

Children:

We have compiled a bibliography of books (include in the webpage) that we have found helpful for children who have experienced a death. It is cataloged based on who has died in the child's life. Please refer to the bibliography section for a complete list of our suggested books. We find that reading a book to a child creates an opportunity for the child to talk about the feelings he is experiencing following a death. The following books are some of our favorites:

*Read: **I Heard Your Mommy Died, or I Heard Your Daddy Died** by M. Scrivani. These books talk about the different feelings children experience following the death of a mother/father. While the stories are similar, they do hit on things specific to each loss.

*Read: **The Garden Angel** by Jan Czech. This is a story about how a young child remembers grandpa's love as she plants a garden.

*Read: **Molly's Mom Died** by Margaret Holmes. This book talks about the feelings that Molly has experienced since the death of her mother.

*Read: **The Brightest Star** by K.M.Hemery. This book is about a little girl whose mom died. A school assignment is to draw a picture of the family and the little girl struggles with drawing a picture without Mom. She talks to Dad and decides to draw a picture of something that reminds her of the special thing she and Dad did with Mom (look at the stars at the beach.)

*Read: **After Charlotte's Mom Died** by C. Spelman. This book addresses some good topics. One thing that some people told Charlotte after her Mom died was that death was a lot like sleep and she then became afraid of sleeping. She finds out later that this is not true and that she can sleep without being afraid of dying. She also talks about her fear of being an orphan.

*Read: **It Must Hurt a Lot** by D. Sanford. Joshua's dog Muffin is killed, and Joshua hurts more than he has ever hurt before. But, with time, Joshua finds he has gained important secrets he can grow on.

*Read: **Tough Boris** by M. Fox. This book is about a tough pirate whose parrot dies, and we find that even a tough, mean pirate cries. There are not a lot of words in this book but it is very cute so the "reader" needs to read this with a lot of feeling and expression.

*Read: **Love is a Family** by Roma Downey. This book tells of a little girl preparing for Family Fun night at her school. She is worried what the other children will say because she feels that her family is different from all the other

children's families because she just has a mother. She finds that a family should not be defined by mother, father, and child, but by love.

***Read: Alice's Special Room** by Dick Gackenbach. This book talks about a little girl whose cat dies, and she tells Mom that the cat is in a special room. The mom keeps looking for the cat and then discovers the special room is in her heart.

***Read: Geranium Morning** by S. Powell. Discuss. This book deals with two classmates, one whose father has died and another whose mother is dying of cancer. Timothy and his father did a lot of things together, including working in the nursery. Every spring Timothy's dad got new geraniums to add to his collection. Usually Timothy went with his dad on geranium mornings, but one morning Timothy wanted to stay in bed. He told his dad he would wait until he returned and then have cocoa with him---another geranium morning tradition. However, Timothy never got his cocoa because his father was killed in a car accident. Timothy begins to hate Saturday mornings and cocoa. His mother also had difficulty dealing with this unexpected tragedy. "If only..." was the phrase Timothy kept thinking over and over again. If only he had gone with his dad. If only his dad hadn't wanted geraniums. No one seemed to understand Timothy's feelings except Frannie, whose mother is dying. The story tells how the two children help each other deal with the death of their parents.

***Read: I'll Always Love You** by Hans Wilhelm. This is a story about the relationship between a boy and his dog, Elfie. As the years go by, the boy grows up and Elfie grows older. One night, Elfie dies in her sleep. The boy is comforted by the thought that every night he told Elfie, "I'll always love you."

***Read: The Hurt** by Teddi Doleski. In this book Justin has a hurt. By not talking about his hurt, it gets bigger and bigger until it surrounds him. When he talked to his father, he finds the hurt can get smaller. Some things you can discuss with your child are: How hurt and sad/mad feelings can feel bigger and bigger, can get in the way, and prevent sleeping. How do they affect you? What did Justin do that finally helped (talked to his Dad)? What do you do when your hurt gets big?

***Read: It's Not Your Fault** by J. Flynn. This is a good book that helps us reassure the children about the fact that they didn't do anything to make the person die. Children often connect things that are not logically connected or perhaps they don't know that there was nothing anyone could do to keep their loved one alive. Children need to be reassured that they did not make their loved one die. After you have discussed the book, there is a page where the children can fill in the blanks on a **letter** to the person who died.

***Read: The Memory Box** by Kirsten McLaughlin. In this book the boy's grandfather dies unexpectedly. At first the boy is angry that his grandfather broke a promise to take him fishing on Wednesday. Then he is sad about all of the things he is going to miss doing with Grandpa. The boy decides to make a

memory box. He fills his box with all sorts of special items that remind him of times he spent with his grandfather. When he shares it with his mother he smiles as he remembers special times with his Grandpa. Together with your child make a **memory box**. This can be used to place a special item that the loved one who died may have given your child, or mementos of special times, or this could be a place to put notes or drawings to the deceased. You could use a white cardboard box and markers and encourage your child to decorate all of the sides of the box by drawing memories about the person who died, messages to the person who died, or a picture of what the family looked like before the death, etc. You could also decorate a pencil box, cigar box, or shoe box. We have found that the younger children have an easier time with the first type of memory box, while the older children enjoy making the second type of memory box.



If your child is young and not able to write well, take a tape recorder and let him talk into the recorder telling stories, memories, and details about the person who died. You could have other family members and friends add to this tape. When your child talks about having difficulty remembering things about his loved one, pull out this tape and play it and it will help your child “remember”.



We have found “**design a mugs**” at a local craft store. These are special mugs where the child can slip a paper in a special sleeve of the mug and enjoy the picture as he uses his/her mug. On the piece of paper encourage your child to draw a picture of a favorite memory with their loved one and then put it in the sleeve of the cup. You could also add photos of the child with their loved one.



This activity is useful in helping your child with memories and anger. Give your child a plain white **pillowcase**. On one side, have your child draw all the happy memories that he/she can remember of his loved one. On the other side, draw all the things that have made him angry about the death. Make sure you use permanent markers or fabric markers for this activity. Put a paper bag inside the pillowcase so that the colors do not go on to the other side. After you have completed coloring on the pillowcase, place your child’s pillow in this pillowcase. When he/she is angry, he can hit the bed with the angry side of the pillowcase. At night, to have happy thoughts, have your child sleep with the memory side up.