



# Resource Family Connection

News, Events, and Information Benefiting  
the Children of Waukesha County

July and August, 2019



## Signs of Grief in Children and How to Help Them Cope

By: Amy Morin, LCSW; Medically Reviewed By: Steven Gans, MD

When a child grieves, you might not even realize that they're grieving. Kids process and display complex emotions differently than adults. However, that *doesn't* mean that grief is not happening and that your child isn't affected by their emotions. Children aren't too young to grieve.

### Ability to Understand Death

Grief in children is tricky because younger children may not understand the concept of death and its permanence. A child might believe that death is temporary, particularly because so many cartoons show a character being mortally wounded and then coming back to life.

Consequently, younger kids often miss a loved one in small spurts and may be sad for a few moments every now and again, but because they have trouble understanding that death is permanent, they won't really grasp what the loss will really mean to their life.

It's also common for a younger child to say they understand that Grandpa isn't coming back, only to then ask if Grandpa will be attending their next birthday party.

Just like understanding of death varies by age, so do the signs of grief. It's important to recognize when your child is grieving so you can ensure they're dealing with emotions in a healthy way.

### Signs a Child Is Grieving

When an adult grieves, it seems to be ever-present, even in moments of happiness. Children, however, often seem fine one moment, only to become very upset the next, because their brains can't seem to tolerate the sadness for a long period of time.

In the early stages of grief, it's normal for children to be in a bit of denial that their loved one is gone. They may continue to expect the person who has passed away to show up at any moment. This is normal for a while, but over time, the reality of the loss should begin to sink in, especially with older children.

Whether your child has lost a pet, teacher, neighbor, or family member, here are some other things you might see after the loss:

- ⊗ **Clinginess:** Your child may be extra clingy after a loss. He may cry about having to go to school or he might ask for help with tasks he previously mastered just to get your attention. Infants and toddlers can sense the distress in their caregivers, so they might respond by being irritable, crying more, and wanting to be held even if they aren't aware of the loss.
- ⊗ **Developmental regression:** Toddlers and preschoolers may start wetting the bed or stop sleeping through the night. A small child might revert to crawling, baby talk, or want to drink from a bottle again.
- ⊗ **Academic issues:** Older children and teenagers who have experienced loss often show grief by falling behind in studies or failing classes that they once aced.
- ⊗ **Sleeping problems:** Grief-stricken children might want to sleep with parents or others close to them, or they could have nightmares or dreams about the person who died.
- ⊗ **Difficulty concentrating:** A child might not be able to focus on any particular activity or have trouble making decisions.

- ⊗ **Anxiety:** Both children and teens start to worry about everything, but particularly about other people in their life dying. They will need reassurance, particularly preschoolers, that they will be safe and looked after on a daily basis.
- ⊗ **Feelings of abandonment:** A child might feel betrayed, rejected, or abandoned by the person who died, and perhaps by others as well.
- ⊗ **Behavioral reactions:** Children of all ages may react to grief by displaying behavioral problems that didn't exist anymore. They may begin acting out in school or talking back at home. Teenagers may be drawn to riskier behavior, such as drinking or taking drugs.
- ⊗ **Guilt:** It's common for kids to blame themselves for a loved one's death. Your child might think it's his fault because he once wished the person would "go away" or he might somehow think his actions caused the person's death.
- ⊗ **Changes in play:** Your child may start talking about death in his pretend play more. His stuffed animals, dolls, or action figures may die and come back to life.



