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Dear Parents and Guardians,

Kids In The Middle is deeply saddened by the news of the senseless killings of innocent lives at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas. We are all holding our babies a little closer today. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Uvalde community as we mourn their losses and acknowledge the bravery of the staff and first responders who reacted immediately to protect the children.

Even though the event was hundreds of miles away, today's media and news coverage bring the tragedy right into our homes and lives. As a children's organization, we can't help but feel connected to the Uvalde community and grieve along with them. We also know that events like this can have an impact on us all and bring on feelings of sadness, anger, anxiety, and grief. Your feelings and your child's feelings are valid and real.

Our Kids In The Middle therapist have prepared some tips to help you and your families during this difficult time.

- **Reassure children they are safe.** Recognize that children may become concerned that something bad will happen to themselves, family or friends. Explain that safety measures are in place and reassure them that you and other adults will take care of them.
- **Observe your child's emotional state.** If your child is not focused on the tragedy, do not dwell on it. Try to avoid having detailed adult conversations regarding the tragedy in front of children. However, be available to answer questions to the best of your ability. Young children may not be able to express themselves verbally. Pay attention to changes in their behavior or social interactions.
- **Monitor social media.** Limit exposure to media coverage. Images of a disaster or crisis can become overwhelming, especially if watched repetitively. Young children in particular may not be able to distinguish between images on television and their personal reality. Older children may choose to watch the news—be available to discuss what they see and to help put it into perspective.
- **Maintain a normal routine.** Maintain normal family routines as much as possible. Routine family activities, classes and time with loved ones can help children feel more secure.
- **Be aware of your own needs.** Don't ignore your own feelings of anxiety, grief and anger. Talking to friends, family members, faith leaders and mental health counselors can help. Let your children know you are sad. You will be better able to support them if you can express your own emotions in a productive manner.

In general, it is difficult to know how your child will react to a traumatic event. Look for signs that your child may be struggling and reach out to your child's therapist with questions or requests for additional resources.

Please continue to keep the Uvalde community in your thoughts and prayers.

Thank you,

Katy Walter

Kids In The Middle, CEO

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