

Frequently asked questions



What is Pathways?

Pathways offers peer support groups for children, teens, and their adults when a family member is living with an advanced serious illness. Pathways consists of a group for children, one for teens, one for adult caregivers, and a group for the adults diagnosed with an advanced serious illness. All groups meet at the same time so families can come together. Groups are ongoing and you can join anytime.

Who can join a Dougy Center Pathways group?

Children and teens who have a parent or sibling that has been diagnosed with an advanced serious illness are invited to participate in the Pathways groups, as well as their adults.

What if it's a grandparent or other family member that has been diagnosed, can we participate?

Please contact a Pathways Coordinator if your child's grandparent is living with you full time and has been diagnosed with an advanced serious illness to determine if Pathways is appropriate for your family, 503-775-5683 or pathways@dougy.org.

Does the children's family member diagnosed with an advanced serious illness need to be in hospice to attend the group?

Your family member does not need to be on hospice to participate in Pathways. Pathways is here to support your family after the diagnosis of an advanced serious illness (late stage cancer, ALS, and advanced neurological disease) through that journey. Your family member can continue to seek treatments, medical care, and maintain hope. Families have shared that having support earlier on the path helps with anxiety and not feeling so alone.

What if my kids don't know that their person has been diagnosed with an illness that will significantly shorten their life? Can they still attend?

Yes, they can attend. Often adults find it difficult to find the words to start these challenging conversations with their children. However, talking with the other adults in the peer support group and the Pathways Group Coordinators can bring some ease to these tough conversations. Contact a Pathways Coordinator at 503-775-5683 or pathways@dougy.org for more information.

Where and how often does the Pathways groups meet?

Pathways support groups meet for 1.5 hours in-person at our Southeast Portland location, every other week. At this time, Dougy Center does not have a Pathways virtual group or meet at other locations.

What happens in a Pathways peer support group?

Groups for children and teens involve discussion, play, and activities where they can share with peers who are having similar experiences and learn tools for coping within a supportive environment. Adult groups offer facilitated conversations about living with an advanced serious illness themselves or within their family. Through playing, talking, and listening, your family will find understanding, connection, and community.

How do I sign up for the group?

To learn more about Pathways or sign up for a group contact Dougy Center at 503-775-5683 or email pathways@dougy.org.



Do we have to wait long before we can attend a group?

The Pathways Coordinator will discuss the group with you and send forms to complete prior to attending the group. Once the forms are received by the coordinator, your family can participate in the next Pathways group that meets.

What does Dougy Center charge for the peer support group?

The Pathways Program is provided at no cost to your family. We are committed to providing services without any additional financial burden to families.

Does everyone in the family have to participate?

Dougy Center's mission is to provide peer support to children and teens who have a family member living with an advanced serious illness or are grieving a death, therefore a child or teen must be participating for the adults in the family to attend groups. The Pathways Coordinator can help direct you to other resources if your child(ren) choose not to participate. Adult groups at Dougy Center are optional, however most adults find the group supportive and helpful. Adults who choose not to participate must remain onsite for liability, medical, and safety reasons.

What do you offer for a young adult who has a family member living with an advanced serious illness?

A Pathways young adult support group is not available at this time. Young adults who have a family member living with an advanced serious illness are invited to attend the adult caregiver group. Contact the

Pathways Coordinator at 503-775-5683 or pathways@dougy.org to determine if Pathways could be a possible support for you.

Does Dougy Center have additional Pathways resources?

Yes, the Pathways Coordinator has additional resources that your family may find helpful. Some of these resources can be found on the Dougy Center website, dougy.org/pathwaysresources. As Dougy Center offers peer support groups, but not counseling services, referrals to therapists specializing in support through serious illness are available upon request.

Does Dougy Center offer the Pathways group in Spanish?

The Pathways group is not available in a Spanish speaking format at this time. Program staff who speak Spanish are available for questions and there are resources available in Spanish for before and after a death on our website, dougy.org/recursos. Please contact Dougy Center at 503-775-5683 for more information.

Do families transition after the death to a bereavement group?

Families are invited to attend one more Pathways group after the death to share and say goodbye to their peers. Information regarding the bereavement groups will be sent to a family after closing from Pathways. Families then decide when they are ready to participate in a bereavement group.



**The National Grief Center
for Children & Families**

Dougy Center Bookstore/Resources

Dougy Center's practical, easy-to-use materials are based on what they have learned from more than 65,000 Dougy Center participants. To order online, visit dougy.org or dougybookstore.org, or call 503.775.5683.

About Dougy Center

Founded in 1982, Dougy Center provides grief support in a safe place where children, teens, young adults, and their families can share their experiences before and after a death. Dougy Center provides support and training locally, nationally, and internationally to individuals and organizations seeking to assist children in grief.

©2025