### Signs a Child May Need Professional Help

Not all children who are grieving need grief counseling. But it's important to be on the lookout for signs that your child is having an especially difficult time processing the loss. Here are some warning signs that might indicate your child could benefit from professional help:

- ⊗ **Excessively imitating the deceased person:** It's normal for kids to say things like, "I want to eat chocolate chip cookies because that's what Grandpa used to like the best." But, excessively imitating the deceased individual isn't normal and it may mean your child is struggling to deal with his emotions.
- ⊗ **Repeatedly expressing a desire to join the deceased person:** If your child says he wants to be dead or that he wishes he could die, don't take those statements lightly. Suicidal ideation is a big red flag and it's important to talk to your child's doctor or a mental health professional.
- ⊗ **Believing they are talking to a deceased person:** All children may say they saw the deceased individual or that they talked to the person once in a while. But if your child insists he continues to see the person or has ongoing conversations with the individual, seek professional help.
- ⊗ **Extended period of depressions:** Sadness is normal but a prolonged loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities could be a sign your child is struggling. Mental health issues, like depression or anxiety, can develop after a loss.
- ⊗ **Symptoms that get worse with time:** Your child's symptoms, like clinginess or difficulty sleeping, should resolve slowly over time. If your child's symptoms are getting worse, it could be a sign she needs professional help in dealing with her feelings.

Children who are having difficulty coping with a loss may benefit from grief counseling. Grief counseling may involve individual therapy, family therapy, or group treatment.

If you suspect your child is struggling to deal with a loss, talk to your child's pediatrician. The pediatrician may be able to assess your child's needs and refer you to an appropriate treatment provider.

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## Signs of Grief in Children and How to Help Them Cope (Continued from page 1)

### How to Help a Child Cope

It's not easy for an adult to navigate helping a child deal with their grief, and the best interventions vary based on the child's age.

Here are some strategies that can help your child deal with grief:

- ⊗ **Be honest and direct about the loss:** Using euphemisms, such as "we lost him" or "she's sleeping now," can confuse and scare a little one. It's important for a child to understand that the person isn't just sleeping or lost, but rather their body stopped working and they are not coming back. Of course, gruesome details aren't necessary, but you should focus on telling the truth.
- ⊗ **Help your child acknowledge the loss:** It's up to you to decide if it's appropriate for your child to attend the funeral. But, if your child is scared to go, don't force her to do so. You can find other ways to acknowledge your child's loss. Write a letter to the loved one, hold your own private celebration of life, light a candle, or create a scrapbook at home.
- ⊗ **Be patient:** A child's grief cycles in and out, and to an adult, it can feel like they're dwelling after you think the kid has moved on. It's crucial to be patient and respond similarly with comfort and truth every time they return to a moment of grief. A reminder, such as the anniversary of the death, could reawaken the grieving process.
- ⊗ **Speak with other caregivers:** Teachers, particularly, should be in the loop as to what's going on with the family. They need to know information about the death, whom to turn to if they're seeing signs of distress, and an appropriate way to support the child if they're having an emotional moment.
- ⊗ **Take care of yourself:** Your child will look to you to see how to deal with her feelings, so it's important to make sure you're taking care of yourself. Talk about your feelings openly but be careful not to burden your child with too many adult issues. It may be helpful for you to speak with a grief counselor or to attend a grief group to help you care for your emotions.
- ⊗ **Read books about grief:** Your child may benefit from reading stories about loss, death, and grief. Be prepared to answer questions about what happens to people when they die. And if you don't know the answer, it's OK to say you aren't sure.

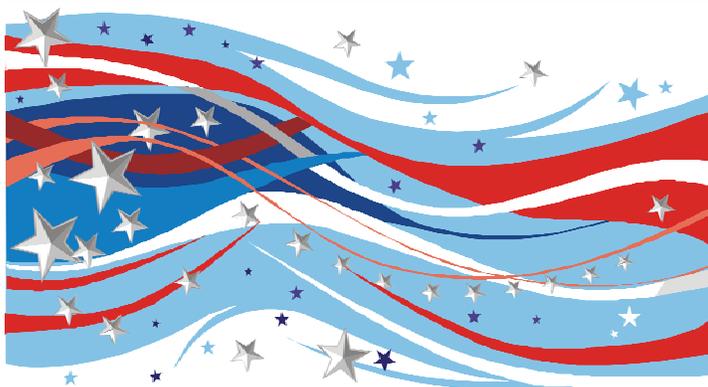
### Signs Down the Road

You might not see many signs of grief immediately following a loss, especially if a child is young. But that doesn't mean you won't see signs of grief years later.

