

Tips for adults supporting children in NA establishments experiencing

Change and Loss

1 Take care of yourself and your colleagues

Be prepared to acknowledge your own feelings about change and loss should they emerge. At the end of a difficult day take time for yourself and others if they need it. You have a unique contribution to make in supporting and caring for children experiencing change and loss. Adults working in NA establishments:

- know the child and their personality
- often know the culture within the class
- teachers are experts in providing children with knowledge
- children trust teachers

2 Listen

A caring empathetic relationship is key for the child. Make eye contact with the child, sit near to them at their level, allow them to talk, nod in response to their words and acknowledge the situation “I can see that you are sad”.

3 Ask how the child is feeling

During check-ins ask “Are you doing OK today?” “If it helps to talk, you can always come and see me or another adult”.

4 Use clear language

“I am sorry that your granny died”. Avoid evasive terms like ‘she went to sleep’.

5 Normalise the child's reaction

“The way you are feeling is normal, this has happened to other people too and this feeling will change”.



6 Let the child know they don't have to react as adults

"It's OK not to be sad all the time; it's OK to have fun".

7 Answer questions honestly

If a child asks a question to which you are not sure how to respond, ask them what they think about the issue.

Don't be afraid to say you don't know but you will try and find out for them.

"That's an interesting question, let me think about that and get back to you"
- gives you a chance to clarify your response.

8 Give the child permission to express how they feel

Use tools like 'I want to talk to you' cards or a worry box.

9 Consider how you are linking with parents

Good communication with home stimulates emotional coping. Help parents give adequate information, check what the family has told the child, check out where areas of difficulty lie and try to work out strategies with the child and their family to make school life easier.

10 Remember what you say can have a lasting effect on children

When the time is right, consider how to address change with the whole class. Education about change and loss supports resilience.

For further information on change and loss, please contact your school Psychologist. In the case of Child Protection, staff should discuss immediately with the establishment Child Protection co-ordinator.

Educational Psychology Service, North Ayrshire Council,
Cunninghame House, Irvine Tel: 01294 324500