



Suggested Readings List

The following books may assist children and their families in dealing with grief and loss.

Children Ages 3-7

^A Candle for Grandpa: A Guide to the Jewish Funeral for Children and Parents

By David Techner, 1993

An 11-year-old boy describes the events surrounding his grandfather's death, including his and his family's feelings of grief and the Jewish funeral service. Includes a glossary and notes to parents about talking to children about death. Published by the Reform Jewish movement.

Always Remember

By Cece Meng, 2016

A beautifully illustrated book about friends and family remembering and sharing stories about Old Turtle after he died.

A Story for Hippo

By Simon Puttock, 2001

Monkey is devastated when his best friend, Hippo, dies. This book describes how Monkey learns to cope with the loss and remember his wise old friend.

Aarvy Aardvark Finds Hope: A Read-Aloud Story for People of All Ages About Loving and Losing, Friendship and Hope

By Donna R. O'Toole, 1988

Aarvy has lost his family and feels despair and hopelessness, until a true friend helps him learn about his inner strengths. Illustrated with line drawings that can be colored in.

And What Comes After a Thousand?

By Anette Bley, 2007

A gentle story about love and friendship, and then about loss.

**Annie and the Old One*

By Miska Miles, 1985

A young Navajo girl has difficulty believing that her grandmother will die, but eventually comes to accept and cope with this.

Badger's Parting Gift

By Susan Varley, 1992

Old Badger leaves gifts behind for his animal friends after he dies.

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**Brother: A grief story*

By Teleah Scott-Williams, 2013

A little boy named Jackson finds ways to remember and honor his deceased older brother.

Cemetery Quilt

By Kent and Alice Ross, 1995

A story of a girl who goes to her grandfather's funeral and talks to her grandmother about her feelings about death.

Cry, Heart, But Never Break

By Glenn Ringtved, 2016

In this creative and wise book, Death appears as a grandfatherly figure and tells a story to help the young characters understand their grandmother's impending death. The story helps the children learn that death appears in everyone's lives, that life and death cannot exist without the other, and of the importance of being able to say good-bye.

**Everett Anderson's Goodbye*

By Lucille Clifton, 1988

This short poetic picture book describes a little boy's stages of grief in big pictures and few words.

Glad Monster, Sad Monster

By Ed Emberly and Anne Miranda, 1997

An interactive book that includes masks of different emotions to play and explore with your child/ren. This book is a great way to start to talk about emotions in general and to start a conversation about grief emotions. Ages 3-8.

Ida Always

By Caron Levis, 2016

A story about two polar bears, Gus and Ida. Ida becomes ill. The story talks about Gus and Ida through Ida's disease, death, and Gus's grief and healing after she dies.

I Miss You A First Look At Death

By Pat Thomas, 2001

This book aims to help kids understand that death is a natural complement to life, and that grief and a sense of loss are normal feelings for them to have.

Imagine a Rainbow: A Child's Guide for Soothing Pain

By Brenda Miles, 2006

Introduces how a child can use their imaginations to cope with painful emotions. Includes a section for parents on how they can help support their children.

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**Knots on a Counting Rope*

By Bill Martin, Jr. and John Archambault, 1997

A beautifully illustrated book depicting a Navajo boy and his grandfather retelling the story of the boy's birth. Despite the boy's request, his grandfather cannot promise that he will always be with him, but does promise that his love will surround him forever.

Life is Like the Wind

By Shona Innes, 2014

This book introduces the concept of death to young children by using the metaphor of wind. Good for any age, and very simply written so especially good for younger ages.

**Lou, The Grief Dog*

By Teleah Scott, 2015

Willie and his dog, Lou, are best friends. Lou helps Willie with his grieving process after his dad dies.

+The Family Book

By Todd Parr, 2010

A celebration of love between members of a variety of families, including LGBTQ. One page refers to sadness regarding loss in the family. This book is best used in tandem with the same author's, *The Goodbye Book*.

The Goodbye Book

By Todd Parr, 2015

A pet fish loses his companion and goes through a variety of emotions experienced by grieving children. Reminds readers that it's ok to not know all the answers, and that someone will always be there for them. Very simply written, great for ages 10 and under.

The Heart and the Bottle

By Oliver Jeffers, 2010

A little girl delights in the joy and wonderment of the world around her with an older gentleman, likely her grandfather. But then the man's chair is empty, and the girl puts her heart in a bottle to help with the hurt. As she grows older, she loses her sense of wonderment, and it isn't until she meets another young girl that she finds a way to free her heart again.