A 4-year-old who loses her father won't understand the finality of death at the time. But when she's 10 and there's a father-daughter dance, she might begin to see signs of grief as the reality of what she lost really sinks in.

Similarly, a 7-year-old might seem to resolve his grief rather quickly after he loses a grandparent. But during his teenage years, he may show signs of grief as he begins to understand the things he missed out on by not having his grandmother in his life or he may regret not spending more time with her when she was alive.

There's no timeline when it comes to grief, no matter what a person's age, and it's not productive to suggest that it's time for a kid to "get over it." The grief may last a lifetime, but with support, grief can turn into healing for the whole family.



## Travis and Monica Begley



Travis and Monica Begley have been licensed foster parents with Waukesha County since November 4, 2016; prior to that, being licensed through Children's Hospital of Wisconsin. Since transferring their license to Waukesha County, the family has taken in three long-term placements, including a sibling group with an older teen, a 12-year old boy, and a sibling group of three children 3-years old and

under. The Begley family recognized the importance in maintaining sibling connections and the need to keep these children together. The current sibling group in the Begley home has adapted well, and the transition from 1 to 4 kids wasn't as tough as they thought! The Begleys report that this was a positive experience. In addition to fostering, Monica is the mediator of our foster care Facebook page, as well as being a Foster Parent Champion

The Waukesha County Foster Care Program and staff would like to recognize the Begley family for their support and commitment! You are truly amazing!

### Thank You!

We would like to thank everyone who joined us at Milwaukee County Zoo for our annual Waukesha County Caregiver Recognition Event. Over 200 foster parents, relative caregivers, and children enjoyed a catered breakfast, scavenger hunt, and raffle prizes.

A special thank you to our breakfast sponsor, The Boucher Group. Thanks to The Boucher Group, everyone enjoyed a catered breakfast which included scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage, and fresh fruit.



We would also like to thank all of our raffle prize sponsors:

Applebee's, Pewaukee  
Bath & Body Works, Waukesha  
Betty Brinn Children's Museum  
Circus World Museum  
Clarke Hotel  
Comedy Sportz, Milwaukee  
Domino's Pizza, Waukesha  
Emperor's Kitchen  
First Stage Children's Theatre  
Foxy View Lanes  
Hair & Body Solutions, New Berlin  
Harley Davidson Museum  
Ingleside Hotel  
Little Amerricka  
Log Gables  
Marcus Theatres  
Marty's Pizza,  
Brookfield  
Milwaukee Public Zoo  
Mt. Olympus  
Prairieville Park  
Shedd Aquarium  
Skyzone Trampoline Park  
Sunset Playhouse  
Top Secret Attraction  
Waukesha Civic Theatre



### Free Summer Meals for Kids!

The Summer Food Program provides FREE healthy meals to kids and teens during summer break. No need to sign up or apply. Just show up and enjoy.

**When:** June 11 - August 31, 2019, Seven days a week

**Time:** 7:00 AM - 7:30 PM

**Location:** ProHealth Waukesha Memorial Hospital, 725 Grille (just inside the east entrance), 725 American Ave, Waukesha

## Support the Babies in Your Life

Taking care of a baby is an exciting experience. Loved ones can show their support to the new addition in their family.

Babies love skin-to-skin contact, especially very young or premature babies. Skin-to-skin contact is holding a baby bare chest (usually only wearing a diaper) to someone else's bare chest. Skin-to-skin contact has many benefits, including calming a crying baby and improving infant brain development. Babies need human touch and interaction, and they love to be held and cuddled. This encourages bonding and helps the baby to feel safe.

Talk, sing, and read to the baby. Babies need to hear the spoken language to help them learn to speak and eventually read. Even if you just describe the environment around them, you are helping develop the baby's vocabulary.

Babies eat about every 1.5 to 4 hours around the clock. They have tiny tummies and need to eat during the night. Many babies do not even start to sleep through the night (6-8 hours) until they are at least three months of age or until they are 12-13 pounds. It can be challenging to have a baby who does not sleep through the night, but know that it is normal, and it does not last forever.

