



Reading List & Resources for Children Coping with Death

HOSPICE CARE | PALLIATIVE CARE | GRIEF SUPPORT | EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE

agrace.org

I Miss You: A First Look At Death

Pat Thomas and Leslie Harker

When a close friend or family member dies, it can be difficult for children to express their feelings. This book helps boys and girls understand that death is a natural complement to life, and that grief and a sense of loss are normal feelings for them to have following a loved one's death.

The Next Place

Warren Hanson

An inspirational journey of light and hope to a place where earthly hurts are left behind.

Tear Soup

Chuck DeKlyen, Taylor Bills and Pat Schwiebert

Grandy has just suffered a big loss in her life, and so she is cooking up her own unique batch of "tear soup." "Tear Soup" gives you a glimpse into Grandy's life as she blends different ingredients into her own grief process. Her tear soup will help to bring her comfort and ultimately help to fill the void in her life that was created by her loss.

Water Bugs and Dragonflies: Explaining Death to Young Children

Doris Stickney and Robyn Henderson Nordstrom

Looking for a meaningful way to explain the death of a five-year-old friend to neighborhood children, Stickney adapted a graceful fable about a water bug that changed into a dragonfly.

Lifetimes

Bryan Mellonie

A pet, a friend or a relative dies, and it must be explained to a child. This sensitive book is a useful tool in explaining to children that death is a part of life and that, eventually, all living things reach the end of their own special lifetimes.

The Fall of Freddie the Leaf: A Story of Life for All Ages

Leo Buscaglia, PhD

This story by Leo Buscaglia is a warm, wonderfully wise and strikingly simple story about a leaf names Freddie. How Freddie and his companion leaves change with the passing seasons, finally falling to the ground with winter's snow, is an inspiring allegory illustrating the delicate balance between life and death.

Continued on next page

When Dinosaurs Die: A Guide to Understanding Death

Laurie Krasny Brown

Unlike many books on death for little ones, this one doesn't tell a story. Instead, it addresses children's fears and curiosity head-on, and in a largely secular fashion, by answering some very basic questions: "Why does someone die?" "What does *dead* mean?" "What comes after death?" The forthright approach makes the subject seem less mysterious and provides kids with plenty to think about and discuss with their parents.

Sad Isn't Bad: A Good-Grief Guidebook for Kids Dealing With Loss

Michaelene Mundy and R.W. Alley

Loaded with positive, life-affirming advice for coping with loss as a child, this guide tells children what they need to know after a loss—that the world is still safe; life is good; and hurting hearts do mend. Written by a school counselor, this book helps comfort children facing of the worst and hardest kind of reality.

Badger's Parting Gifts

Susan Varley

Badger's friends are overwhelmed with their loss when he dies. By sharing their memories of his gifts, they find the strength to face the future with hope.

Someone I Love is Sick: Helping Very Young Children Cope with Cancer in the Family, Parent Version *(there is also a grandparent version)*

Kathleen McCue

"Someone I Love is Sick" is a customizable tool to use when talking with children ages 2 to 6 years old about a parent or grandparent who has cancer. It addresses all stages of the cancer journey, including diagnosis, treatment, hospitalization, recurrence and end of life. The tool can be used by families and health care professionals.

Angel Catcher for Kids: A Journal to Help You Remember the Person You Love Who Died

Amy Eldon

"Angel Catcher for Kids" offers a healthy way for a child to cope with the painful and often confusing process of grieving. Designed to help a child overcome the loss of a loved one, this journal also invites the child to record precious memories of the special person who has died. "Angel Catcher for Kids" will help a child to catch—and hold—an angel.

Everett Anderson's Goodbye

Lucille Clifton

The death of Everett Anderson's father brings to a close this empathetic series of verse stories that express universal heartaches and small moments of hope.

