

# Welcome to 2025 Leadership Convention

Session will begin soon





# Grief-Sensitive Schools Initiative (GSSI)

*Empowering Schools to Support Grieving Students*

Presented by:  
New York Life Foundation

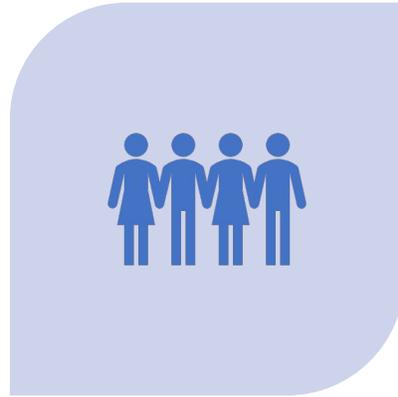


Grief-Sensitive Schools Initiative®

# Learning Objectives



***UNDERSTAND THE  
PREVALENCE AND IMPACT  
OF GRIEF***



***LEARN ABOUT GSSI AND  
UTAH'S CHILDREN'S  
COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS***



***DISCOVER BENEFITS FOR  
YOUR SCHOOL AND  
STUDENTS***

## Our Purpose:

# Childhood Bereavement and New York Life

- Aligned with New York Life's mission
- More than \$85 million contributed to support and advance the field of childhood bereavement
- New York Life identified and addressed key gaps in bereavement – including grief support at school
- Conducted surveys to understand the issue



# Impact of Grief in Schools

## 2012: Starting in Schools

- **92%** of educators say childhood grief is a serious problem that deserves more attention from schools
- **3%** of educators stated that their school or school district offer any kind of training on childhood bereavement
- **7%** of educators stated received any specific training about childhood bereavement