Many babies are breastfed. Anyone can support a breastfeeding baby by supporting breastfeeding in our community. Do you know the Wisconsin Law on breastfeeding? In Wisconsin, a mother has a right to breastfeed her child in any location where the mother and child are otherwise authorized to be. No person may prohibit a mother from breastfeeding her child, ask her to move, or direct her to cover her child or breast while breastfeeding. For those babies who cannot receive their mother's milk, they can receive donor milk from a human milk banking association or through a local milk sharing organization that has a screening process for milk donors.

Waukesha County Public Health, as part of the Waukesha County Breastfeeding Coalition, is hosting a Global Big Latch On event to promote and support breastfeeding. Anyone who supports breastfeeding is welcome to attend. Big Latch On events take place at registered locations around the world, where women gather to "latch on" (breastfeed) at the same time (10:30 AM). The event will take place at the Brookfield Farmer's Market on August 3. Friends, family, and community join this celebration to raise awareness and to normalize breastfeeding.

**WHEN:** Saturday, August 3, 2019

**TIME:** 10:30 AM

**WHERE:** Brookfield Farmer's Market, 2000 N. Calhoun Rd, Brookfield

**Dates:** Thursday, May 2, 2019 and Thursday, June 6, 2019

**Time:** 9:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.; The Butterfly Vivarium closes at 4:30 p.m.

## Waukesha County Community Dental Clinic

The Waukesha County Community Dental Clinic provides dental care to children on BadgerCare/Medicaid, or who do not have insurance and whose families are income-eligible.

**HOURS:** Monday through Thursday: 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Friday: 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM

### LOCATIONS AND SCHEDULING:

210 NW Barstow St, Ste 305, Waukesha, WI 53188

Call 262-522-7645, ext. 2210, to schedule an appointment

N81W15062 Appleton Ave, Menomonee Falls, WI 53051

Call 262-522-7645, ext. 2280, to schedule an appointment

## The Clothing Closet

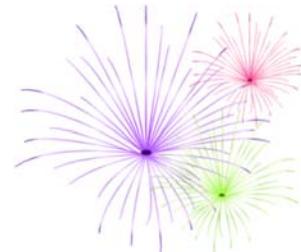
The Clothing Closet is located in the lower lobby of HHS, and is full of donated FREE clothes for Foster Care and Kinship families. There are also personal hygiene items available such as toothpaste, tooth brushes, shampoo/conditioner, body wash, and hair accessories. The clothing is in good condition, and available in sizes infant to adult. Please contact Jennifer Mantei, Caregiver Support Coordinator, at 262-548-7250 or [jmantei@waukeshacounty.gov](mailto:jmantei@waukeshacounty.gov) to schedule a time to shop. You may also connect with your assigned social worker if/when you are at HHS, and they can let you in.

If you are looking to donate items, we are in need of child-size and pant hangers.

## Backpack Coalition Reminder

Pickup locations are listed below. Reminder that you can only pickup at the location you selected on your application!

- ✦ **Mukwonago:** Mukwonago Food Pantry Resource Center, 225 Eagle Lake Ave, Mukwonago  
August 24, 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM
- ✦ **Muskego:** Muskego Food Pantry, S81 W19150 Apollo Dr, Muskego  
August 24, 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
- ✦ **Oconomowoc:** First Congregational Church, 815 S. Concord Rd, Oconomowoc  
August 24, 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
- ✦ **Pewaukee:** Pewaukee Food Pantry, 642 Main St, Pewaukee  
August 17, August 21, or August 24, 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM
- ✦ **Waukesha:** Health and Human Services, 514 Riverview Ave, Waukesha  
August 24, 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM



