



HEALING HEARTS. BUILDING HOPE.

Peer-Support Program On-Site

Erin's House Peer-Support Program Nights provide children and teens who are grieving the opportunity to be surrounded by others who have also experienced a death. This peer support helps them feel **a sense of belonging and respect**.

Our once-a-week, 10-week-long program is unique in that it allows each child, teen, and family the opportunity to learn coping techniques, so they might integrate their grief into their daily lives and find their "new normal." Additionally, **our services are offered to families at no cost**. Programming available in Spanish upon request.

Erin's House provides peer-support groups for youth ages 3–18 who have experienced a death. These groups are divided by developmental ages:

- 3 to 5-year-olds
- 6 to 9-year-olds
- 10 to 13-year-olds
- Teens (ages 14 to 18)

Groups consist of less than 10 youth participants along with 2-3 trained volunteer facilitators. Small peer groups ensure a safe, comfortable environment for each person to share their feelings and memories with others who have similar experiences and emotions.

What To Expect

The evening begins with the families eating pizza together and celebrating birthdays. After family time in the common space, participants break into their peer-support groups. During this time, caretakers can attend our adult group which focuses on how to support their children and teens through the grieving process.

The peer-support groups provide age-appropriate activities, crafts, reading, and more that encourage the exploration of grief and the feelings associated with it. Spending time in the special rooms, like our Volcano Room and Quiet Room, provides additional opportunities to process their grief through other outlets such as play, physical activity, and quiet reflection.

The evening ends with a "closing circle". Then, kids and their families head out with their acquired skills, feeling more confident and empowered in their grief journeys. Having had the opportunity to express fear, sadness, anger, or to simply play and forget their worries, children and teens experience an impactful change in their lives each time they step into Erin's House.

Benefits

Our program takes a preventative approach aiming to alleviate and eliminate the negative consequences of unresolved grief within our community:

- Minimizes truancy, substance abuse, depression, anxiety, distrust, and inability to form significant relationships.
- Prevents misinterpretation of the behaviors of children and teens who are grieving by educating caregivers. We provide caretakers with information and tools to facilitate the grieving process at home and in school.
- Allows for the normalization of the changes and effects of grief by providing youth an understanding of themselves and their feelings, as well as communication and coping skills that will last a lifetime.
- Enhances the child or teen's well-being throughout their grief journey and their development into adulthood.

