



Hunsbury Park Primary School

A Parent's Guide  
To  
Bereavement

## HELPING PARENTS AND CHILDREN COPE WHEN SOMEONE DIES

- How best can you help your child or children when someone significant to them dies?
- Dealing with your own grief.
- Do children grieve in the same way as adults?
- What about very young children?
- What is 'normal' grieving for a child?
- What factors can affect a child when someone dies?
- Reading list
- Support agencies

Even when they have not experienced a loss or bereavement, children will have lots of thoughts about death. This is part of their healthy curiosity about life – like thoughts about their body or birth. Adults may find it difficult to talk about death due to their own anxieties about their mortality or fear of upsetting others. It is important not to assume that children are not ready and willing to talk about their anxieties on the subject. Indeed, this can be the most useful way in which parents and other important adults in their lives can help children: by being prepared to **listen** to the child's thoughts, beliefs and fears and allowing them to ask questions.

## BREAKING THE NEWS

You may want to protect your child or feel that it is better that they do not know the true circumstances about the death. However, children are intuitive and can tell very quickly when someone is missing from the family or family members are upset. Therefore, it is best to be honest with your child and explain all the details about the death and answer their questions in an age appropriate way. This will help to maintain trust between you and your child also help them to understand that they can talk to you about the death.

If the death is sudden it can be more difficult, and like an adult, a child will feel a range of emotions, from shock to anger. It would not be unusual for a child to pretend that it isn't happening; this can be a defence mechanism to protect them from the shock. A child may not cry or talk and if angry or feeling guilty they could react in an aggressive manner. As every child is unique it is impossible to know how your child will react. Be prepared for any eventuality and most of all to comfort them. Be prepared to answer repetitive questions as this is common for children.

As a parent or carer, one of the most helpful things that you can do for your child is be honest and supportive. Assure them that this did not happen because of anything they have said or done and make it clear to them that they will be looked after. This will reassure the child in a time which can seem very scary and confusing.

How to tell a child when someone has died

Talking to a child about the death of a parent, sibling, close relative or friend can be very difficult and could be the hardest thing you ever have to do. These suggestions may be helpful:

- **Use straightforward words like dead and dying.**
- With young children, try to link it with a known loss, such as the death of a pet (which may also cause more grief for the child than the parents anticipate). Children under the age of approximately four often think that sleeping and death are the same. Older children can sometimes think this too. The difference needs to be explained try to use concrete words when explaining like "dead or died" using everyday examples like 'when you die you can't eat or sleep or feel anything, your body stops working'.
- **Avoid phrases like 'He's gone to sleep', or 'She's gone away', or 'We lost Gran'.**
- These phrases can be confused with everyday occurrences, and may lead to fears about going to sleep. Your child needs help to understand the body has not gone anywhere, other than perhaps the cemetery or the crematorium. Concrete explanations will lessen confusion.

- **Explain what 'dead' means.**

It is not unusual for children to assume that when someone dies they can come back. Make it clear to younger children that dead means that the **body** of the person who has died is **no longer working**, and that they don't feel any pain. Go through this carefully as children may need to be clear about what happens to the body. Explain that when somebody dies they don't feel anything, they can't see or hear and they don't breathe. A good way to explain this is to say that the person's body no longer works, and this means that they have died.

- **The importance of truth.**

Although it may seem easier in some circumstances to try to protect your child from further upset by shielding them from painful facts, it is better that you try to be honest with your child in telling them what has happened. Children who know all the facts are able to process them and this will aid "normal" grieving. We have found that children who are not told the full facts about the death and later find out can display very angry behaviour and this can sometimes affect the relationship between a child and their parent/carer. Finding out later means that the children have to re-visit their grief and often they can feel lied to.

- **Repeating the story and questions.**

Be prepared to **repeat the story** on numerous occasions and answer repeated questions as your child may be really confused at times. Allow children and young people to ask questions because this can aid their understanding. Understandably some of these questions can be difficult to explain and you may feel as though your child is too young to hear some details especially if the death was a suicide or a murder. However, if a child is asking to know something it usually means that they will be able to cope with the information and this can help them in their grieving process. It can be helpful for adults to understand that a child's imagination can be worse than reality. Talking through the facts can help clear up any confusion.