## Independence Day Festivities

- ✦ **Elm Grove 4th of July Family Fun Fest:** At Elm Grove Village Park. Includes free games, bounce house, pool games, etc. Fireworks begin at 9:30 PM. More information at: <https://elmgroveuniorguild.org/fourth-of-july/>
- ✦ **City of New Berlin:** Carnival and mini parade at 9:30 AM. Main parade at 1:00 PM. Fireworks at 10:00 PM in Malone Park. More information at <http://www.newberlin.org/671/4th-of-July-Festival>
- ✦ **City of Waukesha Parade and Fireworks:** Parade kicks off at 11:00 AM. At dusk, head to the Waukesha County Expo Grounds to prepare for the fireworks display, beginning at 9:30 PM. More information at: <https://waukesha-wi.gov/695/4th-of-July-Activities>
- ✦ A list of many other local events, parades, and fireworks can be found at: <https://lakecountryfamilyfun.com/events/2019-07-04/>

## Fun Summer Activities

- ✦ **Badgerland Water Ski Shows**  
*When:* Every Wednesday evening, Memorial Day - Labor Day  
*Time:* 7:00 PM  
*Where:* Frame Park on the Fox River in Waukesha  
Grab your blanks, lawn chairs, and enjoy!
- ✦ **Hartland Kids Days**  
*When:* Wednesday, July 31, 2019  
*Time:* 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM  
*Where:* Nixon Park, Hartland  
Come join the fun with bounce houses, the rock wall, fun activities, food, demonstrations, and tons more! For more information, go to: <https://lakecountryfamilyfun.com/hartland-kids-day/>
- ✦ **Henry Vilas Zoo in Madison**  
*When:* Daily, Year-round  
*Time:* 9:30 AM - 5:00 PM  
Free admission - Donations are encouraged but not required  
For more information, go to: <https://vilaszoo.org/>
- ✦ **Kids Bowl Free**  
Select bowling centers and schools around the country are participating in the first ever Kids Bowl Free program. For more information and to register, go to: <https://www.kidsbowlfree.com/>
- ✦ **Mukwonago Maxwell Street Days**  
*When:* July 20-21, August 17-18, 2019  
*Time:* 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
*Where:* Field Park (Hwy 83 and NN), Mukwonago  
Free admission  
Over 650 sellers offering crafts, product, plants, tools, etc.! Food and refreshments available on grounds!
- ✦ **Oconomowoc Festival Week**  
The week starts with Kids Fest at Roosevelt Park and Kids Day at the Beach on Tuesday, August 14, and ends with the Festival of the Arts over the weekend on August 18 and 19. For the complete schedule, go to: <https://lakecountryfamilyfun.com/oconomowoc-festival-week-2/>

## Mental Health Connection

Waukesha County Health and Human Services and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) have partnered together to create this website specific to the mental health needs of youth/young adults and parents/guardians. It contains guides, articles, and helpful tips regarding mental health. Check out the website at: <https://www.mentalhealthconnection.life>

# Additional Training and Events



## Foster Parent Orientation

Foster Parent Orientation is open to anyone interested in becoming a licensed foster parent. **All prospective foster parents are required to attend orientation prior to the approval of your foster care license.** You will have the opportunity to learn more about our program and the children we serve.

**WHEN:** July 9, July 25, August 13, August 22, 2019  
**TIME:** 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM  
**WHERE:** Waukesha County Human Services, 514 Riverview Ave., Waukesha, WI

RSVP to Cassie BeLow at [cbelow@waukeshacounty.gov](mailto:cbelow@waukeshacounty.gov) or 262-896-8574. (There is no childcare available.)

## On-going Trainings

**WHEN:** See below  
**TIME:** 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
**WHERE:** Waukesha County Human Services, 514 Riverview Ave., Waukesha, WI

All of the on-going trainings are open to foster parents, as well as relative caregivers. A light dinner and daycare will be provided.

You must register the number of adults attending, as well as the number of children for child care, for each individual session at: <http://waukeshafostercaretraining.eventbrite.com>

## LGBTQ Youth in Foster Care

**July 18, 2019**  
**Presented by: Brad Schlaikowski, Executive Director of Courage MKE**  
Brad will talk about youth in foster care who identify as being lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, or queer, and how we can support them.