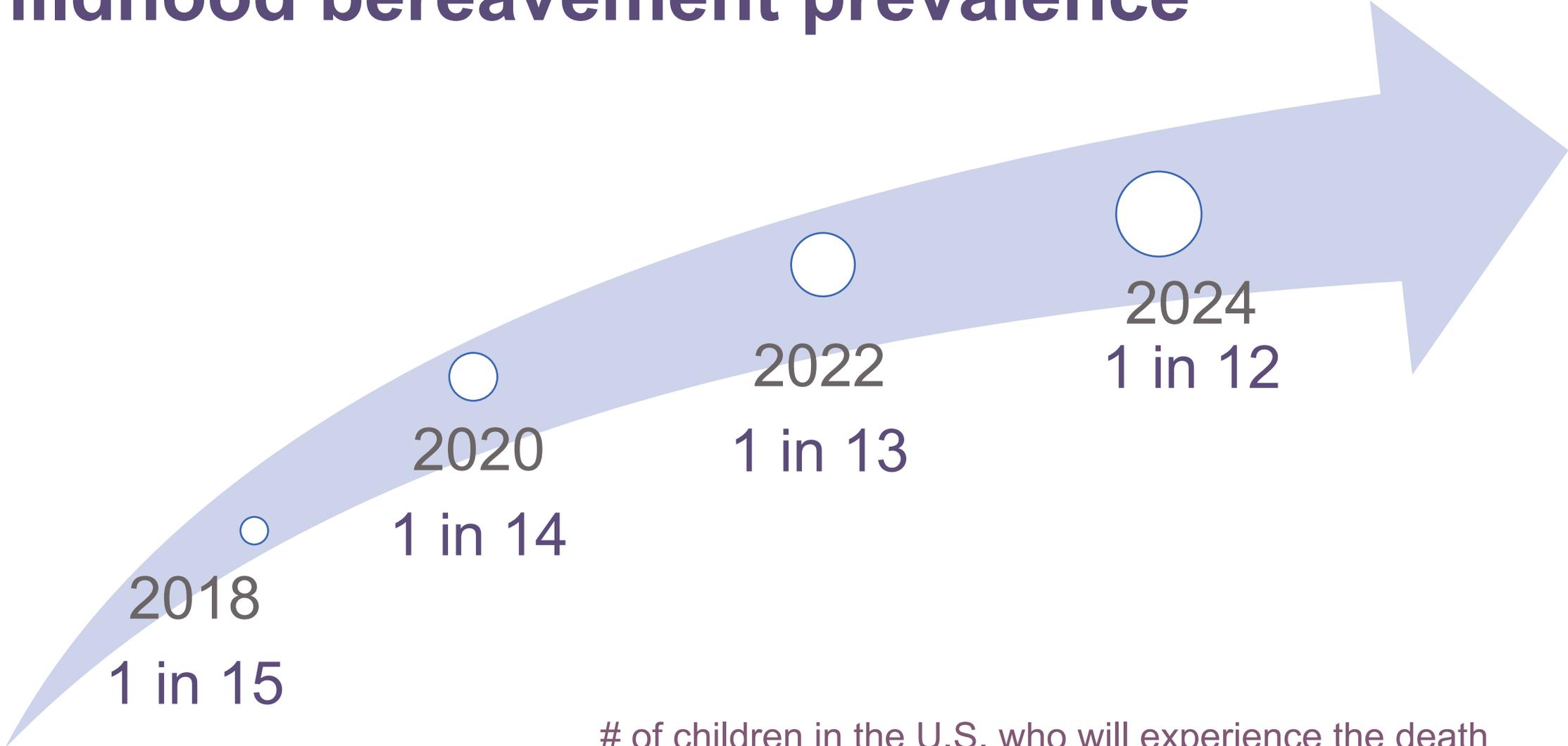
## 2020: Making Strides

- **93%** percent of educators agree that childhood grief is a serious problem that deserves more attention
- **12%** of educators stated that their school or school district offer any kind of training on childhood bereavement
- **15%** of educators stated received any specific training about childhood bereavement

## 2022: Beyond the Classroom

- **86%** of parents say after-school programs should be notified if a child experiences a loss of someone close to them and that program staff should receive bereavement training
- **0%** of NYLF out of school education grantees offer bereavement training
- When asked to rate their program's ability to support grieving children, the average score was **3.5 out of 10**

# Childhood bereavement prevalence



# of children in the U.S. who will experience the death of a parent or sibling by age 18.

\* Results from the Childhood Bereavement Estimation Model (CBEM) developed by Judi's House/JAG Institute [www.judishouse.org/CBEM](http://www.judishouse.org/CBEM).



# Utah...Why It Matters

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1 in 15 Utah children will experience the death of a parent or sibling

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That's over 63,000 children—nearly 3x the Delta Center's capacity

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Grief affects emotional well-being and academic success if not supported

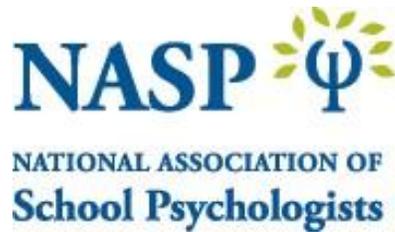


# Our approach:

*meeting young people where they are  
through partnerships and collaboration*

# Coalition to Support Grieving Students

## Founding Members



NATIONAL CENTER FOR SCHOOL CRISIS AND BEREAVEMENT



NEW YORK LIFE FOUNDATION

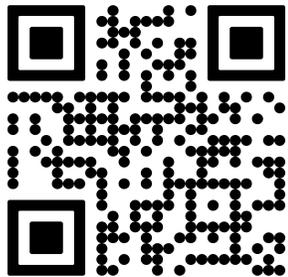


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COALITION *to* SUPPORT  
GRIEVING STUDENTS

[www.grievingstudents.org](http://www.grievingstudents.org)



### Specialized resources:

- Guidance Documents: Grief over the Holidays
- Video Training Modules: How School Staff can Initiate Conversation and Offer Support
- Additional Articles: Coping with the Death of a Student or Staff Member
- Parent Resources: Supporting Your Child

### Topics:

- **Conversation and Support:** talking with children, what not to say, providing support over time, peer support
- **Developmental and Cultural Considerations:** concepts of death, connecting with families, cultural sensitivity
- **Practical Considerations:** funeral attendance, social media, secondary and cumulative losses, coordinating services
- **Reactions and Triggers:** impact on learning, guilt and shame, other reactions, grief triggers
- **Professional Preparation and Self-Care:** helping school personnel obtain training and stress relief
- **Crisis and Other Special Circumstances:** suicides, memorials, life-limiting conditions, death in the school community



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# New York Life Foundation Peer Learning Group

*Out of school time education grantees*



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# Grief-Sensitive Schools Initiative®+ goals:

- Provide a personal introduction to our work through presentation given by the New York Life workforce
- Raise awareness about the prevalence of childhood bereavement and ‘grief in school communities’
- Increase the knowledge of the resources available for school communities and youth-serving organizations to support grieving young people and their families
- Support school communities and youth-serving organizations in striving to become Grief-Sensitive by providing tangible resources



# Impact

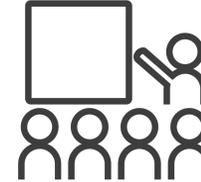
(2016 – 2024)

1,000



NYL agents and employees have delivered over...