- **Explaining an illness.**

If someone has died because of an illness it can help to explain the illness and how it made the person die. For example, if someone has died from cancer you could say 'granny died because of an illness called cancer. You can't catch cancer it just develops in people's bodies and no-body knows why. Sometimes doctors can make people better but unfortunately the medicine didn't work for granny and her body stopped working and this is what caused her to die'. Be sure to re-assure the child that this does not mean that they will die from the same thing.

- **Explain that it is not their fault.**

In some cases, children can blame themselves for the death. Children between the ages of 4 and 7 can think that if they wished for someone to go away they could have made the person die. Reassure your child that nothing they said, did or thought made the person die.

- **The funeral**

It can be a meaningful and important experience for children to have the opportunity to attend the funeral and say goodbye. Providing children with the choice of attending the funeral can bring a sense of finality and this can help the grieving process. However, remember that children may also choose not to attend the funeral. Respect this decision and offer the child to think of a way that they would like to say goodbye e.g. letting a balloon go or writing a letter. If your child chooses to attend the funeral try to explain the funeral process, making sure they understand what a funeral is and what happens there. Try to explain what a coffin will look like and what happens at a burial/cremation. It can also be nice to include children in the planning of the funeral by letting them choose a song or the flowers or even saying a prayer or a reading. Discuss this with them and allow them to choose whether this is something they would like to do.

- **Viewing the body**

In some cultures, or families, children may see the body after death. Indeed, it may be helpful to do so, however make sure time is taken to explain exactly what will happen when they go to view the body and what the person will look like.

Some choices can be more difficult to make than others. For example, many parents feel uncomfortable with the idea of a child viewing the body of the person who died, they feel that this may be too distressing and want to protect them from further hurt/pain. Children's imaginations can often be worse or more

frightening than reality, and because children have a natural curiosity, viewing the body can help them understand that the person is dead.

It is important to use concrete words, like died or dead, as children can often become confused by other explanations. For example, a lot of people often use the term, "it looks just like they are asleep". Although this term seems kinder to use, children can often become confused and worried that when they, or someone else, go to sleep they too might not wake up.

Again, choice is important for a child. If a child decides they do not want to view the body, but everyone else in the family does, they should not be made to feel wrong. Children need permission to choose and reassurance that whatever they decide is okay. Again here is a list of facts that a child may find helpful to talk about before viewing the body.

- **The body:**

- Is in an open or partially open coffin
- Is in a cool temperature
- Doesn't move
- Can't talk and doesn't see you
- Won't come back to life
- May be puffed up
- May have markings, etc. from injury/illness
- May look and feel different than the person did before the death
- May have a different smell

## **HOW A CHILD MIGHT GRIEVE**

There are no clear cut stages of grief, nor a correct order or 'right' amount of time to grieve. Therefore, try not to think about it in terms of a "right way" to grieve. How children respond to the death of a significant person in their lives can depend upon a number of factors including:

- Their age and stage of development – this will have an impact on the child/young person's understanding of death
- The circumstances of the death – illness, accident, suicide, murder, may also have an effect on a grieving child
- Their relationship to the person who died
- The reaction of other family members to the death
- How the family unit reacts to life following the death
- Culture and religion

### **Grief reactions and ages**

A child's age and stage of development can affect the way in which a child grieves

#### **0-2 Years    No concept of death Experience of loss is separation**

If a significant death occurs in the life of a child under the age of 2 years, they will not have much language to express their loss. Babies and toddlers react **physically** and **emotionally** to the disappearance of a significant person in their lives. Children of this age will pick up on parental feelings of grief and changes in routine and will perhaps fear separation from close family members.

Try to minimise disruptions and changes as in time, within a steady and loving environment, the loss can be repaired to some extent. It is important for the child and those caring for them to keep their memories of the person alive by talking and remembering. Additionally, it may be helpful to a child if a few belongings of the person that died are kept for them until they are older.

**2-5 Years**            **Death viewed as temporary and reversible – like sleep**  
**Dead people are elsewhere**  
**Dead people have feelings and bodily functions Thoughts, feelings and wishes**  
**can have causal effects- magic years**

Children of this age can understand the concept of death, but do not yet realise the finality of it and so may expect the person to reappear, “When’s daddy coming back?”. Children of this age think in concrete terms and so may become confused by terms such as “gone away” or “gone to sleep”. They may require the story of what has happened to be told over and over again. Children at this age can also believe that something they did or said caused the death to occur for example, in a fairy-tale, if they wish for someone to go away or die then they can make this happen. It is important to say that nothing they said, thought or did caused the person to die.

