

Useful Books for Professionals Helping Children and Young People Cope with Grief



Below is a selection of books that may be useful for you to share with children and young people.

Many of the publications are available through Norfolk County Council Libraries. You can access their booklist at www.norfolk.gov.uk/libraries and follow the link for health and well-being. Many of these books can also be purchased at reputable bookshops.

Alternatively, you can look at the Winston's Wish website on the Internet www.winstonswish.org.uk which has an extensive booklist for children of all ages. Simply follow the link for parents and carers and then click the link on the left hand side of the page entitled 'Publications and Resources'.

Early Years

I Miss You: A First Look at Death by Pat Thomas

ISBN: 978-0764117640

This is a good first information book to help you to talk about death and grief with clear explanations.

A Place in My Heart by Annette Aubrey

ISBN 978-1-84835-004-5

This rhyming story shares Andrew's story after the death of his Grandad. He is feeling very sad and confused and the book follows Andrew as he begins to explore these feelings with his Mum and Dad. This book is illustrated beautifully and gives lots of opportunities for discussion and exploration of a number of bereavement themes, including emotions and remembering.

Beginnings and Endings with Lifetimes in Between: A beautiful way to explain life and death to children By Bryan Mellonie & Robert Ingpen

ISBN: 978-1855617605

This thought-provoking book has large pictures alongside small sections of text. It clearly explains about life and death, focussing on plants, animals and insects, before moving on to people. It emphasises that death is part of the life cycle and is natural and normal whenever it occurs. A simple book with a powerful message.

Always and Forever by Alan Duranti

ISBN 978-0-552-54877-9

A lovely illustrated story book. One of four animal friends dies and so everyone is really sad. They all find lovely ways to remember their friend and this helps them come to terms with his death.

No Matter What By Debi Gliori,

ISBN: 978-0747563310

A rhyming story with large, bright pictures about Small, a young fox who is feeling cross because no one loves him. Large, then reassures him that she'll love him no matter what. A fun and imaginative book that only briefly talks about death but would be a useful story to help support a young child through difficult times

5 to 8 Years

Many of these books can also be shared with children under 5 with additional planning and support from an adult

Ellie's Book-The Story of When My Mummy Died by Lorna Vyse

When five-year-old Ellie's mummy dies unexpectedly, her world changes beyond all recognition. The youngest of three siblings, Ellie struggles to understand where her mummy has gone, why she isn't coming back and why the adults in her home keep whispering to each other. She looks to her aunt, who answers Ellie questions fully and honestly to help her make sense of what has happened.

This book is only available at <https://www.lornavyse.com/shop>

When Dinosaurs Die – A guide to Understanding Death by Laurene Krasny Brown and Marc Brown

ISBN 978-0316119559

A colourful information book to help children understand different aspects of life and death and causes of death. Includes lots of cartoon dinosaur pictures to give prompts for discussion.

Badgers Parting Gifts by Susan Varley

ISBN 0-00-664317-5

A lovely illustrated story book. When old badger dies, his friends think they will be sad forever but they remember him and manage to come to terms with his death.

Is Daddy Coming Back in a Minute? By Elke and Alex Barber

ISBN 978-1-78592-106-3

This illustrated book explains sudden death in words young children can understand. Written by Elke, a young widow and her ten year old son Alex, this book aims to explore questions that children may have following a sudden death, such as 'is Daddy coming back?', 'where is he?' and 'why couldn't the ambulance people fix Daddy?'

What Happened to Daddy's Body? By Elke and Alex Barber

ISBN 978-1-78592-107-0

Written by the same mother and son team as above, this illustrated book tells the true story of what happened in the months after Alex's daddy died and how, with the help of his mother, Alex learnt all about burial and cremation.

The Lonely Tree by Nicholas Halliday

ISBN 978-18404659-9-3

This beautiful and moving story book follows the first year in the life of a lone evergreen tree, growing in an ancient oak woodland. During this year, the little tree experiences not only the joy of his first friendship with a giant Oak tree but also, the death of this old friend. As the seasons pass, he learns that death is a natural part of living in the forest and that we are all part of the never-ending cycle of life. This book can be particularly useful when a child experiences the death of an older person in their life.

