

The ICBN has developed "Standards for Supporting Bereaved Children and Young People". This work is undertaken with the expectation that The Standards have the following functions:

1. To promote public and professional understanding of the impact of grieving bereavement on children and the role of adults in bereaved children's lives;
2. To ensure that family and community are seen as having a key role in the support of bereaved children;
3. To act as an improvement framework for those working with bereaved children and their families;
4. To promote the concept that any services provided to bereaved children adhere to the highest standards when evaluated against the standards that have been set out;
5. To set out the role for policy makers locally and nationally to ensure that appropriate support is provided to children who are bereaved;
6. To act as a preventative mental health approach for bereaved children to reduce the likelihood of future mental health problems;
7. To underpin education and training at public, volunteer and professional levels.

We use the language of standards to illustrate a multi-layered vision for bereavement support to emphasise the highest level of care that our bereaved children deserve. In this way, the standards provide a framework to help us all improve and develop our care.

## The Standards

**Standard 1: Child & Young Person** - Children's experience of bereavement will be recognised, acknowledged and supported in accordance with their needs over time.

**Standard 2: Family** - The family is generally the main source of care for the bereaved child and may require access to reassurance, information, guidance and support to provide this care.

**Standard 3: Local Community** - All bereaved children should have access to bereavement information, guidance and support services in their local community as required.

**Standard 4: Service Providers** - All service providers will ensure that governance, procedures and protocols are in place to ensure ethical, safe and appropriate bereavement service delivery to the children in their care.

**Standard 5: National** - National policy and local infrastructure includes appropriate responses to, and integrates the needs of, bereaved children.

## Who should join the ICBN?

The ICBN is a member organisation, and membership is open to professionals working directly with bereaved children, those who occasionally support them and people interested in the area of children and young people's loss, for example social workers, bereavement specialists, palliative care professionals, bereavement coordinators and anyone working or interested in the area of childhood bereavement.

By joining the ICBN, you will be part of a coordinated approach to ensuring all children have access to the bereavement support they need, when they need it.

## Benefits of membership

- Training and networking events to develop your skill set and foster peer support relationships
- Policy and best practice guidelines
- Research bulletin with the latest in international research findings
- Regular E-zine covering sector news, funding and more
- ICBN resources, fliers and toolkits
- Discounted membership to the Irish Hospice Foundation E-learning platform and link to resources on our website: Listen with eyes, ears & heart - online learning for primary school teachers, book and website resources, video presentations, latest news.

## For further information contact:

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The ICBN has taken great care in preparing this leaflet.

The information is intended to be a guide.

It does not, and is not intended to, provide legal advice



## The Irish Childhood Bereavement Network

The Irish Childhood Bereavement Network (ICBN) is a hub for those working with bereaved children and young people throughout Ireland.

It was established in 2012 to:

- **Support** professionals in delivering high quality, appropriate and accessible bereavement services for children and young people who are bereaved
- **Signpost** families and carers to a directory of bereavement support services available throughout Ireland
- **Inform** the general public about issues related to childhood loss
- **Advocate** for bereaved children, young people and their families

Our website provides a full range of information & resources  
[www.childhoodbereavement.ie](http://www.childhoodbereavement.ie)

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## THE ICBN BEREAVEMENT CARE PYRAMID

In the absence of a national approach to childhood bereavement care in Ireland, the ICBN designed and developed this Pyramid as a framework to guide adults and professionals concerned about bereaved children and young people. It helps them to identify and respond appropriately to those children and young people who have experienced a loss. From reviewing research and building on practice experience, three key components of childhood bereavement were identified. These are the **needs** of a bereaved child or young person, **support services** that may be required to respond to the need identified and the **competencies** needed by service providers to deliver an appropriate service response to the need identified. The Pyramid recognises the essential role of family and community in supporting bereaved children and young people and shows that the needs of **most** bereaved children and young people can be met from within their family and community, **some** may require additional support and a **few** children will require more specialist help.

### Who is it for?

It is sometimes said it takes a village to raise a child. This pyramid maps out the different responses that a bereaved child might need in his or her 'village'. This Pyramid is intended as a reference point for anyone who is connected with or concerned for a bereaved child. Information at **level one** on the Pyramid is aimed at family and adults in the child's natural network. **Level two** is aimed at bereavement support organisations in local areas including schools, faith-based and community services. **Level three** advises those in professional counselling settings. Finally, **level four** addresses the mental health professions. The Pyramid helps each and every individual (family and professionals) to identify their own responsibility and importantly, to be aware of others who can provide more support if this is required.

### How to use it?

Firstly, consider the arc surrounding the Bereavement Care Pyramid. It serves to remind us that care of children and young people must be approached in a family context (consider strengths, pressures and functioning of family life). The arc also pays attention to the passage of time and the child's ongoing development. The meaning and implications of loss can be ever-present and worked through at each new milestone in the child's life, e.g. first day at secondary school, first date, first job.

The **purple** segment identifies the needs of bereaved children and young people, from basic to advanced needs. The base of the Pyramid is relevant to most bereaved children. As the levels ascend, the needs become increasingly more complex, as do the required responses and competencies. The **green** segment identifies the appropriate support or service required to respond to these needs. Finally, the **pink** segment identifies the type of competence that the responders should possess.