**5-9 Years**            **60% of 5 year olds have an almost complete concept of death**  
**7 year olds understand that death is irreversible and final and may begin to fear**  
**death**  
**Most 8 year olds have a fully developed concept of death and understand external**  
**causes**

Children of this age now begin to understand the difference between people who are alive and people who are dead. By this age they are able to understand that a dead person cannot feel, speak, hear, see or smell and they do not need to eat or drink. By the age of seven, most children know that death is final and that it can happen to anyone. Although children are more able to express thoughts and feelings, they can also hide these feelings away and may appear unaffected. Children of these ages need to be given the opportunity to ask questions and to be given as much information as possible to help them adjust. An important factor is their deepening realisation of the inevitability of death and an increasing awareness of their own mortality and the fear this can cause.

**10 years**  
**- adolescence**            **The concept of death becomes more abstract There is an understanding of**  
**the long term consequences of loss**  
**Personal implications of death are being appreciated**  
**Justice, injustice and fate may be issues**

Struggling for independence and an increasing understanding of the impact of a death on their lives may cause some teenagers to challenge beliefs and explanations given to them by others. Many teenagers feel more comfortable talking to their peers rather than a close family member. It is not unusual for teenagers to seem more insecure and behave more like younger children. In contrast you could see them pulling away from the family and withdrawing into a private existence. On the other hand, they may become angry and display more aggression.

### **Circumstances of the death**

The circumstances of the death can have a big impact on the way in which a child grieves. A sudden or traumatic death can be very different from one which is anticipated. When a parent or sibling dies unexpectedly the immediate reaction can be one of complete shock and sometimes the inability to feel anything (see attached sheets for traumatic deaths).

Although an anticipated death from a long illness is expected children can still be shocked. Children may seem to dip in and out of grief. One minute they may seem very upset and the next may seem fine. Try to be open and honest with your child and allow them to ask questions if they need to.

## **Their relationship to the person who has died**

This can be a major factor in how your child may react. If the child has a close relationship to the person who has died their grieving may be more intense compared to a family member who they have only met once. Try to remember this when speaking to children as although you may be grieving and upset for a relative overseas a child may not be as upset as this has no direct impact on their lives. On the other hand, a relative who has cared for them or they see on a daily basis could be a huge loss to them and they will need time and support to help them through their grief.

## **The reaction of other family members to the death**

If you are open and honest with your child about the death and you grieve openly then this allows your child to see it's alright to be sad, to cry and show their feelings, and gives them permission to grieve openly in front of you. Don't hide your tears, you are allowed to grieve!

## **How the family unit reacts to life following the death**

Often a death can put extra strain on the family as a whole. It is important to talk about how you are feeling. Hiding feelings from one another and ignoring the death can mean that children feel as though they can't be upset and talk about how they are feeling. Sometimes this causes children to release how they are feeling in other ways such as aggressive behaviour. Sharing your grief will give permission to your child to let them know that how they are feeling and grieving is ok.

## **Culture and religion**

Families have different cultures and religions therefore it is important to discuss this with your child. Children may grieve depending on how their religion allows. For example, some religions do not believe that children should attend the funeral. Try to explain the reasons for this to your child and try to let them decide a way in which they can say goodbye e.g. letting a balloon go or planting a tree.

Children will revisit their grief at different times, as part of their development and it can be helpful for parents to be aware that children can slip in and out of grief. This can sometimes be upsetting and shocking to an adult who may also be grieving. The best way to deal with this is to be prepared to comfort your child and answer any questions which may be bothering them. Remember it is ok for you to show your feelings to your child and for you to grieve together.

## **How you can help your child**

- Talk to your child honestly and explain what has happened in a way they can understand.
- Talk to them about the funeral and how they can be included. Give them the choice to attend.
- Inform the school of what has happened and find out who they can talk to in the school if they are upset.
- Support them in going back to school and talk to them about what additional support they may need.
- Remind them that they are not to blame and that it is not their fault and remember they may need to talk about this.
- Help them to keep their memories alive by talking and remembering especially at special times of the year.
- Let them keep something that belonged to the person who died.
- Give them a cuddle.
- Remind them to have fun and laugh sometimes. This doesn't mean that they are 'over it', have 'forgotten' or 'couldn't care'.
- Give them space but talk to them if you are worried they are not eating properly, having sleep problems or any other problems, so that you could do something about it together.
- Arrange for them to get extra support if they appear to be struggling.