Continued on next page

A Terrible Thing Happened—A Story for Children Who Have Witnessed Violence or Trauma

Margaret M. Holmes

Sherman Smith saw the most terrible thing happen. At first he tried to forget about it, but soon something inside him started to bother him. He felt nervous for no reason. Sometimes his stomach hurt. He had bad dreams. And he started to feel angry and do mean things, which got him in trouble. Then he met Ms. Maple, who helped him talk about the terrible thing that he had tried to forget. Now Sherman is feeling much better. This gently told and tenderly illustrated story is for children who have witnessed any kind of violent or traumatic episode, including physical abuse, school or gang violence, accidents, homicide, suicide, and natural disasters such as floods or fire.

When Your Grandparent Dies: A Child's Guide to Good Grief

Victoria Ryan and R. W. Alley

Explaining what happens from a child's-eye view, the little elves in this book depict the difficult days before, after and beyond a grandparent's death. With ideas for action and questions for discussion, this creative guide will help you help your grieving child to create comforting memories and find closure. Gentle references to God and prayer.

The Two of Them

Aliki

"The day she was born, her grandfather made her a ring of silver and a polished stone, because he loved her already." Through the years, the little girl and her grandfather share so many happy times—playing by the sea, walking in the mountains, working in his store. And when he grows sick, she takes care of him with as much love as he always showed her.

Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs

Tommy dePaola

Every Sunday four-year-old Tommy's family goes to visit his grandparents. His grandmother is always busy downstairs, but his great-grandmother is always in bed upstairs, because she is 94 years old. Tommy loves both of his nanas and the time he spends with them. He is desolate when his upstairs nana dies, but his mother comforts him by explaining that "she will come back in your memory whenever you think about her."

Samantha Jane's Missing Smile: A Story About Coping With the Loss of a Parent

Julie Kaplow, Donna Pincus

This story of a young girl whose father has recently died, deals with the full range of emotions, questions and worries that children have when a parent has died. It offers ways to remember and honor the lost parent, encourages the open sharing of feelings and helps children understand that their parents want them to be happy and live their lives fully.

Continued on next page

Someone Came Before You

Pat Schwiebert

There are books for children to help them when the baby they are waiting for dies. And now there is a book for the child who comes after the one who died. It's a perfect gift just for them. It explains in a gentle way the parent's desire for a child and the sadness that comes over them when that baby dies. It then shares how the parents, with the help of the baby, get to the point of wanting another child to come into their lives. The illustrator, Taylor Bills, who has an extraordinary gift of capturing feelings in his drawings that tell the story beyond words.

Where's Jess?

Marvin Johnson with Ray and Jody Goldstein

Ray and Jody Goldstein wrote this book for siblings aged 3 to 6, following their daughter Jess' death from SIDS. A very simple and easy to understand book for children whose baby brother or sister lived for a time at home.

Am I Still a Sister?

Alicia Sims

Letters and thoughts written by 11-year-old Alicia about her baby brother who died of cancer when she was four.

Since My Brother Died: Desde que Murio Mi Hermano

Marisol Muñoz-Kiehne

Includes both English and Spanish translations of a caregivers' section, teachers' section and a story for children. In this book, the child talks about how things are different since his brother died. In the end, the child realizes his brother is still alive in his heart.

Lost and Found: Remembering a Sister

Ellen Yeomans

"We lost Paige. That's what my Grandma said 'lost.' My parents said she died. I wondered if I could find her again." So begins the story of one child's search for understanding after the death of her sister. If someone could be "lost" could they also be "found?" Dealing with her own grief and accepting the emotions of those around her this child finds her way toward healing.

Sammy's Mommy Has Cancer

Sherry Kohlenberg

This warm, sensitive, and straightforward story will help young children understand and accept the changes in their lives when a parent is diagnosed with a life-threatening illness. Parents will welcome this valuable aid in explaining the illness to their children. Sharing the book together, families will find encouragement in dealing with their sorrow, hopes, and small joys during a difficult time.

