

SCHOOL'S ROLE ON DEALING WITH LOSS AND MOURNING OF CHILDREN: PROPOSALS IN GREEK EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

Family and school are primary child socialization institutions. They constitute social places where children learn to communicate, develop relationships and cultivate skills useful in the course of their lives. The concepts of "loss", "death" and "mourning" are demanding and sensitivethat is why handling these issues is becoming one of the most important skills in life. Loss is part of life and a child experiences it from an early age, when, for example, he/she loses his/her favorite toy or a puppy or when a person's relative is seriously ill and even when he/she daily lives with one of the two parents as a result of business responsibilities, divorce or death. Therefore, it is important that parents and teachers gradually contribute to the development of this skill by preschoolers as it will allow them to recognize process and express their emotions through realizing the loss and seeking for the supportive network. This paper is a literature review of researchers in which we attempt to outline children's psychosocial consequences of loss and mourning according to their age, to give insights into the teachers' role in such a difficult issue in children's lives, to strengthen cooperation between family and school, and to present basic guidelines about the way we address children who experience a loss. Finally, we present sample educational material that could be used in the classroom to help students understand and develop relevant skills to contribute to shaping a positive attitude to teachers' involvement in children's mourning and promote the implementation of death-focused preventive educational programmed.

KEYWORDS: Loss, Mourning, Children's Treatment, Class Management