## ANNIVERSARIES AND HOLIDAYS

Holidays and anniversaries can be difficult times for grieving families. Holidays can be filled with family get-togethers and festive events, many of which people are accustomed to sharing with the person who died, whilst anniversaries and birthdays can mark important events. At these times it can sometimes be difficult to "put on a happy face" when you're grieving inside.

For the newly bereaved, Christmas and New Year may be especially difficult. You might see the perfect gift for a loved one, and then realise he or she is not here to enjoy it. Whether your grief is new or old, there are ways you **can** make the holidays more bearable and less tiring for you and your children. The anniversary of a person's death may also be a difficult day but it may be helpful to honour the memory of the person who died and to begin new meaningful traditions in the family. Here are some suggestions. Use what is helpful for you.

- **Accept your Limitations**

Grief can be all-consuming, no matter what time of year it is. Holidays place additional stresses and demands on our lives. You may not be able to do all the things you've always done. Lower your expectations and allow yourself time and space to grieve.

- **Plan Ahead**

Decide ahead of time what you can and cannot do comfortably and let your friends and family know. For example, can you handle making the family dinner or should someone else do it? You may want to make a list of all the things you usually do - greeting cards, baking, shopping, decorations, parties, dinners etc. - and decide what you most want to do. Talk with your children about plans and allow them to be involved in deciding how the family spends the holiday. They will appreciate being included.

- **Ask for Help if You Need it**

There's a good chance that friends and family are looking for ways they can be helpful to you during the hard times. You may want to continue certain traditions, but feel you can't do it alone. Involve others. People enjoy supporting others in concrete ways, such as cleaning, cooking and baking. Sometimes it's hard to ask for help because we worry about burdening others but more often than not, they are more than happy to contribute.

- **Allow for Rest**

The holidays can be physically and emotionally draining for us all. Grieving is tiring too. Naps, walks, quiet times and other forms of relaxation - even for a short stretch of time - can be revitalising. Encourage children to have times of rest and quiet play as well.

- **Eliminate Unnecessary Stress**

Of course we can't entirely remove stress from the holidays but we **can** set limits! For example, we all know how exhausting shopping can be, especially as we get closer to the holidays. If you plan to buy gifts, consider shopping early or buying from catalogues.

- **Acknowledge the life of the person who died**

There are many creative ways to honour a person's memory. You may wish to do so by carrying on your family traditions or by creating new ones. Here are some ideas:

- Buy or make a memorial candle to light during the evening
- Observe a moment of silence or prayer before a meal (or at another appropriate time) in honour of the person who died
- Make a special toast or share memories of the person who died
- Buy a gift or ornament in honour of your loved one
- Make a donation to a charity in the name of your loved one or help a family in need by making a meal for them or sending presents to their children.

Remember there is no right or wrong way to "handle" holidays and anniversaries. You can only do what is right for you and your family.

## **WORKING WITH SCHOOLS**

Up to 70% of schools have a bereaved pupil on their school role at any given time. With the right support, most of these children will not need professional help, what they need is the understanding of familiar and trusted adults. Schools are well placed to support bereaved children and young people, offering them a safe and routine environment. Below is some advice on how you can work with a school to ensure your child is being supported.

- Phone or arrange a meeting with the school, either with the head teacher, class teacher or guidance teacher. This will allow you to tell the school what has happened so they are familiar with the circumstances of the death.
- Agree with the school what words/phrases to use, it is important that all adults who are in contact with a child should be saying the same. It is important that the school does not contradict the family wishes.
- Ask the school to notify all staff who work with the child or young person about the bereavement. This is important as it will help ensure all staff are aware of the situation and this will help in their approach to supporting the child/young person.
- Allow the child or young person to decide if they wish to tell their class and if so, how they would like it to be done.
- Arrange a plan for the child or young person if they need to leave class for a time out. Remember their school work may deteriorate for a time due to lack of concentration and to allow for this, so perhaps mention this to the school.
- Have a designated person who the child knows they can talk to. This can be any trusted adult that they feel they would like to talk to during school hours.
- Keep in touch with the school because they will be in a position to notice any changes in behaviour or school work.

