

Books can help explain the complexities of grief and loss to children. We utilize a wide variety of books to help us interact with children at our grief center but also use them as a reference guide to the adult caregivers of grieving children. Caregivers know their child best and should try to choose a book based on the level of grief their child is experiencing.

With that in mind, choose a book that fits your comfort level and the child's developmental understanding of what has changed in their life. The books we refer to range from a story-telling perspective to a more factual and authentic narrative. We also use books that identify emotions to help the younger children (with limited communication skills) describe what they are feeling.

These books are wonderful tools to encourage discussion and help support you and your child in this time of need.

For Children:

"Sad Isn't Bad" by Michaelene Mundy

This is a book about normalizing feelings and the after death experiences a child might have. This includes funerals, and the changes in their emotions and their environment.

"Lost and Found- Remembering a Sister" by Ellen Yeoman

This story acknowledges the changes you may feel and see after a sibling death. There are also ideas of how to memorialize and honor the person who died.

"One Wave at A Time" by Holly Thompson

This is a great book that helps children identify the many waves of emotion that can be felt after the death of someone we care about.

"Why Do I Feel So Sad?" by Tracy Lambert-Prater

Understanding grief can be an important conversation with children. This book addresses the various reasons why someone may be grieving while also sharing how that can look and feel to all different children.

"Badger's Parting Gifts" by Susan Varley

This story is a delicate way of acknowledging all the things our person who died left with us. This is a great book to use as a tool for conversation and memory sharing.

"Tear Soup" by Chuck DeKlyen and Pat Schwiebert

This story shares in the sadness that can overcome someone who has experienced the loss of someone they love. Many themes are present in this story that make it relatable to a griever. The biggest theme of how people often try to make a grieving person feel better by any means necessary but that is not always what the griever needs.

“Invisible String” by Patrice Karst

The story of the invisible string shares in the idea that we are always connected to the people we care about. The string in this story is the connection that brings us comfort and support when we need it most.

“I Miss You - A First Look at Death” by Pat Thomas

This authentic book looks at the various first experiences a child might have when someone they care about has died. This includes the ritualistic practices as well as the new emotions they may be feeling.

“When Dinosaurs Die” by Laurie Krasney Brown

This factual book looks at all the potential experiences after someone we care about has died. This includes what can happen to the body as well as ritual practices and the recognition that there are many different practices families follow when someone dies.

“The Kissing Hand” by Audrey Penn

This story allows the reader to share a token of love with the listener. You can use this story to share memories or tangible items of the person who has died and remind the listener that they can touch those items when they are missing their person.

“Gentle Willow” by Joyce C. Mills

This book addresses transformation in illness. Identifying changes in our person can be difficult, by sharing in those changes we can better help children understand the process associated with terminal illness and death.

“My Big Dumb Invisible Dragon” by Angie Lucas

This story follows a boy in his grief journey after his mother dies. The experiences the boy shares include his grief and how he shares his experience with his grief is relatable to any reader.

“A Terrible Thing Happened” by Margaret M. Holmes

This story acknowledges the many emotions that can be felt when we experience something terrible. Not only does this story share a variety of emotions but it encourages the reader or listener to think of what is supportive to them when they are feeling many emotions related to something terrible.

For Teens and Young Adults:

“Straight Talk About Death for Teenagers” by Earl R. Grollman

“The Grieving Teen: A Guide for Teens and Their Friends” by Helen Fitzgerald

“Weird is Normal When Teenagers Grieve” by Jenny Lee Wheeler

“The Healing Your Grieving Heart Journal for Teens” by Alan Wolfelt & Megan Wolfelt

“Modern Loss: Candid Conversations About Grief” by Rebecca Soffer & Gabrielle Birkner

For Parents/Caregivers:

“Bereaved Children and Teens” by Earl A. Grollman

“Teen Grief: Caring for the Grieving Teenage Heart” by Gary Roe

“A Parent’s Guide to Raising Grieving Children” by Phyllis R. Silverman & Madelyn Kelly

“Guiding Your Child Through Grief” by Mary Ann Emswiler & James Emswiler