I Will Remember You: What to do When Someone You Love Dies—A Guidebook Through Grief for Teens

Laura Dower

Just as death is a part of life, grieving is a part of living. For teens, this can be a particularly painful lesson to learn. “I Will Remember You” is an inspirational and accessible guide to coping with loss. It includes personal stories of death and life from real teens, advice from a renowned grief counselor, and dozens of hands-on creative exercises to help teens move through their pain and sorrow . . . into tomorrow.

I Wasn’t Ready to Say Goodbye: Surviving, Coping and Healing After the Sudden Death of a Loved One

Brook Noel

This book acts as a touchstone of sanity through difficult times. “I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye” covers such difficult topics as the first few weeks, suicide, death of a child, children and grief, funerals and rituals, physical effects, homicide and depression. New material covers the unique circumstances of loss, men and women's grieving styles, religion and faith, myths and misunderstandings. “I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye” reflects the shifting face of grief.

The Grieving Teen: A Guide for Teenagers and Their Friends

Helen Fitzgerald

Writing not only about—but also for—teenagers, Fitzgerald adeptly covers the entire range of situations in which teens may find themselves grieving a death, whether the cause was old age, terminal illness, school violence or suicide. She helps teens address the gamut of strong and difficult emotions they will experience and the new situations they will face, including family changes, issues with friends, problems at school and the courage needed to move forward with one's own life. Using the clear and accessible format that has made “The Mourning Handbook” and “The Grieving Child” enduring and helpful classics, Fitzgerald guides teens through everything from the sickbed to the funeral, from the first day back at school to the first anniversary of the death. Above all, she lets teens know that even in their darkest hour, they are not alone.

Healing Your Grieving Heart for Teens: 100 Practical Ideas

Alan D. Wolfelt

A book that is written in clear, user-friendly prose. Each page presents a different idea designed to help teens recognize mourning as a natural process connected with loss, reassuring them that they should not be afraid of deep, sometimes uncontrollable emotions, and showing them how to release grief in healthy, positive ways. Several suggestions appear under each heading; many of them encourage readers to express their feelings in a journal.

Continued on next page

Angel Catcher: A Journal of Loss and Remembrance

Kathy Eldon

Over the past decade, this classic work has helped thousands find meaningful ways to overcome the despair of losing a loved one. Now, *“Angel Catcher”* has been revised and updated to convey its powerful message of hope to a new audience. Featuring brand new illustrations and a fresh updated look, the tasteful pages of this journal guide the user through the process of mourning and onward to a lasting sense of peace in the face of loss.

The Gift of a Memory: A Keepsake to Commemorate the Loss of a Loved One

Marianne Richmond

“The Gift of a Memory” is a warm and gentle gift of love that commemorates the loss of a special life and celebrates our most cherished memories. Each page, with its tender prose and reflective artwork, is a hug for the healing heart. Created to be a welcome friend for life's emotional journey of loss, this keepsake offers sensitive compassion, hope, and comfort. A beautiful section in the back of the book honors our memories, inviting friends and family to record their treasured recollections.

Straight Talk about Death for Teenagers: How to Cope with Losing Someone You Love

Earl A. Grollman

If you are a teenager whose friend or relative has died, this book was written for you. Earl A. Grollman, the award-winning author of *“Living When a Loved One Has Died,”* explains what to expect when you lose someone you love.

Weird Is Normal When Teenagers Grieve

Jenny Lee Wheeler

Teens grieve differently from adults and often get lost in the shuffle after the death of a loved one. *“Weird Is Normal When Teenagers Grieve”* is unique because it is a self-help book for grieving teens written by an actively grieving teen. Author Jenny Lee Wheeler lost her father to cancer when she was 14 and validates for her peers that they have the right to grieve in their own way and according to their own timetable, that their grief attacks might be different from those of adults around them, and that they aren't going crazy if they see signs from their loved one. Dr. Heidi Horsley writes in the Foreword, “Teen grief is often overlooked and unacknowledged. Jenny's journey will strike a note with teenagers everywhere who have experienced the loss of someone they love. She gives sound advice and lets them know they are not alone.”

