

A Heart For Children: Supporting Adult Caregivers of Grieving Children

References and Resources

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- Gordon, Audrey, and Dennis Klass. *They Need to Know: How to Teach Children about Death*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1979.
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- Trozzi, Maria (with Kathy Massimini). *Talking with Children about Loss*. New York: Penguin Inc, 1999.
- Wakenshaw, Martha. *Caring for Your Grieving Child*. Oakland: Harbinger Publications, 2002.
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Articles

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Unpublished Sources

- American Bereavement Academy. *Bereavement Facilitator, Level 1 Training Program*. Unpublished manual. Buffalo, New York, 2005
- Beltramo, Beverly. "Supporting the Grieving Child: A Clinical and Pastoral Perspective." Unpublished Master's Thesis, Assumption University, University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada. 2007

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Children's Grief Education Association. "How Children Grieve."

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Hospice Net. "Talking to Children about Death." Compiled from Keynote Addresses by J.W.

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Annotated list of Resources for Adult Caregivers of Grieving Children

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Here is a brief list of resources and books which others have found helpful. Most are available at any bookstore. It is very important that adults preview any book before sharing it with a child. According to Helen Fitzgerald in *The Grieving Child*, the following questions may be important to consider in previewing a book:

1. Listen to the words and the language and try to hear them through the child's ears.
2. Will the child be able to relate to the characters in the story?
3. Is this an honest book, conveying the information you would like the child to have?
4. Is it needlessly frightening?
5. Is the book age appropriate for the child?
6. Are the religious and spiritual beliefs consistent with the beliefs the child is learning in the home?

Beltramo, Beverly M. *"A Heart for Children: Helping a Child Cope with Grief."* Oakwood Healthcare System Publication, Rev. 2008.

Emswiler, Mary Ann, and James P. Emswiler. *Guiding Your Child Through Grief.* New York: Bantam Books, 2000.

Written for parents, with chapters such as "How to Communicate with a grieving child," and "Step parenting a Grieving Child."

Fitzgerald, Helen. *The Grieving Child: A Parent's Guide.* New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1992.

A guide for parents and caregivers that provides suggestions for dealing with a child's emotional responses.

Grollman, Earl A. *Talking about Death: a Dialogue Between Parent and Child.* Boston: Beacon Press, 1990.

A guide for talking about death to a child.

Wakenshaw, Martha. *Caring for Your Grieving Child.* Oakland: New Harbinger Publications, 2002.

Offers an overview of children's grief with helpful exercises and activities parents and children can do together to help them heal.

Books for Children Sorted by Age Appropriateness

Johnson, Joy and Marv Johnson. *Where's Jess?* Centering Corporation, 1982.

Ages 3 – 8. Written from child’s point of view about loss of a younger sibling (baby or toddler). Especially appropriate for SIDS loss.

Schweibert, P. *We Were Gonna have a Baby, But we Had an Angel Instead*. Portland, OR: Grief Watch, 2003.

Ages 3 – 8. A young child comes to understand the loss of a baby.

Stickney, Doris. *Waterbugs and Dragonflies*. Pilgrim Press, 1982.

Ages 3 – 8. This mini-book uses a symbol of a waterbug turning into a dragonfly to weave a tale of death and new life.

Hanson, Warren. *The Next Place*. Waldman House Press, 1997.

Ages 3 – adult. This is a beautifully done book for children and adults. Not religious, but offers a hopeful spiritual message about dying and “the next place I’ll go.”

Vigna, Judith. *Saying Goodbye to Daddy*. A. Whitman, 1991.

Ages 4 – 9. A story of a father’s death and the healing that takes place in the weeks that follow.

Viorst, Judith. *The Tenth Good Thing About Barney*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971.

Ages 4 – 9. A child comes to understand grief through the death of his beloved cat, Barney.

Heegaard, Marge. *When Someone Very Special Dies*. Woodland Press, 1992.

Ages 4 – 11. Written to teach children about grief and loss.

Sanford, Doris. *It Must Hurt a Lot—A Child’s Book About Death*. Multnomah Press, 1986.

Ages 5 – 10. Told from young boy’s perspective, book deals with child’s first loss (a beloved pet), offering insight for all types of loss. Beautifully done.

Varley, Susan. *Badger’s Parting Gifts*. William Morrow, 1985.

Ages 5 – 10. Badger was a special friend to the animals. After his death, each animal recalls a special memory of him.

Johnson, Joy, and Marv Johnson. *Tell Me, Papa*. Centering Corporation, 1978.

Age 5 – 12. Told from Grandfather’s (“Papa”) perspective, answers specific questions children may have about funeral, funeral home and defines words (“casket”).

Kubler-Ross, Elisabeth. *Remember the Secret*. Celestial Arts, 1982.

Age 6 – 11. Beautifully illustrated book about dying and the beauty of heaven without advocating any specific religious perspective.

Blackburn, Lynne Bennett. *The Class in Room 44 – When a Classmate Dies*. Centering Corporation, 1991.

Ages 6 – 12. Ideal for use in an elementary school classroom when the death of a student has occurred. Addresses different responses of classmates.

Heegaard, Marge. *When Someone Very Special Dies*. Woodland Press, 1988.

Ages 6 – 12. This workbook/coloring book allows children to express their feelings and emotions through the art and drawings.

Hemery, Kathleen Maresh. *The Brightest Star*. Centering Corp. 1998.

Ages 6 – 12. A young girl learns to find hope again after the death of her mother.

Kramsy-Brown, L. *When Dinosaurs Die*.

Ages 7 – 12. Explains death in a way that holds a child's interest, using dinosaur characters.

Moss, Mary Martha. *God is Here When Bad Things Happen*. Pauline Books, 2002.

Ages 7 – 12. Written from a Catholic perspective, offers children and parents guidance in understanding God's presence when bad things happen. Illustrations show children from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

Krementz, Jill. *How It Feels When a Parent Dies*. Knopf, 1998.

Ages 7 – 16. Interviews with children sharing their feelings after the death of a parent.

Wolfelt, A. *Healing Your Grieving Heart, for Teens*. Companion Books, 2001.

Ages 13 – 18.

Fitzgerald, Helen. *The Grieving Teen, a Guide for Teenagers and Their Friends*. Fireside Press, 2000.

Ages 13- 19. Written for teens in direct and clear language. Addresses issues such as "When you can't cry" and "Am I normal?" Also addresses anticipatory grief.

Websites

Hospice Net www.hospicenet.org - Wonderful section on children with several articles about children's grief and bereavement.

KidsHealth www.kidshealth.org/parent - Use "grief" as a search term and you will find several good articles offering support and advice to parents of grieving children. Separate portals for kids, teens and parents.

GriefNet.org www.griefnet.org - Offers on-line support groups. Led by Michigan-based clinical psychologist and grief therapist. Please note: there is a *suggested* \$5 cost to join one of their support groups.

