Did You Know?

Children and Grief Statistics

- 1 in 5 children will experience the death of someone close to them by age 18. 
  *(Kenneth Doka, Editor of OMEGA, Journal of Death and Dying)*

- In a poll of 1,000 high school juniors and seniors, 90% indicated that they had experienced the death of a loved one. *(nahic.ucsf.edu/downloads/Mortality.pdf)*

- One in every 1,500 secondary school students dies each year. 
  *(nahic.ucsf.edu/downloads/Mortality.pdf)*

- One out of every 20 children aged fifteen and younger will suffer the loss of one or both parents. These statistics don’t account for the number of children who lose a “parental figure,” such as a grandparent or other relative that provides care. *(Owens, D. “Recognizing the Needs of Bereaved Children in Palliative Care” Journal of Hospice & Palliative Nursing. 2008; 10:1)*

- 1.5 million children are living in a single-parent household because of the death of one parent. *(Owens, D. “Recognizing the Needs of Bereaved Children in Palliative Care” Journal of Hospice & Palliative Nursing. 2008; 10:1)*

- Mortality rates for adults in their 40s and 50s in the past two decades have risen dramatically, making it more likely that younger children will experience the death of a parent, or a classmate’s parent. “Kids are encountering death more often and at a younger age—it’s just inevitable,” says Gerald Koocher, chief of psychology at Boston’s Children’s Hospital. *(“Early Grief” Wall Street Journal, Feb. 18, 1999)*

- It is estimated that 73,000 children die every year in the United States. Of those children, 83 percent have surviving siblings. *(Torbic, H. “Children and Grief: But what about the children?” Home Healthcare Nurse. 2011;29(2):67-79)*
Did You Know?

Children and Grief Statistics

- In a study of 11- to 16-year-olds, 78% reported that at least one of their close relatives or friends had died. (Harrison and Harrington, 2001)

- Reviews of studies from various countries on childhood bereavement following parental death report that children in this situation do experience a wide range of emotional and behavioral symptoms…. The child often experiences an increase in anxiety with a focus on concerns about further loss, the safety of other family members, and fears around separation. (Dowdney, 2000; Haine et al., 2008)

**Key Results of Childhood Bereavement Study completed by Comfort Zone Camp (2009)**

- 56% of respondents who lost a parent growing up would trade a year of their life for one more day with their departed parent.
- 72% believe their life would have been “much better” if their parent hadn’t died so young.
- 69% of Americans who lost a parent growing up still think about their parent frequently.

**Grieving in Schools: Nationwide Survey among Classroom Teachers on Childhood Bereavement Conducted by New York Life Foundation and American Federation of Teachers, 2012**

- Classroom teachers report that students who have lost a parent or guardian typically exhibit:
  - Difficulty concentrating in class (observed by 87% of teachers)
  - Withdrawal/disengagement and less class participation (observed by 82%)
  - Absenteeism (observed by 72%)
  - Decrease in quality of work (observed by 68%)
  - Less reliability in turning in assignments (observed by 66%)

- 7 in 10 teachers (69%) currently have at least one student in their class(es) who has lost a parent, guardian, sibling, or close friend in the past year.