Luna's Red Hat by Emmi Smid

ISBN 978-1-84905-629-8

This illustrated story book is designed to be read with children aged 6+ who have experienced the loss of a loved one by suicide. Luna's Mum died one year ago and she still finds it difficult to understand why. She feels that it may have been her fault and worries that her Dad might leave her in the same way. Her Dad talks to her to explain what happened and together, they think about all the happy memories they have of her Mum.

9 to 11 years

Ben's Book- A story of when my mum died by Lorna Vyse

Ben's life is turned upside-down when his mum dies unexpectedly. With a funeral to face, as well as a new school on the horizon and his upcoming eleventh birthday, he struggles to make sense of what has happened and how to adapt to life without his mum. He finds a way to manage his grief with the help of his aunt and the notebook she gives him to write down his anxieties and any questions he has, which she answers fully and honestly.

This book is only available at <https://www.lornavyse.com/shop>

Water Bugs and Dragonflies by Doris Stickney

ISBN 9780829816242

This is a good story book for explaining how we do not know what happens when someone dies. The book uses an analogy of waterbugs changing into dragonflies. Please note this has Christian prayers and readings at the end of the book.

What on Earth Do You Do When Someone Dies? By Trevor Romain

ISBN 1-57542-055-4

This is a really good information book that covers a wide range of issues surrounding death including cremation, funerals and rituals. It also offers practical suggestions to children to help cope with their feelings.

Milly's Bug Nut by Jill Janey

ISBN: 978-0-9539123-4-6

This is a short, simple story of a young girl whose Dad has died. It talks about the ups and downs of family life and how things slowly get easier as time goes by. Milly misses her Dad and things are just not the same anymore. She knows when people die, they can't come back but she still wishes to see her Dad one more time.

12 to 16 years

Alex's Book- A story of when my mum died by Lorna Vyse

Alex's life changes beyond recognition when her mum dies unexpectedly. At 14 years old and as the eldest of three children, she feels the need to support her siblings at a time when she herself is struggling to imagine life without her mum. She feels the full weight of her grief and the many changes happening in her family, and looks for support from her aunt, who gives her a notebook to write down any questions swirling around in her mind.

This book is only available at <https://www.lornavyse.com/shop>

Michael Rosen's SAD BOOK by Michael Rosen

ISBN: 978-1406313161

This book has large illustrations and small snippets of text. It is wonderfully honest and will appeal to children and adults of all ages. We all experience sad things, but what makes Michael Rosen most sad is thinking about his son who died. This book explains a simple but emotive story. Rosen talks about what 'sad' is and how it affects him and what he does to cope with it.

Finding a Way Through When Someone Close Has Died' by Pat Mood & Lesley Whittaker

ISBN 1 85302 920 3

This is an information book for young people, written by young people. It discusses lots of topics, including feelings and emotions and has several ideas to help young people cope with bereavement.

You Will Be Okay by Julie Stokes

A comforting, practical and go-to expert toolkit for children age 9+ dealing with loss and grief, by Julie Stokes OBE - chartered clinical psychologist, executive coach and founder of Winston's Wish

Books to support with specific bereavement-related issues

Worry and Anxiety

A Huge Bag of Worries by Virginia Ironside

ISBN: 978-0340903179

(Suggested age range 4-8 years)

Jenny begins to worry about lots of different things and these worries build up and get out of control. A lovely story with fun illustrations which encourages children to talk about their worries.

Separation Anxiety

Wherever You Are, My Love will Find You by Nancy Tillman

ISBN 978-1-250-01797-0

(Suggested age range 3-8 years)

Many children can worry about being apart from the people they love after experiencing a bereavement. With this in mind, this magical picture book can help to offer reassurance and comfort, reminding children that even when we are not together, we can still feel connected to one another by love.

The Invisible String by Patrice Karst

ISBN 978-1-443-177368

Suggested age range 4-8 years)

"A girl who is anxious on her first day of school learns that she carries an "invisible backpack" around with her everywhere, packed full of "invisible tools" that allow her to access her inner strength whenever she needs it"

Anger

Angry Arthur by Hiawyn Oram

ISBN: 978-0099196617

(Suggested age range 4-8 years)

It's time for bed but Arthur wants to stay up so he gets really angry. Every time someone tells him 'that's enough!' his anger gets bigger and bigger and takes over the world until he wonders why he was so angry in the first place. A wonderful imaginative story that many children (and adults) will be able to relate to.