### **What can school do to help a bereaved child or young person?**

- Communicate clearly with the family and make sure that what you say to the pupil does not conflict with the family's wishes.
- Acknowledge the bereavement, don't be afraid to use the word dead. For example, "I was very sorry to hear about the death of your..."
- Honesty; children and young people need honesty. Answer questions honestly, if you do not know the answer explain to the child that you're not sure, but can try to find out.
- Be prepared to listen, over and over again.
- Allow them time and space to express emotions
- Share any stories about the dead person, and talk about them with the child if they wish.
- Reassure them that they are not to blame, that it is not their fault that the person died.
- Grieving is tiring; it may be months until a child or young person is able to manage all of school and its work load.
- Have a designated person for a child to talk to if they need to.
- Have a plan for a time out, a safe, quiet place a child can use if they become upset.
- Keep in contact with the family.
- Understand that children will revisit their grief throughout the course of their lives; a death which occurred years ago can still affect a child or young person as their understanding may change with their development.
- Try not to judge or make assumptions. Every child and young person is different and they will grieve in their own way.

## **When a death affects the whole school**

When a pupil or member of staff in a school dies, it can have huge impact on the running and ethos of the school. It is important that the school work with the family of the person who has died to ensure they are considered in the process. This is especially important if there are siblings or family members of the deceased in the school.

### **Guidelines for breaking sad news**

- Whoever is giving the news should prepare what they are going to say.
- Don't be afraid to show emotion, it just shows that you are human; be careful though, it can be difficult if you weren't expecting it.
- Start by acknowledging you have sad news to give.
- Be honest, use straight simple facts use words like dead/died.
- If known, explain the basic circumstances of the death. If not known, say so, and explain you will try to find out.
- If there are rumours about the death, clear them up and state which ones are definitely not correct.
- Talk briefly about the person who has died, without eulogising them.
- Inform every one of any arrangements that have already been made.
- Close by acknowledging that not everyone will be feeling sad and that's ok.

### **Saying goodbye**

Schools can feel like it would benefit the school community to hold a special assembly or remembrance service. This can help put back a sense of normality into what may have been a very unsettled time. It can bring the school together to acknowledge what has happened. It will allow them to reflect and remember the person who has died. It will normalise grief, and allow pupils to see that it is OK to be sad, but also OK to be unaffected.

Suggestions for an assembly (every school will be different)

- Invite pupils, staff, any family members that may wish to come. If someone wishes not to attend then that is OK.
- Allow the pupils to help plan the service; this will give them a sense of involvement.
- You could; light a candle, have songs which the deceased liked, have staff and pupils read stories about the person.
- Place some photographs of the person who has died, but remember that a big image may be too much for a grieving family.
- To close, you could give a memorial box/book to the family, or blow out a remembrance candle, or allow pupils to write a private farewell message which can be placed in a box at the end, or play reflective yet uplifting music or go outside and anyone who wishes can release a balloon.
- You may want to hold the assembly before a break to allow everyone to compose themselves to return to normal timetable or at the end of the day so everyone can go home.

## BOOK LIST

**Lucy Has a Tumour** (Age 4+) CLIC Sargent: Barton, V.

Available online at [www.clicsargent.org.uk](http://www.clicsargent.org.uk) .

This is a story designed especially for parents and carers to read with children who have a cancer diagnosis. In a gentle manner, this story takes the reader through what cancer is and what to expect throughout the treatment process.

**Joe Has Leukaemia** (Age 4+) CLIC Sargent: Barton, V.

Available online to download or order as a hard copy at [www.clicsargent.org.uk](http://www.clicsargent.org.uk)

This is a story designed especially for parents and carers to read with children who have a leukaemia diagnosis. In a gentle manner, this story takes the reader through what leukaemia is and what to expect throughout the treatment process.

**Words of Comfort: For you in your time of loss**

Blue Mountain Press: Blue Mountain Arts Collection.

This is a collection of poems and sentiments designed to comfort the reader.

ISBN 0883966255

**Muddles Puddles and Sunshine**

Winston's Wish: Crossley, D. (2000)

Muddles, Puddles and Sunshine is a workbook that offers children the opportunity to look at their lives and explore the death of a loved one.

ISBN 1869890582

**I Feel Frightened** (Age 4+)

Hodder Wayland: Wayland, M.B. (1994)

This book explores some things that make children frightened and coping mechanisms they can use when they are frightened.

