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THE UNIVERSITY of  
TENNESSEE

Fall 2011  
Volume 5 Issue 4

## C4P News

Grief, Loss, & Parenting

### Center for Parenting Update

On November 11, 2011 the Center for Parenting hosted the Southeastern Regional Parent Education Conference in Chattanooga, Tennessee. It included two keynote presentations and multiple skills and techniques demonstrations, and also highlighted parenting programs from around the region. Also, a research update on parenting and personality was presented.

We look forward to hosting two conferences in the Spring of 2012. Please email the C4P at [center4parenting@utk.edu](mailto:center4parenting@utk.edu) to get on our listserv to receive more information.

### Inspirational Words

"Death leaves a heartache no one can  
heal, love leaves a memory  
no one can steal."  
~Author Unknown

"When you are sorrowful look again in  
your heart, and you shall  
see that in truth you are weeping for  
that which has been your  
delight."  
~Kahlil Gibran

<http://grievingparents.com/Quotes.html>

### Featured Resources

**Katerpillar Kids Camp:** weekend day camp for kids who have experienced the death of a loved one. For more information, visit <http://www.covenanthealth.com/?id=2252&sid=27>

**Helen Ross McNabb Center:** Provides a variety of Mental Health and Social Services for children and adults in 17 East Tennessee counties

#### Websites:

- <http://www.omh.state.ny.us/omhweb/grief/>
- <http://childgrief.org/childgrief.htm>
- [http://helpguide.org/mental/grief\\_loss.htm](http://helpguide.org/mental/grief_loss.htm)

### C4P Trivia Question

How many American children lose a parent to death before the age of 15?

- A) 1 million
- B) 1.2 million
- C) 1.4 million
- D) 1.7 million
- E) 1.9 million

The first person to send the correct answer to [center4parenting@utk.edu](mailto:center4parenting@utk.edu) will receive a \$5 Starbucks gift card.

### Featured Professional

Teri Henke, M.Ed. is a doctoral candidate in Child and Family Studies at the University of Tennessee and a graduate assistant for the Grief Outreach Initiative in the Department of Educational Psychology. Ms. Henke recently developed a parent education workshop that focuses on increasing parents' understanding of how children experience change or loss, and building communication and coping skills. The program is designed with parents in mind but is open to anyone who works with children. In an interview with C4P staff, Ms. Henke shared with us the following information about the workshop and grief and loss:

- The workshop contains a knowledge component and a skills component and provides parents with ideas for resources to cope with grief and loss.
- Children have a very different grieving process than adults.
- Parents are used to trying to be the strong ones, but they should know that it's okay to acknowledge their own emotions and share their feelings with their children.
- In grief or loss situations, parents need to be a companion to the young person, be willing to learn from them, and be open and non-judgmental.

The next workshop is on December 3rd from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM at the Farragut Branch Library. To register, go to [www.knoxlib.org/griefworkshop](http://www.knoxlib.org/griefworkshop). Contact Teri Henke at [tmhenke@utk.edu](mailto:tmhenke@utk.edu) for more information about this program.

### Research Update

The death of a parent during childhood is an event which places children at risk for many negative outcomes. While researchers have found some evidence for strategies to help children through this difficult time, more research is needed to provide strong evidence-based practices. However, research does indicate that parents are an important resource for a child who has experienced the death of a caregiver. As a parent educator, you can help the surviving parent of a bereaved child through the following practices:

- Promote positive parenting practices. These practices include warmth, open communication, and effective discipline.
- Encourage the parent to strengthen his or her role in the child's adaptation by increasing positive events and reducing the child's exposure to negative life events.
- Teach parents skills for enhancing the quality of the parent-child relationship in addition to teaching both the parent and the child techniques for increasing the child's self-esteem.

Haine, R. A., Ayers, T. S., Sandler, I. N., & Wolchik, S. A. (2008). Evidence-based practices for parentally bereaved children and their families. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 39(2), 113-121.

### Featured Books



*10 Steps For Parenting Your Grieving Children* written by Anne Hatcher Berenberg Ph.D., Vicki Scalzitti, and Jack Cain is a sensitive, to-the-point guidebook that uses a combination of empathetic descriptions, clear explanations, illustrative stories, and practical suggestions to aid you on your journey of parenting a child or adolescent whose loved one or friend has died.

In *Parenting Through Crisis*, parenting educator Barbara Coloroso shows how parents can help children find a way through grief and sorrow during the difficult times of illness, death, divorce and other upheavals. At the heart of her approach is what she calls the T.A.O of Family—Time, Affection, and Optimism—coupled with her deep understanding of how people move through grief. Coloroso's clear answers to difficult questions are enriched by uplifting humor and insightful anecdotes from her own experiences.