The Invisible String

By Patrice Karst, 2000

A mom teaches her young twin children about the invisible string, which connects the hearts of loved ones, dead and alive. Appropriate for any age.

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The Memory String

By Eve Bunting, 2015

The most cherished button on young Laura's memory string belongs to her deceased mother. When the string breaks, her stepmother comforts her, but it's not the same. In this story, Laura learns that the memory string is not only for remembering the past, but also for recording new memories.

The Memory Box: A Book About Grief

By Joanna Rowland, 2017

The child in the story creates a memory box to keep mementos and written memories of the loved one, to help in the grieving process. This book includes a parent guide in the back with information on helping children to manage the complex emotions they feel when someone dies.

The Tenth Good Thing About Barney

By Judith Viorst, 1987

With the help of his parents, a little boy comes to terms with the death of his cat.

Children Ages 8-11

A Taste of Blackberries

By Doris Buchanan Smith, 1973 (reprinted in 2004)

A boy processes the loss of his best friend, as well as the feeling that he could have prevented it. Recommended for ages 8-12.

Charlotte's Web

By E. B. White, 1952

This classic novel tells the story of Wilbur the pig and his old and wise friend, Charlotte the spider. It describes their loving bond and how he copes after she dies by taking care of her family and remembering her in various ways.

Lifetimes: The beautiful way to explain death to children

By Bryan Mellonie and Robert Ingpen, 1983

A book about natural lifetimes for all living creatures. Beautiful pictures.

**Mama Does the Mambo*

By Katherine Leiner, 2001

Young Sofia remembers watching her parents dance together, and wonders if her mama will ever dance again after the death of her father. Set in Havana, Cuba and includes some Spanish words/phrases.

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My Yellow Balloon

By Tiffany Papageorge, 2014

Describes the grieving process of a boy who loses his best friend, his yellow balloon. A poignant tale of love, loss, and finding an on-going connection. Wonderfully illustrated to reflect the changing of emotions during the grief process.

**Since My Brother Died: Desde que Murio Mi Hermano*

By Marisol Munoz-Kiehne, 2000

A child talks about how things have changed since his brother died. Includes English and Spanish translations of a caregivers section, teachers section, and a story for children. Ages 5-12.

Tear Soup: A Recipe for Healing After Loss

By Pat Schwiebert, 1999

Grandy, an old and wise woman, sets out to make tear soup in order to cope with her loss. A creative depiction of coping and supporting others through grief.

The Fall of Freddie the Leaf

By Leo Buscaglia, PhD, 1982

Natural cycles of life and death discussed in simple terms. A story for all ages.

The Giving Tree

By Shel Silverstein, 1999

A tender story of love shared between a boy throughout his lifespan, and a tree that gave him anything he needed, even as he became increasingly distant. Tinged with lessons around loss, change, and receiving and giving love.

The Saddest Time

By Norma Simon, 1986

This book contains three short stories about different kinds of death and grief: an uncle with terminal illness, a classmate killed in an accident, and a grandparent.

The Scar

By Charlotte Moundlic, 2011

A young boy is overwhelmed by grief after his mother dies until his grandmother helps him see other ways he can continue to feel connected to her. This book could help an adult better understand a child's grief. Can be read to or by children, but may be a heavy read for a bedtime story.

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^What is Death?

By Etan Boritzer, 2000

This book introduces and explores concepts surrounding death. Includes examples of customs and beliefs of various religions including Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim.

^ When Your Grandparent Dies: A Child's Guide to Good Grief (Elf-Help Book Series)

By Victoria Ryan, 2002

Elves depict difficult days before, after and beyond a grandparent's death, from a child's perspective. Includes discussion of God and Heaven.

Children Ages 12-18

Bridge to Terabithia

By Katherine Paterson, 1977

This classic novel depicts the friendship of two teenagers from different socioeconomic backgrounds, and how one friend copes after the other tragically dies.

Help for the Hard Times: Getting Through Loss

By Earl Hipp, 1995

Explains grief processes of adolescents in an accessible way, with drawings throughout.

How It Feels When A Parent Dies

By Jill Krementz, 1988

Real children ages 7-17, speak openly about their experiences and feelings surrounding the death of a parent. Includes photographs of the young person with their surviving parent and other family members.