## Grief and Loss in Children

**August 15, 2019**  
**Presented by: Melissa Minkly, Healing Hearts of Waukesha**  
Melissa will talk about grief that children feel when separated from their parents, and how to help them deal with the loss.



## Waukesha County Foster Care In The Community

Waukesha County Foster Care will be in the community on the following dates/locations:

**Waukesha Farmer's Market**  
Enjoy music, food, flowers, and more!  
**WHEN:** July 13, 2019  
**TIME:** 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM  
**WHERE:** 125 W. St. Paul Ave, Waukesha

**Hartland Kids Day**  
Come join in the fun with bounce houses, the rock wall, fun activities, and food!  
**WHEN:** July 31, 2019  
**TIME:** 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM  
**WHERE:** Nixon Park, 175 E. Park Ave, Hartland

## \*NEW\* Foster Parent Support Group

Foster Parent Support Group is under construction! The Foster Parent survey results are in, and we have taken note of what you want and need from this support group. The Foster Parent Support Group will have a fresh new look and feel starting September, 2019!

*Due to preparing for the upcoming changes, there will be no group in July or August.*

The group will be facilitated by Jennifer Mantei, Caregiver Support Coordinator, with the support of our amazing foster parents. The intent of the group is to have a relaxing night while building network connections with other foster parents.

This particular support group is for foster parents only.

PLEASE NOTE: The Foster Parent Support Group will no longer meet at Parent's Place!

**WHEN:** September 25, November 13, 2019  
**TIME:** 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
**WHERE:** Waukesha County Human Services, 514 Riverview Ave., Waukesha, WI

A light dinner and childcare will be provided.

You must register the number of adults attending, as well as the number of children for child care, for each individual session, via an Eventbrite invite. Be on the lookout for the invite in the upcoming months.

## FUTURE DATES COMING SOON! Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Peer Support

Bringing together grandparents of all ages and backgrounds across Waukesha County who are raising their grandchildren. Since 2016, 2.7 million grandparents are now raising their grandchildren, and we know that number is continuously increasing from a variety of reasons including substance use and mental health. Providing a platform for grandparents to share their unique experiences and challenges with each other and provide an opportunity to gain support, and gather helpful information.



## Contact Numbers:

### Foster Care:

Waukesha County  
Health & Human Services  
262-548-7212

Michelle Lim, Foster Care  
Licensing Supervisor  
262-970-4761

Cassie BeLow, General Foster Care  
Coordinator  
262-896-8574

Jennifer Mantei, Caregiver  
Support Coordinator  
262-548-7250

Jessica Morris, Relative Foster Care  
Coordinator  
262-548-7256

Libby Sinclair, Kinship Care  
Coordinator  
262-548-7277

Hilary Smith, Relative Foster Care  
Coordinator  
262-548-7254

### Social Workers:

Angie Sadler, Ongoing Social Work  
Supervisor  
262-548-7272

Eric Calvino, Ongoing Social Work  
Supervisor  
262-548-7271

Nicole Allende..... 262-548-7265

Kimberly Dudzik ..... 262-548-7347

Megan Fishler ..... 262-896-8570

Abbey Girman ..... 262-548-7695

Sharon Godwin ..... 262-548-7684

Laura Jahnke..... 262-548-7359

Alyssa Jones ..... 262-548-7239

Jessica Larsen..... 262-548-7346

Maria Maurer ..... 262-548-7345

Chelsey Nisbet..... 262-896-6896

Rachel O'Sullivan ..... 262-548-7639

Johanna Ploeger ..... 262-896-6857

Elizabeth Russo ..... 262-548-7349

Kim Sampson..... 262-548-7273

Linda Senger ..... 262-548-7698

Brittany Sutton..... 262-548-7262

Jamie West ..... 262-548-7264

Children's Mental Health Outreach  
262-548-7666

Medical Emergency: 911  
Family Emergency: 211 or  
262-547-3388

**If an Allegation of Abuse or Neglect has been made against you, please call:**

**FASPP**  
Norma Schoenberg  
920-922-9627