
3. Teachable moments with individuals or small groups

The vignettes that follow give examples of each of these strategies at work. Although these examples involve elementary and middle school students, similar principles and interventions would also be appropriate with older students.

Planned Coursework

Some classes may have lessons in place that specifically address issues of death and grief. (For a research study demonstrating that school-based lessons can

advance young children's understanding of concepts related to death, see Schonfeld and Kappelman [1990].) Some may address emotions, such as sadness, grief, happiness, and anger. This sort of coursework might be a part of a health education program or social development and life skills classes. Older students might address these issues in a psychology or comparative religions class.

A Classmate's Help

A kindergarten class had talked about what it means when someone dies. Students discussed times when they had been sad and shared ideas about things they could do when they had sad feelings. Suggestions included talking with their parents or a friend. Some said that drawing a picture made them feel better. Some liked to play with their pets.

A few days after one of these lessons, the teacher overheard one of her students, Misha, talking with Liza, a child from the other kindergarten class. Liza said she was feeling very sad because her grandmother had recently died. Misha said, "I'm sorry. Maybe you would like to draw a picture of your grandma. We learned that can help you feel better."

Teachable Moments at the Class Level

Teachable moments that address the topic of death will come up in most classes at some point. History and current events often involve issues of death and loss. Local events, such as a natural disaster (e.g., flood, earthquake, fire), or other crises such as a pandemic often involve deaths that students want to talk about. Celebrities known to students may die or become seriously ill or injured, which may increase students' anxiety and concern. In addition, it is common for elementary classes to have a class pet, such as a fish or a hamster, that may die, which will have an effect on the students.

The Hamster Died

One Monday morning, students in a seventh-grade science class were surprised to discover that the hamster in the cage at the back of the classroom had died over the weekend. The animal hadn't really been a pet; in fact, it belonged to one of the other classes. No one in the class expressed any strong feelings of sadness.

One of the boys, however, looked at the curled body and said, "Look! He was going to the bathroom when he died. Yuck!" All of the students crowded around the cage to stare, joke, push each other, and laugh about this strange indignity. Their teacher called for order, got them to their seats, and matter-of-factly began to describe some of the physiological processes of death. He described several features that were evident in the body of the hamster, including the relaxation of the sphincter muscles, which might result in excretion of feces.

After their initial display of anxiety and discomfort, the students settled down, listened to their teacher, and asked honest and thoughtful questions about biology and death. It became an instructive morning for the class.

Teachable Moments With Individual Students or Small Groups

Interactions related to attitudes or understanding of death may occur on the playground, in small groups working on a class project together, or among friends. For example, children may tease one another, challenge beliefs or experiences, or provide misinformation to one another. Educators who observe these exchanges can use the opportunity to provide clarification and guidance.

Unruly in Line

A group of fifth graders stood in line at one of the playground games during recess. Two of the girls began a commotion. "You're dead," said Mariah as she pushed the other.

"No, you're dead," Felicia replied, pushing back.

Both girls were smiling and seemed playful as they did this. They continued to push each other, however, and both the taunts and the pushing became fiercer. The other students, annoyed at being shoved out of place themselves, started pushing and shouting back. From across the playground, their teacher saw her usually well-behaved students in an unruly process of shoving and shouting. She heard one of the boys call, "You guys are so dead."

"You're dead, you're dead," said another.

"No, you're all dead," Mariah called back.

"Stop it. This isn't funny," another student cried.

"Please stop," the teacher called as she approached the group. She waited until they calmed down, and then asked, "What is going on here?"

All the students spoke at once with descriptions, defenses, and accusations. The teacher stopped them and asked them to talk about how they felt about the words that were being used. Several students mentioned being disturbed by the taunting and repetitions about death. The group became more serious, and everyone seemed willing to acknowledge that this kind of play had been hurtful. Mariah and Felicia became quite contrite and apologized to the group.

Later that day, the teacher spoke with the two of them privately. She talked with them about the seriousness of death and mentioned some of the feelings people often have when they lose someone they care about. She asked directly if either of them was going through a loss. Neither indicated anything troubling going on in their own lives. Their teacher knew, however, that their relationship could occasionally become aggressive.

The teacher explained that it was not possible for them to know if people around them had experienced the death of a loved one. Their teasing could be hurtful in ways they probably didn't realize. They agreed that they had not meant to upset their classmates.

The three of them talked about better ways Mariah and Felicia could deal with each other's teasing in the future, and both seemed willing to speak with the teacher if they had problems. Their apologies seemed genuine, and they agreed to avoid future disturbances on the playground.