I Will Remember You: What To Do When Someone You Love Dies- A Guidebook Through Grief For Teens

By Laura Dower and Elena Lister, 2001

This book includes personal stories from teens, advice from a grief counselor, and creative exercises for teens to move through their pain and sorrow.

*Miracle's Boys

By Jacqueline Woodson

This young-adult fiction novel by an acclaimed African-American author is written from the point of view of a 12-year-old boy named Lafayette. Both his parents have died and his oldest brother Ty'ree is responsible for caring for him and the middle brother, Charlie. All three brothers have different ways of coping with their grief, which leads to both conflict and connection.

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Part of Me Died Too

By Virginia Lynn Fry, 1995

Eleven children and adolescents who have lost loved ones show how drawing, music and other creative rituals can assist with the grieving process.

Straight Talk About Death for Teenagers: How To Cope With Losing Someone You Love

By Earl Grollman, 1993

An easy to read book that poetically describes normal grief reactions, funeral participation, how grief can affect relationships and/or special events, and other related topics.

**The Boy in the Black Suit*

By Jason Reynolds, 2016

A story about how a 17-year-old boy navigates his grief after the death of his mother from cancer.

**The Hate U Give*

By Angie Thomas, 2017

This is a fictional story about a 16-year-old girl who witnesses her best friend be fatally shot by a police officer. It describes her grief process, which is complicated by the media attention and protests that occur following this shooting, and the fact that she lost another of her best friends to a shooting when she was younger.

Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Finding Your Own Way to Grieve: A Creative Activity Workbook for Kids and Teens on the Autism Spectrum

By Karla Helbert, 2012

With illustrations throughout, this interactive workbook begins with a simple story about what happens when people die. Each chapter expands on issues associated with grief and offers a variety of coping skills exercises including, writing, art, cooking, movement, relaxation and remembrance activities. Beneficial for ages 8+.

Understanding Death and Illness and What They Teach About Life: An Interactive Guide for Individuals with Autism or Asperger's and Their Loved Ones

By Catherine Faherty, 2008

This book offers detailed, concrete explanations of illness, dying, life after death, losing a pet, and other issues related to death and grieving. 'Communication Forms' follow each topic and encourage readers to share their personal experiences, thoughts and concerns. This book is appropriate for older teenagers and for caregivers of children with ASD.

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Books for Adults Caring for Grieving Children:

Finding the Words: How to Talk With Children and Teens About Death, Suicide, Homicide, Funerals, Cremation and Other End-of-life Matters

By Alan Wolfelt, PhD, 2013

In this book, grief counselor and educator Dr. Alan Wolfelt, offers simple methods for talking with young people about death. Includes advice on age-appropriate language and explanations.

Healing the Grieving Child's Heart: 100 Practical Ideas for Families, Friends, & Caregivers

By Alan Wolfelt, PhD, 2001

A short, simple book with concrete suggestions to help grieving children, written by a grief counselor and educator.

Helping Children Grieve: When Someone They Love Dies

By Theresa M. Huntley, 2002 (revised)

This book assists adults in talking to children about death in meaningful ways. Includes explanations of common grief reactions and offers adults spiritual tools they can use to help children cope with a significant loss.

How to Help Children Through a Parent's Serious Illness

By Kathleen McCue, 1996

The author of this book is a child life specialist. In this book she offers practical advice regarding how to talk to children about illness and how to recognize when a child may need professional help to cope.

Parenting Through Crisis: Helping Kids in Times of Loss, Grief and Change

By Barbara Coloroso, 2001

The author of this book is a parenting educator. In this book she shares concrete and compassionate ideas for parents to help their children find a way through grief during difficult times of death, illness, divorce and other upheavals.

The Grieving Child: A Parent's Guide

By Helen Fitzgerald, 1992

Offers practical and compassionate advice to caregivers of grieving young people from toddlers (in newer editions), pre-school age to teenage years. Covers topics like helping a child visit the seriously ill or dying, using age appropriate language, handling difficult situations like murder and suicide, deciding if a child should attend a funeral, supporting a child's emotional responses (including anger, guilt, and depression) and helping a child adjust to a changed life.

Sitting Still Like A Frog: Mindfulness Exercises for Kids (and their parents)

By Eline Snel, 2013

This book teaches simple mindfulness practices to help children deal with difficult emotions, anxiety and concentration issues, which is very useful after a loss. Doing the exercises with a child can be beneficial and connecting for both adult and child. Includes a CD of guided mindfulness exercises.

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