6,500+



GSSI Presentations to schools across...

49 states  
+DC



Resulting in grants totaling more than...

\$3M  
in grants



# National PTA + Healthy Minds Partnership

\$1.3M+ NYLF  
grant  
(2024–2027)

Focus on Title I  
and  
underserved  
schools

Equipping PTAs  
to support  
grieving families





# Utah Leading the Way



Grief-Sensitive Schools Initiative®

# The Children's Collaborative

The  
Children's  
Collaborative  
: A  
Three-Pronged  
Approach

**Identify:** Utilizing data systems to identify children who have lost a parent using birth, death, and school system data on an ongoing basis

**Connect:** developing support networks of local organizations, local/state/federal government resources, and other community partnerships

**Support:** working with local partners to support families to increase access to resources along their grief journey



# The Children's Collaborative

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## How It Works in Utah

Uses state data to match **birth and death records** to identify grieving children

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Enrollment form updates offer **caregiver opt-in** for grief support

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Advocates for changes to **death certificate forms** to help agencies identify bereaved children

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# Utah as a National Model

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## The Vision Ahead

Ongoing partnerships with schools, non-profits, and state leaders

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Positioned to inform **national policy and expansion**

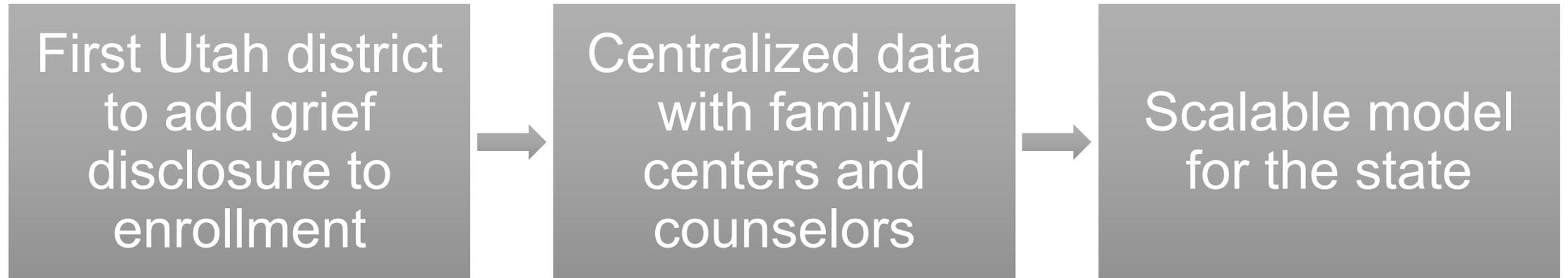
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**Join the movement** to ensure *no grieving child goes unnoticed* it's **shaping the future** of grief support in education

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# Granite SD: Leading the Way



# Grief-Sensitive Agreements

## **Agree to partner with New York Life on the New York Life Grief-Sensitive Schools Initiative+ (GSSI+)**

- Strive to be a Grief-Sensitive School or Organization
- Promote and encourage all staff to attend the GSSI presentation
- Participate in communication strategy around partnership
- Feedback and follow-up as needed

## **Strive to become a Grief-Sensitive School or Organization by increasing awareness of this issue and resources:**

- Sharing information from [grievingstudents.org](http://grievingstudents.org) with greater community
- Reviewing relevant policies and practices
- Providing specific professional learning opportunities
- Posting the “Grief-Sensitive” decal in your building
- Utilizing the \$500 grant to support community in these efforts

*\*after the GSSI presentation*



# Why Your School Should Join GSSI

## Supportive School Environment

- Empowers educators to better understand and support grieving students
- Promotes emotional well-being and improved academic outcomes

## Access to Valuable Resources

- Free training for school staff
- Welcome package with books and grief resources from First Book Marketplace
- Quarterly newsletter with webinars, tools, and event updates

## Grant Funding

- \$500 grant awarded per school upon GSSI certification
- Funds can be used for grief-related programs and materials

## Engagement Opportunities

- Eligibility for special GSSI events (e.g., Kai's Journey Read-Aloud)
- Ongoing connection with a network of trained Ambassadors



# Request a GSSI Presentation Today

Arrange for your organization to become Grief-Sensitive today

- Start with one presentation and one pledge
- Connect your community to vital support and resources
- Help Utah lead the nation



# New York Life Bereavement Resources and Partners



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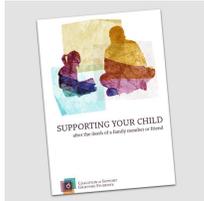
# Printed and Digital Resources



## After a Loved One Dies: How Children Grieve and How Parents and Other Adults Can Support Them

This booklet explains how children grieve and the ways parents and other caring adults can help them understand death better.

