

…"bite size" news from your HSB Regional Behavior Specialists

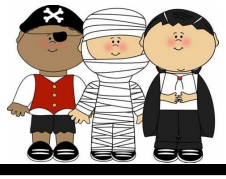
This is a special memorial issue dedicated to one of our sisters, teammates, and colleagues. We will always love you, Susan Deans.



OH, Behave!

Volume 16, Issue 4

October 2022



Tip of the Month:

Did you know music is a whole brain activity?

Incorporate music rituals in the classroom to enhance play, strengthen connections and to use as a calming strategy.

Music produces 4 "happy chemicals" in the brain:

- Dopamine (reward, anticipation)
- Endorphins (stress reduction)
- Oxytocin (touch and cuddle)
- Serotonin (emotions, importance)

Connect with us!

Check out Tucker's NC Nest on Pinterest!

Follow OhBehaveTips on twitter!

Join our new online community by clicking here! By joining Social- Emotional Connections, you will have the opportunity to network, post questions, and share resources with other early childhood professionals in NC!

Open our latest public resource, a growing library shelf of virtual binders that include archived issues of the HSB newsletter, *OH, Behave!*, a collection of Disaster Response Resources, and a binder of scripted stories for classroom use! Click here.

Exploring The *Loss* in Grief and Loss

Though we have talked about grief due to loss in a previous newsletter (Spring 2021), it is important to understand that loss comes in different forms. We are still dealing with the pandemic which has caused a lot of teacher turnover. This can cause children to experience grief due to the loss of multiple teachers being in and out of the room. Children deal with loss differently. Some may understand so they can verbally explain how they feel. Others may not understand so they may express it physically. Below are things to look for and strategies to use.

A child who can verbally explain their feelings may express how they feel sad or express how they miss a past teacher. This should not be ignored.

- Talk with the child about their feelings. Help them put a label on why they feel sad.
- Allow them to express how they miss the other teacher and allow them to talk about what they liked about that teacher.
- If a lot of children feel the same way, you can do a whole class activity from the Conscious Discipline website called, "Wish You Well" (once you click the link, scroll down to the bottom of the page for a video of Becky Bailey illustrating how to use a "Wish You Well" Board in the classroom).

A child who may not understand their feelings may express how they feel physically. They may begin to have hard drop-off times or naptimes. They may also pretend to not feel "well".

- Talk to the child about their feelings. Help them use colored crayons like blue for sad or red for mad to color how they feel.
- Nap time and drop-off can be difficult because children are used to seeing their other teacher before going to sleep or when they first come into school. Offer more choices during naptime like reading a book or playing with a quiet toy. Try having them be your special helper in the morning.
- Give an extra little snack in between meals to help ease the feeling of anxiety. Sometimes children who do not know how to verbalize feelings will assume their stomach feels icky because they are hungry. Also, food does release hormones that help calm the body.

Mainly, do not ignore children who are dealing with loss no matter how minor it may feel to you. Give them some time to adjust and understand that it is developmentally appropriate to express feelings in different ways. There may be some delays or regression in class behavior due to staff changes. Creating a safe environment with consistency and building a relationship first is very important to help children deal with loss.

If you would like to know more about grief and loss and how to help young children cope, contact your local HSB Specialist for the next training.

Ask your regional behavior specialist for grief and loss resources such as tip sheets, activities to do with young children to help them cope, and a list of specific children's books!



Susan Carr Moss Deans

January 6, 1962—September 1, 2022

"You will be remembered. You will be long remembered, by those who knew you best, by those who shared your story, by those who caught a quick glimpse into your heart. They will remember the sound of your voice. They will tell others about you, about your humor and your kindness, your generosity and your courage. Through their words your life will once again weave its way through the wide spaces of life, where it counts, where it matters, where life remembered and comes to life again. Never worry, dear friend: you will be remembered."

—Steven Charleston

Ask The Behavior Specialist!

Question: I have a child in my pre-K class that is grieving because her father has been incarcerated. She is showing challenging behaviors, but I am not certain if it is because of this situation or something else. She is doing things such as hitting other children, yelling, has difficulty interacting with other children in positive ways, and cannot self-regulate. She often draws pictures of her father, so that makes me think she misses him. What can I do to help this child and deal with these behaviors? Are there strategies that I can implement? How do I know she is going through a grieving period?

Answer: Thank you for your question! As adults, we often forget that children go through stages of grief also; yet, they do not understand the big emotions they are having. When secure attachments are broken, it can cause grief and behaviors like the ones you described. Other behaviors to watch for include being withdrawn from the class, wanting to spend time alone during free play, being more angry throughout the day than happy, and having difficulty engaging. I would suggest taking 1-3 minutes each morning to let her know how glad you are to see her at school. Allow her to choose how she is greeted, whether it is be a big hug, a handshake, a high five, or just a wave. It is important that the child sees you as a safe person at school, since she is missing that attachment at home. Also, if possible, ask the family to bring in pictures of her with her dad. If possible, laminate these pictures and allow the child to carry them around with her if she would like, or have them in a safe place that the child can see at any time during the day. Help the child express how she is feeling by having her talk about the pictures of her dad and family. Use words such as, "You look sad because you are by yourself, and you are hiding your face. Do you think you are feeling sad?" Use these emotion words to start conversations and let her know the feelings she is having are completely okay. If she does not want to talk, ask if she can draw a picture of how she is feeling. If the child is comfortable drawing a picture, try doing a scripted story. In the scripted story, you will essentially be making a book containing the pictures of what makes her sad, and then finishing with things that make her happy. You can suggest ideas of things that can help calm her, such as taking deep breaths, books, fidgets, or puzzles (whatever she is interested in). It is important to always validate the child's feelings and help her understand how to express these emotions using words rather than any negative or inappropriate actions.

Do you have a question you would like to see answered in our column? Feel free to email it to AskTheBehaviorSpecialist@gmail.com. We will keep your identity private. Your question is probably one someone else needs answering, so ask away! Your time is appreciated!



In each issue you will find a new card to help you build your very own "Calming Choices" Card Set for your classroom.

When I am upset, I can…

MAKE A HAPPY HAT



For durability and repetitive use, print on cardstock paper and laminate.

Simple, but meaningful, strategies to help young children cope with loss:

- Be present to listen.
- Be patient and understanding.
- Maintaining the child's normal routine as best as possible to reinforce stability.
- Answer questions truthfully, but be brief.
- Expose the child to open-ended art and sensory activities.
- Be mindful of a wide range of emotions and validate them.
- Encourage the child to continue to do the things that make him or her happy.

Social/Emotional Book Nook





The Kissing Hand is a wonderful book by Audrey Penn about a young raccoon who was feeling anxious about leaving his mother. Chester's mother shares a powerful secret to help him cope through the separation. This book was featured in this book nook several years ago. We are sharing it here again in loving memory of Susan Deans. Susan had a strong passion for children's books and a true love for early childhood literacy. Along with the dedication of this issue and, particularly, this column, we are sharing ways you can make the most of this precious story. Please check out this book nook which offers many ideas and activities for using this story throughout the day to promote social and emotional development.

For more information about the Healthy Social Behaviors Project, contact your regional Behavior Specialist or:

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