

RESOURCES FOR GRIEVING CHILDREN *and their families*

This list is just a start of the many resources available for grieving children and their families. Local bookstores and libraries have others. Review the message of each book and select appropriate ones for your family.

Preschool children

- *A Bunch of Balloons* by Dorothy Ferguson. A journal/story which looks at not just what has been lost, but what still is.
- *I Know I Made it Happen* by Lynn Bennett Blackburn. This book deals with childhood guilt in a super way. It lets kids know that our thoughts don't control the world.
- *Lifetimes* by Bryan Mellonie and Robert Ingpen. Outstanding illustrations provide a visual and safe way to begin explaining death to children.
- *Tell Me Papa* by Joy and Marv Johnson. Saying goodbye, what happens at a funeral and how feelings associated with a death can be diminished by sharing them are among the book's topics.
- *The Dead Bird* by Margaret Wise Brown. Children find a bird with no heart beating and are sorry. They dig a hole for the bird and cover it with warm ferns and flowers.

Young Children

- *Aarvy Aardvark Finds Hope* by Donna O'Toole. Aarvy's mother is taken to a zoo, and the animals try to help. After Aarvy talks and talks, he can play again. Also available as a cassette tape and a video.
- *A Quilt for Elizabeth* by Benette W. Tiffault. Elizabeth's father dies, and her grandmother helps her by making a quilt with her from her father's clothes.
- *Everett Anderson's Goodbye* by Lucille Clifton. Everett says, "I knew my daddy loved me through and through, and whatever happens when people die, love doesn't stop."
- *Geranium Morning* by E. Sandy Powell. Timothy's dad dies and no one can understand until he meets Frannie, whose mom is dying. Together, these two show us what it means to be afraid, to listen, to be a real friend.
- *Grandfather's Shirt* by Barbara Morning. Peter is Grandfather's gardening buddy. Grandfather wears his gardening shirt, chews on toothpicks and wears his baseball hat backward. When Grandfather dies, Peter learns about death and keeps the old shirt.
- *Grandma's Shoes* by Libby Hathorn. "Who could ever step into such a woman's shoes?" people ask at the funeral. The little granddaughter finds Grandma's shoes under her chair, and they help her remember. There is fantasy here, as well as realistic family moments.



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A program of Hospice of the Valley

- *How it Feels when a Parent Dies* by Jill Krementz. These are simple real stories from children ages 7–16. The writing style is very readable, and we can learn from the ideas and insights presented.
- *When Someone Very Special Dies* by Marge Heegaard. Fits all deaths. Good with feelings.

Adolescents

- *Death is Hard to Live With* by Janet Bode. Teenagers talk about how they cope with loss. All kinds of deaths are discussed, and feelings are deep.
- *Fire in My Heart; Ice in My Veins* by Enid Traisman. A grief journal for teens which is a valuable self-help book.
- *Straight Talk About Death for Teenagers* by Earl Grollman. Written in a simple, direct style, which covers the first days of loss to the future.
- *The Kids' Book About Death and Dying* by Eric E. Rofes and the Unit at Fayerweather Street School. What is death? What is it like when a friend or relative dies? These are just a few of the questions a group of students ranging from 11–14 asked themselves while exploring the subject of death and dying. The Unit felt strongly that children have a right to know about death and that shielding children from death is neither helpful nor responsible. This book is helpful for adults, as well as children.

Adults

- *A Guide to Understanding Guilt During Bereavement* by Robert Baugher. This looks at the should-haves, why wasn't, self-punishment and different types of guilt. Suggestions to avoid letting guilt control your life.
- *A Look in the Mirror: A Handbook for Widowers* by Ed Ames. Covers single parenting, finances, your job, living alone and what to do with her things.
- *I'm Grieving as Fast as I Can: How Young Widows and Widowers Can Cope and Heal* by Linda Feinberg. This deals with single parenting, finances, isolation and special circumstances.
- *Understanding Grief: Helping Yourself Heal* by Alan Wolfelt. This includes places for you to write, to answer questions and affirm feelings.
- *Swallowed by a Snake: The Gift of the Masculine Side of Healing* by Thomas Golden. Includes how the genders differ in healing, examples of successful and unique healing strategies and how an individual's loss impacts the entire family.
- *The Mourning Handbook* by Helen Fitzgerald. This is easy to read as it is organized with subchapters, cross-references and specific problems and stories.

Helping Others

- *The Art of Condolence* by Hilary and Leonard Zunin. This includes letters to write and send when death occurs and a chapter on conversational hints. It discusses what to do if a friend really needs to see a counselor.
- *What Can I Say?* by Kelly Osmont. This excellent, easily read resource helps us help others.
- *What Will Help Me? How Can I Help?* by Jim Miller. A double book which divides in half to give soft affirmation to the griever. The other half is for friends and family who want to do something.

Guiding Children through Grief

- *Bereaved Children and Teens: A Support Guide for Parents and Professionals* by Earl Grollman. This includes grief at different developmental ages, reactions of siblings, cultural variances and some therapies.
- *Helping Children Cope with Grief* by Alan Wolfelt. Informative, self-teaching manual for all caregivers, parents, teachers, counselors and clergy.
- *The Grieving Child* by Helen Fitzgerald. Extremely helpful as each section stands on its own. Some of the topics covered are things any parent can do now; how children react to death; explaining death; dealing with your child's emotional life; when to be concerned, and resolving childhood grief as an adult.
- *Talking about Death: A Dialogue Between Parent and Child* by Earl Grollman. A complete guide on how to answer children when they face and ask questions about death.