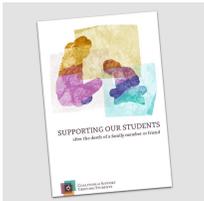
[English e-booklet](#) // [Spanish e-booklet](#) // [Haitian Creole e-booklet](#) // [Simplified Chinese e-booklet](#)  
[Korean e-booklet](#) // [Italian e-booklet](#) // [Tagalog e-booklet](#) // [Traditional Chinese e-booklet](#)



## Supporting Your Child

This brochure provides advice to parents and caregivers on supporting children who are grieving.

[English e-booklet](#)  
[Spanish e-booklet](#)



## Supporting Our Students Brochure

Developed by the Coalition to Support Grieving Students, this pamphlet offers advice to educators and school personnel on how to support grieving students and how classmates can help.

[English e-booklet](#)



## What to Say/Not to Say Tip Card

Wallet-size tip cards offer valuable advice on how to speak with children who have experienced the death of a loved one.

*Only available in print*



All New York Life bereavement materials **listed are free of charge, and there is no fee for shipping.**

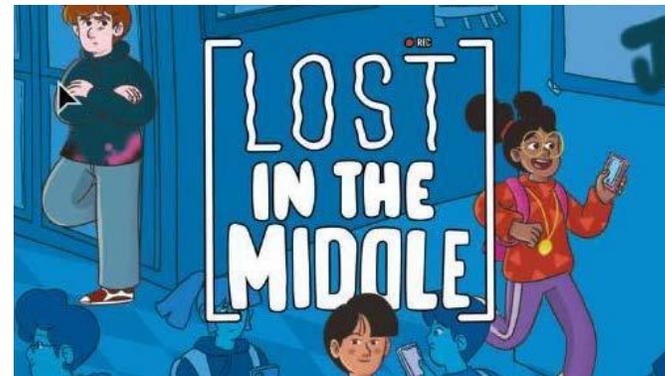
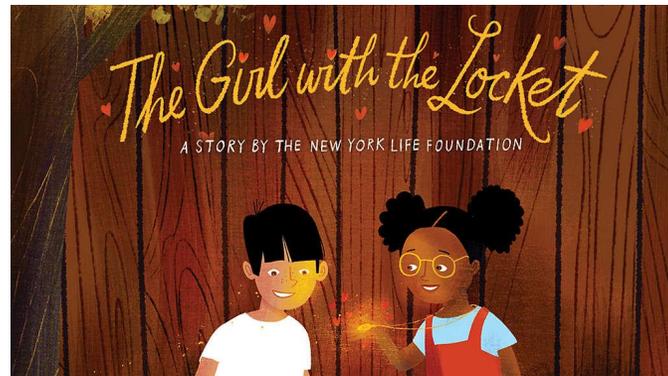
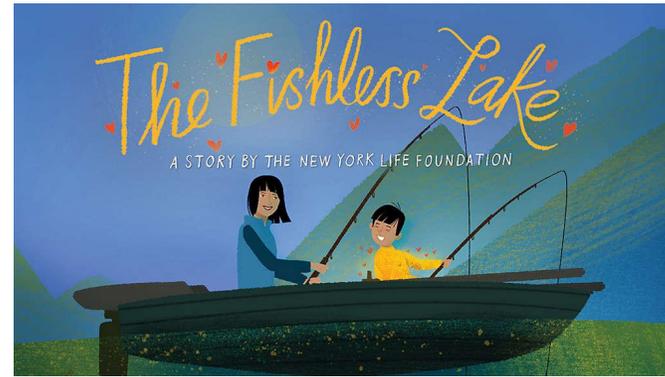
Order from <https://bereavement.newyorklifestore.com/>



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# Bereavement Resources

Kai's Journey book series with discussion guides:  
supporting elementary and middle school students thorough loss





NATIONAL CENTER  
FOR SCHOOL CRISIS  
AND BEREAVEMENT



Alliance for  
Young Artists  
& Writers



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