ISBN 075021404.

**Sad Isn't Bad: A good grief guidebook for kids dealing with loss**

(Age 4+)

Abbey Press: Mundy, M (1998).

This is a positive and comforting "elf-help" book that has been written to try and give children the tools they need in order to grieve well.

ISBN 0870293214.

**Water Bugs and Dragonflies** (Ages 6+)

The Pilgrim Press: Stickney, D. (1970)

This book is about water bugs who live together in a pond. Every so often a water bug will disappear and leave the rest to wonder what has become of them. This book uses the metaphor of a water bug turning into a beautiful dragonfly as a metaphor for the transformation from life to death.

ISBN 082981180

**The Secret C: Straight talking about cancer**(Age 6+)

Winston's Wish: Stokes, J. (2000) This is a picture book about a grandmother who has cancer and her granddaughter's experience of being with her during her illness.

ISBN 0953912302.

**Then, Now and Always** Winston's Wish: Stokes, J. (2004)

Supporting children as they journey through grief. A guide for practitioners.

ISBN 0953912353

**I Miss You: A first look at death** (Age 6+)

Baron's: Thomas, P. (2000)

This is a bright picture book designed to explain death to children in a simple and accessible way.

ISBN 0764117645

**Can Anyone be as Gloomy as Me?** (Ages 6+)

Hodder Wayland: Toczek, N. (2000)

These are simple poems about emotions that can help adults to start conversations about feelings and coping with young children.

ISBN 0750227931

### **Badgers Parting Gifts (Age 6+)**

Collins Picture Books: Varley, S. (2002)

When old Badger dies his friends think they will be sad forever. But gradually they are able to remember Badger with joy and to treasure the gifts he left behind for every one of his friends. This sensitive book can help children come to terms with the death of those they love.

ISBN 0006643175

### **When Uncle Bob Died (talking it through) (age 6+) Happy Cat Books: Wimperis, S. (2001).**

This is a story book that explains how people cope with grief in different ways and that death is completely natural. ISBN 1903285089

### **Silent Grief: Living in the wake of suicide**

Jessica Kingsley Publishers: Lucas, C and Seidem, H.M. (2007)

Silent Grief is a book for and about 'suicide survivors' – those who have been left behind by the suicide of a friend or loved one.

ISBN 9781843108474

### **Loss and Learning Disability**

Worth Publishing: Blackman, N (2003) This book addresses the emotions of people with learning disabilities and how they are affected by bereavement. ISBN 9781903269022

### **Talking with children and young people about death and dying Jessica Kingsley Publishers: Turner, M. (1998).**

This is a workbook designed to facilitate conversation between adults and bereaved children.

ISBN 9781843104414

### **Just my Reflection: Helping parents do things their way when their child dies**

Darton, Longman & Todd. Dominica, F. (1997) Available at:

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/026921639701100517> and to buy online as a hard copy.

A helpful document for practitioners who are helping parents who have suffered the death of a child

ISBN 9780232522112

### **Life after life**

Rider. Moody, R.A, (1975)

Study of more than 100 people who have experienced clinical death and survived.

ISBN 0712602739

### **When children grieve**

Quill. James. J.W, Friedman, R., (2002).

A book to help adults to help children deal with death, divorce, pet loss, moving and other losses.

ISBN: 0060196130

### **When Dad Died**

Gaskell. Hollins, S and Sireling, L. (1989)

Helpful to adults and children with learning disabilities. The pictures tell the story of a father's death.

ISBN 1904671047

### **When Mum Died**

Gaskell. Hollins, S. and Sireling, L. (1989)

Helpful to adults and children with learning disabilities. The pictures tell the story of a mother's death.

ISBN 1904671047

### **A Volcano in my Tummy: A resource book for parents, caregivers and teachers**

New Society Publishers: Whitehouse, E. and Pudney, W. (1994).

This book has helpful exercises in helping children control their anger.

ISBN 9780865713499.

### **What on Earth do you do when Someone Dies (6+)**

Free Spirit Publishing: Romain, T. and Verdick, E. (1999)

Answers some questions children might have about death in an easy, understandable manner.

ISBN 1575420554

**Grandad's Ashes**

Jessica Kingsley Publishers: Smith, W. and Smith, M.W. (2007).