Fire in My Heart, Ice in My Veins—A Journal for Teenagers Experiencing a Loss

Enid Samuel-Traisman

Teens can write letters, copy down meaningful lyrics, write songs and poems, tell the person who died what they want them to know, finish business and use their creativity to work through the grieving process.

Paw Prints in the Stars: A Farewell and Journal for a Beloved Pet

Warren Hanson

“Paw Prints in the Stars” was created to help one deal with the loss of a beloved pet. The book is written in the voice of the pet that has passed and brings peace and comfort while celebrating life and the lessons learned. There is a place for treasured photos and journal pages for favorite memories as well as a special ribbon to hold collar tags.

The Tenth Good Thing About Barney

Judith Viorst

My cat Barney died this Friday. I was very sad. My mother said we could have a funeral for him, and I should think of 10 good things about Barney so I could tell them. But the small boy who loved Barney can only think of nine. Later, while talking with his father, he discovers the tenth—and begins to understand.

Saying Goodbye to Lulu

Corinne Demas

A girl cares tenderly for her old dog, Lulu, whose vision, hearing and general health are declining. Though she wishes that they could play together as they used to, she knows that her dog will not get well. Lulu dies and is buried in the backyard, but it takes some months before the girl can say goodbye. As the story ends, she meets her new puppy and finds that her heart has room for Lulu and her new dog too.

I’ll Always Love You

Hans Wilhelm

In this gentle, moving story, Elfie, a dachshund, and her special boy progress happily through life together. One morning Elfie does not wake up. The family grieves and buries her. The watercolor illustrations, tender and warm in color and mood, suit the simple text perfectly.

When a Friend Dies: A Book for Teens About Grieving and Healing

Marilyn E. Gootman

Sixteen short chapters deliver helpful information on subjects including: How can I stand the pain? How should I be acting? What is normal? What if I can't handle my grief on my own? and How can I find a counselor or a therapist? Quotes from well-known writers and philosophers give insight into the grieving process and healing. These statements allow readers to understand that they're not alone. Other topics covered include guilt, anger, confusion, fear, and numbness; the information offered reassures readers that these are all valid emotions. This edition also addresses loss through violence.

How it Feels When a Parent Dies

Jill Krementz

Eighteen children from 7 to 17 speak openly of their experiences and feelings. As they speak we see them in photos with their surviving parent and with other family members, in the midst of their everyday lives.

You Are Not Alone: Teens Talk About Life After the Loss of a Parent

Lynn B. Hughes

Hughes, the founder of Comfort Zone Camp for grieving kids, believes that sharing experiences about losing a parent begins the healing process. Her purpose in writing the book is to let teens know that they don't have to feel isolated—there is help available for them. The book opens with the author's story of losing both of her parents by the age of 12 and living with an unloving stepmother. Fourteen chapters lead readers through the process of grieving and dealing with life without a parent. Quotes from former campers are interspersed throughout the book, giving insight into a variety of ways young people have dealt with loss. One teen states, "People get that losing a parent is hard, but I don't think they fully understand everything we lose with them. It isn't just a person that is lost, it is a lifetime worth of memories yet to be made." Talking with a counselor, therapist, teacher, coach, or religious leader is suggested, along with keeping a journal. Information about Comfort Zone Camp is appended. This helpful book offers consolation in knowing that others have also experienced immeasurable loss while giving helpful suggestions on how to deal with the pain.

After Normal: One Teen's Journey Following Her Younger Brother's Death

Diane Aggen

"After Normal" is one teen's journey through grief after the death of her younger brother. Unique in the field of death and dying literature, it offers helpful insights and understanding for teens facing a similar loss or for those who might wish to understand and help teens facing a similar loss. No easy answers. No pious platitudes. Just a truthful insider's view of the journey from darkness to light, black and white to color, despair to hope again.