BEING READY: SETTING THE STAGE

Educators can use the relatively simple steps of planned coursework and teachable moments at the class, small group, or individual level to help children better understand death and cope with the loss of a loved one. These interventions *are* important. Children have questions about death. Taking time to help them understand death and grief clarifies misconceptions and reduces anxiety, which promotes better academic achievement.

When educators and students are able to comfortably have these conversations, educators will find it easier to approach a bereaved child. This can also help prevent or minimize some of the common difficulties grieving children have, such as having trouble concentrating, becoming disruptive in class, or becoming withdrawn or isolated.

When bereaved children receive support outside of their home, they are more likely to navigate the entire grief process with less difficulty. Although each child will experience this support differently, it can help children achieve healthy social-emotional skills such as positive emotional health and the ability to maintain strong social connections and contribute to their community, in addition to the later satisfaction of enjoying a rewarding life as an adult.

Key Concepts

- **Children in general benefit by learning more about death and grief.** Anticipatory guidance, starting at the earliest grades, can help children cope better if they do experience a loss. This also prepares students to support peers who experience the death of a friend or family member.
- **Schools are an excellent setting for this learning.** Many school and classroom features offer unique and powerful support to bereaved children.
- **Educators play a unique role in these matters.** In most cases, educators' distance from the death allows children to discuss their feelings and reactions without feeling a need to protect the educator's emotions.
- **Educators can help all students learn about death** through planned coursework, teachable moments at the class level, and teachable moments with individuals or small groups.

"This guide is the best and most informative resource available to help teachers, administrators, and school mental health staff understand and support grieving students with practical, beneficial strategies."

—Roger P. Weissberg, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Psychology, University of Illinois at Chicago; Chief Knowledge Officer, Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)

"This unparalleled book is a veritable gold mine of how-to interventions for all who encounter bereaved students. There is literally *no better* resource to explain to educators, student support personnel, and administrators how children understand and respond to death, as well as what specifically should be done to help them best cope. I cannot recommend this book highly enough!"

—Therese A. Rando, Ph.D., BCETS, BCBT;
Author, *Coping With the Sudden Death of Your Loved One* and *Treatment of Complicated Mourning*

EDUCATORS AND OTHER SCHOOL PROFESSIONALS can be a critical lifeline for grieving children. With the second edition of this bestselling book, educators, school mental health professionals, administrators, and all other school staff will have the practical guidance they need to provide sensitive support to students of all ages and their families.

Author David J. Schonfeld—a developmental-behavioral pediatrician and renowned expert on childhood bereavement and school crisis—partners with family therapist Marcia Quackenbush to guide all school professionals through a child's experience of grief and illuminate the most powerful ways to make a positive difference. Drawing on both empirical research and professional experience, the authors have enhanced this edition with up-to-date information on grief in the context of school crisis and trauma, suicide loss, social media, and other timely topics. School staff will get tips, strategies, vignettes, and activities to help them skillfully support students as they cope with grief and work their way back to full participation in academic and social life.

WHAT'S NEW:

- Expanded online study guide
- New and expanded information on social media, ambiguous losses, school crisis and trauma, supporting children with disabilities, and more
- Expanded focus on all school personnel
- New chapters on suicide loss and providing support in settings outside of K–12 schools
- Insights related to the COVID-19 pandemic
- and more

DISCOVER HOW TO:

- respond constructively to children's common feelings and behaviors after a death
- address the classroom issues that grief may cause
- learn what to say and what *not* to say when a child is grieving
- offer effective guidance to families who are coping with grief
- address children's responses to different causes of death, including suicide, illness, and violence
- use simple commemorative activities at school to help students cope with their feelings
- manage personal feelings that may arise as you work with grieving students

ABOUT THE AUTHORS: **David J. Schonfeld, M.D., FAAP,** Director of the National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement (NCSCB) at Children's Hospital Los Angeles and Professor of Clinical Pediatrics at Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California, has provided consultation, technical assistance, and training in the areas of pediatric bereavement and school crisis preparedness and response for over three decades. **Marcia Quackenbush, M.S., MFT, MCHES,** is a licensed family therapist and certified Master Health Education Specialist. She has more than 20 years of clinical mental health experience, much of which has been focused on children, adolescents, and families of people living with life-changing conditions or people coping with terminal illness in themselves or family members.

ISBN-13: 978-1-68125-457-9
ISBN-10: 1-68125-457-3

· P A U L · H ·
BROOKES
PUBLISHING Co.®
www.brookespublishing.com