Grandad has always wanted to be cremated and for his ashes to be scattered in his favourite place and this book tells the story of his grandchildren trying to find that place. A bright, colourful book that explores bereavement with light humour.  
ISBN 9781843105176

**On Death and Dying**

Schribner: Kubler-Ross, E. (2003).

Explores the five stages of death through sample interviews and conversations.  
ISBN 0684839385

**After the Darkest Hour the Sun will Shine Again** Fireside: Mehren, E. (1997).

A Parent's guide to coping with the loss of a child.  
The author tells her own story of losing her daughter.  
ISBN 0684811707

**Milly's Bug-Nut**

Winston's Wish: Janey, J. and Bailey, P. (2002).

The story of a family finding their way through bereavement.  
ISBN 0953912345

**When Someone Very Special Dies: Children Can Learn to Cope with Grief**

Woodland Press: Heegaard, M. (1991)

A practical format for allowing children to understand the concepts of death and develop coping skills for life. With the supervision of an adult, children are invited to illustrate and personalise their loss through art. "When Someone Very Special Dies" encourages the child to identify support systems and personal strengths.  
ISBN 0962050202

**Fall of Freddie the Leaf - A Story of Life for All Ages**

SLACK Incorporated: Buscaglia, L. (1982)

This story is about how a leaf called Freddie and his companion leaves change with the passing seasons, finally falling to the ground with the winter's snow. It is an inspiring allegory illustrating the delicate balance between life and death.  
ISBN 9780943432892

**When Someone Has a Very Serious Illness: Children Can learn to Cope with Loss and Change**

Woodland Press: Heegaard, M. (1991)

When someone in the family has a serious illness everyone in the family is affected. Whilst the family focus is on a long term illness, children may develop unhealthy defences and roles. This book invites children to illustrate the text and encourages them to talk about their misconceptions, fears and worries. In addition, they also learn about concepts of illness and ways of coping with another person's illness.  
ISBN 0962050245

**Someone Came Before You**

Grief Watch: Schwiebert, P. (2007)

This story explains gently how a child's parents had another baby before them and that it had died before or after birth. This book helps parents to tell their child about their lost sibling and also helps them to preserve memories.  
ISBN 0972424156

**Toby's Tiny Tot**

Sands: Savage, J. (2006)

A story about a young boy awaiting the arrival of a baby brother or sister, when the baby dies. Available at:  
<http://portal.ukstands.org/public/shop/default.aspx#Books>  
ISBN 0954693248

**No New Baby**

Centering Corporation: Gryte, M. (1999)

A story about a young boy awaiting the arrival of a baby brother or sister, when the baby dies.  
ISBN 1561230413

**The Huge Bag of Worries**

Hodder's Children's Books: Ironside, V. (2011)

Jenny carries around a big blue bag of worries everywhere she goes. This book explores how other people can help Jenny with her worries and make the bag a bit lighter.  
ISBN 9780340903179

**Red Chocolate Elephants**

Karridale Pty Ltd: Sands, D (2010).

This is a workbook designed to support children bereaved by suicide.

ISBN 9780646542379

**Chocolate Chipped: A smelly book about grief.**

Smellessence: Gilbert, S (2011)

This is a scratch-and-sniff book that uses smells to try and evoke memories in children. It tells the story of a boy called Charlie who is grieving for his dad. This is a useful tool for facilitating conversations about death when there are grieving children involved.

ISBN 9780954843496

**Bereavement, Loss and Learning Disability: a guide for professionals and carers.**

Jessica Kingsley Publishers: Grey, R. (2010)

This book explains ways of interacting and engaging with people who have learning disabilities when they are going through a bereavement.

ISBN 9781849050203

**Never too Young to Know: Death in Children's Lives**

Oxford University Press: Silverman, P. (2000)

This uses research data and stories from bereaved children to offer practical and honest advice about how to cope with bereavement and grief.

ISBN 0195109554

**Continuing Bonds: New understandings of Grief**

Taylor and Francis: Klass, D. (1996)

This book discusses and expands upon the general understanding society has of grief and bereavement and examines the bonds people hold onto with those who are deceased.

ISBN 1560323396

**As Big as it Gets: supporting a child when a parent is seriously ill**

Winston's Wish: Stokes, J., Crossley, D. and Stubbs, D. (2007)

This is a workbook intended to support parents who have serious illnesses in guiding their children through it, helping them build resilience and facilitating conversations about feelings.

