

## Teaching Classmates & Friends How to Support Grieving Students

*A death in the life of a student offers a teachable moment for other students to learn important, life-long lessons about how to provide support to those who are grieving. Because very few students have experienced death first-hand, they need to be taught these skills.*

### Do:

- Attend the funeral or visitation if the student was a friend. This means so much to students, who often express surprise that people cared enough to do this.
- “I’m sorry,” or “I’m here for you,” is usually all that needs to be said.
- Share good memories of the person who died with the grieving student if you had interactions with the person who died.
- Quietly express support by simply acknowledging the death and showing understanding.
- Offer support by sending a note, card, or email.
- Remember that life is different now for the student; so don’t expect him to return quickly to a happy demeanor.
- Allow the student to return to normal at his own pace.
- Maintain normal demeanor, activities, and conversation with the grieving student.

### Don’t:

- Don’t ask questions about what happened or how the death occurred.
- Don’t share or spread rumors about the death.
- Don’t complain about your own parent in front of the student.
- Don’t say, “I know how you feel.”
- Don’t avoid the student or avoid normal conversation.