



**NATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION OF  
SCHOOL  
PSYCHOLOGISTS**

## **Recommended Books for Children Coping With Loss or Trauma**

Books can be wonderful tools to use with children who have experienced difficult times such as trauma or loss. Reading (or being read to) and talking with adults can help them understand and cope with their feelings in a developmentally appropriate way. Reading also offers a great way to spend time with a child, reinforce a sense of normalcy and security, and connect with them, all of which are important to recovery from a traumatic experience.

Following is a list of books that are recommended by grief and crisis experts working with children. Parents and caregivers who want to find other books should look for books that address children's grief and loss, natural disasters, anxiety, and dealing with tragedy. Talk to a children's librarian for other appropriate search terms. Parents and caregivers can also refer to the following tips for talking to children about their feelings.

### **Tips for Using Books to Engage With Children**

Parents and caregivers who share books with children after a tragedy or loss should be prepared to do the following:

- Let the characters and story help your child understand how to cope. Discuss ways to feel less anxious or nervous about what is happening.
- Be willing to answer your child's questions simply, at their level of understanding.

- Let them know that it is normal to cry, feel scared, or want comfort during difficult times. Provide them with opportunities for that emotional closeness, as needed.
- Remind children that you, the caregiver/parent are there for them, and that you are always willing to help them when times are difficult.
- Use the power of ritual to help teach children how people in your family or social group remember those who have died.
- Encourage children to identify simple plans of action to take each day to reengage in normal activities with others.
- Help children develop simple ways to remember good things about those who have died. They might share a story, draw pictures, or remember occasions that they enjoyed with the person(s) who have died.
- Let children know that they are loved and cared for. Reach out to other family members or close friends who could also support your child/ren.

## PICTURE BOOKS

### **Always and Forever—Alan Durant (Picture Book)**

A story for anyone who has experienced the loss of a loved one. When Fox dies, Mole, Hare, and Otter are devastated. They feel they will never get over their great sadness. How can life go on without him? Then one day Squirrel comes to visit. She reminds Fox's family of all the funny things he used to do. And as the friends share dinner and tell stories, they realize at last that in their hearts and memories, Fox is still with them, and he will be--always and forever.

#### **Product Details**

- ISBN-13: 978-0152166366
- Pages: 32
- Publisher: Harcourt Children's Books
- Age Range: 3+

### **Badger's Parting Gifts—Susan Varley (Picture Book)**

A touching look at death, and how life goes on. Badger's friends are saddened by his passing, but they come to realize that everyone lives on through their gifts of kindness and the happy memories that remain.

#### **Product Details**

- ISBN-13: 9780688115180
- Publisher: HarperCollins 1984
- Pages: 32
- Age range: 4+

### **Dead Bird—Margaret Brown Wise (Picture Book)**

A group of children find a dead bird and bury it in the woods, sing to it, and place flowers on its grave. Without any reference to religious concepts, the author addresses the sensitive issue of death in a non-threatening way that young children can understand. The spare writing style and design help to sustain the serious mood suggested by the subject matter, making the book an excellent mechanism for the sharing of feelings about death. By gently confronting the emotions associated with the experience of death, the author provides a starting point for discussion with young children faced with the loss of a cherished pet or loved one.

#### **Product Details**

- ISBN-13: 9780060289324
- Publisher: HarperCollins Publishers
- Pages: 32
- Age range: 4 – 7

### **Remembering Crystal—Sebastian Loth (Picture Book)**

Crystal and Zelda are best friends. They do many things together (read books, take trips, talk). When Crystal disappears from the garden and it's evident that she has died. As Zelda remembers all that Crystal taught her about the world and the good times they shared, she realizes that her friend will always be in her heart. In this gentle story, children learn, with Zelda, that true friendship is a gift that doesn't die.

#### **Product Details**

- ISBN-13: 978-0735823006
- Publisher: NorthSouth
- Pages: 64
- Age range: 3+

### **Rudi's Pond—Eve Bunting (Picture Book)**

When a sick boy dies, his friends and classmates remember him by building a schoolyard pond in his memory. Based on a true story, "Rudi's Pond" is a gentle, insightful book to help young readers deal with loss.

#### **Product Details**

- ISBN-13: 9780618486045
- Publisher: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 1999
- Pages: 32

### **Someone Special Died—Joan Prestine (Picture Book)**

An unencumbered, explanation of death for young children. Using language appropriate for younger audience, the book addresses some of the feelings that a young child may have about death. Instilled is the message that while the person is no longer here with them, there are ways in which they can be remembered.

#### **Product Details**

- ISBN-13: 978-1577686828
- Pages: 32

- Publisher: Brighter Child
- Age Range: 3+

## GENERAL

### **Chester Raccoon and the Acorn Full of Memories—Audrey Penn (More appropriate for older children)**

Chester Raccoon's good friend Skiddel Squirrel has had an accident and will not be returning - ever. Chester is upset that he won't get to play with his friend anymore. Mrs. Raccoon suggests that Chester and his friends create some memories of Skiddel, so that they will have good memories when they miss him. Chester, his brother Ronny, and their friends decide to gather at the pond, where they combine their memories and create a touching celebration of their friend's life. This sweet story will help children to understand the positive purpose behind memorial services and how "making memories" can provide cheer and comfort when missing an absent loved one.

#### **Product Details**

- ISBN-13: 978-1933718293
- Publisher: Tanglewood Press
- Pages: 32
- Age range: 3+

### **I Miss You: A First Look At Death—Pat Thomas**

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. Titles in this sensitively presented series explore the dynamics of various relationships experienced by children of preschool through early school age. Kids are encouraged to understand personal feelings and social problems as a first step in dealing with them.

#### **Product Details**

- ISBN-13: 9780764117640
- Publisher: Barron's Educational Series- 2001
- Pages: 32
- Age range: 4+

### **The Invisible String—Patrice Karst**

Children of all ages (And yes! Adults too!) feel a great sense of peace and joy realizing that we are all connected to the ones that we love... (pets, friends, grandparents, cousins etc... and especially those that have passed on)...through the Invisible String. A string that can never be lost, cut, or torn. A string that can reach all the way to the moon or down to the ocean floor. Strings that anger, time, or bad feelings can ever make go away

#### **Product Details**

- ISBN-13: 9780875167343
- Publisher: DeVorss & Company- 2000
- Pages: 36

- Age range: 3+

**Lifetimes: The Beautiful Way to Explain Death to Children—Bryan Mellonie Page**

When the death of a relative, a friend, or a pet happens or is about to happen . . . how can we help a child to understand? Lifetimes is a moving book for children of all ages, even parents too. It lets us explain life and death in a sensitive, caring, beautiful way. Lifetimes tells us about beginnings. And about endings. And about living in between. With large, wonderful illustrations, it tells about plants. About animals. About people. It tells that dying is as much a part of living as being born. It helps us to remember. It helps us to understand

**Product Details**

- ISBN-13: 9780553344028
- Publisher: Bantam- 1983
- Pages: 40
- Age range: 5+

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