ISBN 0953912396

**A Comprehensive Guide to Suicidal Behaviours: Working with Individuals at Risk and their Families**

Jessica Kingsley Publishers: Aldridge, D and Barrero, S. (2012) This book advises the reader on how to support someone who is at risk of suicide and to identify behaviours that might be perceived in those who are at risk. The book also debunks myths about suicide and clarifies the facts.

ISBN 9781849050258

**Is Daddy Coming Back in a Minute?: Explaining (sudden) death to preschool children in words they can understand.**

Elke Barber: Barber, E. and Barber, A. (2012)

This book explains death to children in an honest, loving and gentle way and is beautifully illustrated. It is based on the real life experience of the author who had to explain the death of her son's father to him when he an infant.

ISBN 9780957474505

**Helping Children Cope with the Loss of a Loved One: A Guide for Grown Ups**

Free Spirit Publishing Inc.: Kroen, W.C. (1996)

This book practically explains what children understand about bereavement and how they grieve and offers advice on how to support them throughout the grief process.

ISBN 1575420007

**Frog's Breathtaking Speech: How Children (and Frogs) Can Use Yoga Breathing to Deal with Anxiety, Anger and Tension**

Singing Dragon: Chissck, M and Peacock, S.

This book takes children through all of the breathing techniques Frog learns in order to steady his nerves before he makes his speech. This is a useful tool for teaching children breathing that can help them to cope with feelings like anxiety and anger.

ISBN 9781848190917

## **Remembering...**

Child Bereavement UK: Leutner, D.

A workbook or children to remember their loved one.

ISBN 9780952166184

## **The Forgotten Mourners: Guidelines for working with bereaved children.**

Jessica Kingsley Publishers: Smith, S.C. (1999)

This book gives advice on how important it is to acknowledge that a child is mourning and highlights that their grief can often go unrecognised when others are grieving as well. The books include advice on how to recognise mourning behaviours and support each child through his or her grief. ISBN 1853027588

## **NATIONAL SUPPORT AGENCIES**

### **Child Bereavement UK (Head Office)**

**Information, training, support and activity material to assist those helping bereaved families**

Add : Clare Charity Centre, Wycombe Road, Saunderton, Buckinghamshire, HP14 4BF

Tel : 01494 568 900

Email : [support@childbereavementuk.org](mailto:support@childbereavementuk.org)

Web : [childbereavementuk.org](http://childbereavementuk.org)

### **Barnardo's Rollercoaster Service**

**Group work and one to one counselling and individual support available for children who have been bereaved.**

**Therapeutic support for parents, carers and children who have been bereaved is also available.** Add :

Family Services Dundee, 3 Fleuchar Street, DUNDEE, DD2 2LQ

Tel : 01382 432631

Web : <http://www.barnardos.org.uk/rollercoaster-service/serviceview.htm?id=174031223>

### **Crocus**

**Peer support for bereaved children**

Add : Unit 10, 20 Carsegate Road North, Carsegate Rd, Inverness, IV3 8EA

Tel : 01463 70400

Email : [info@crocusgroup.org.uk](mailto:info@crocusgroup.org.uk)

Web : [www.crocusgroup.org.uk](http://www.crocusgroup.org.uk)

### **Winston's Wish**

**Advice and guidance for families of bereaved children**

Add : 17 Royal Crescent, Cheltenham, GL50 3DA

Tel : 01242 515 157

Email : [info@winstonswish.org.uk](mailto:info@winstonswish.org.uk)

Web : <https://www.winstonswish.org>

### **The Compassionate Friends**

**Bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents who have suffered the death of a child or children of any age and from any cause. Offering a helpline, local support contacts and peer support groups across Scotland.**

Add : Kilburn Grange, Priory Park Road, London NW6 7UJ

Tel : 0345 123 2304

Email : [helpline@tcf.org.uk](mailto:helpline@tcf.org.uk) / [infor@tcf.org.uk](mailto:infor@tcf.org.uk)

Web : [www.tcf.org.uk](http://www.tcf.org.uk)

### **Together for Short Lives**

**Supporting families with children with life shortening conditions before and after death**

Add : New Bond House, Bond Street, Bristol, BS2 9AG

Tel : 0117 989 7820 (office) 0808 8088 100 (helpline)

Email : Contact form on website

Web : [www.togetherforshortlives.org.uk/](http://www.togetherforshortlives.org.uk/)