



Books That Help Children with Grief/Loss/Death
Compiled by the Hyattsville Branch Library
for the City of Hyattsville's Mental Health Awareness Month (May 2022)

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Books for Young Children Ages 0-5 (Pre-K through Kindergarten)

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day by Judith Viorst

Alexander could tell it was going to be a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day. He went to sleep with gum in his mouth and woke up with gum in his hair. When he got out of bed, he tripped over his skateboard and by mistake dropped his sweater in the sink while the water was running.

Allie All Along by Sarah Lynne Reul

Have you ever felt mad enough to stomp, smash, and crash? Allie has! Meet one angry little girl and see how she calms down, bit by bit with the help of her understanding big brother.

Always Remember by Cece Meng

When Old Turtle dies and is taken back by the sea, his friends remember that he was a wonderful teacher and friend who made his world a better place.

Cry, Heart, but Never Break by Glenn Ringtved

Aware their grandmother is gravely ill, four siblings learn to realize the value of loss, life, and the importance of being able to say goodbye.

Don't Hug Doug (He Doesn't Like It) by Carrie Finison

Meet Doug, an ordinary kid who doesn't like hugs, in a story that aims to spark discussions about bodily autonomy and consent.

Holes in the Sky by Patricia Polacco

Soon after her beloved grandmother's death, Trisha's family moves to a diverse California neighborhood where she meets Stewart and his grandmother, Miss Eula, who bring people together to help a grieving neighborhood.

I Am Peace: A Book of Mindfulness by Susan Verde

Mindfulness means being fully in the present moment. Children can learn how to manage their emotions by learning to be mindful, express emotions through speech, find empathy through imagination, and wonder at the beauty of the natural world.

Te Echaré de Menos (Lost in the Clouds) by Tom Tinn-Disbury [English and Spanish versions available]

Alex quiere mucho a su mamá, pero ella ya no está aquí. Ahora vive en las nubes. Los días en que las nubes son blancas y brillantes, Alex se siente muy cerca de ella. Pero otras veces, las nubes son muy oscuras y la echa mucho de menos. Uno de esos días de tormenta, Alex decide subir a la nube de mamá para hablar con ella. En esta conmovedora historia sobre el duelo y en desconsuelo los niños aprenden que, pese a las pérdidas, siempre hay alguien con quien hablar y nunca tenemos que enfrentarnos solos a los días tempestuosos.



Alex loves his mother very much, but she is no longer here. Now she lives in the clouds. On days when the clouds are white and bright, Alex feels close to her. But other times, the clouds are very dark, and he misses her so much. On a stormy day, Alex decides to go up to Mama's cloud to talk to her. In this moving story about loss and grief, children learn that despite their losses, there is always someone to talk to and we never have to face stormy days alone.

Love Waves by Rosemary Wells

While at work, a mother and father send powerful "love waves" to their child at home, in a book that offers reassurance and comfort to children experiencing separation anxiety and missing loved ones when they're away.

Ravi's Roar by Tom Percival

Not everyone likes a growling tiger that forgets to play nicely. Becoming so mad sometimes that he loses his temper and becomes a roaring tiger, a little boy learns lessons in expressing his feelings and making amends.

Ruby Finds a Worry by Tom Percival

A young girl's sense of adventure and exploration vanishes when she discovers a worry that grows and grows until she learns how to get rid of it.

Saying Goodbye to Lulu by Corinne Demas

When her dog Lulu dies, a girl grieves and learns it's possible to continue with her life.

The Beach is Loud! by Samantha Cotterill

A boy is overwhelmed by the sights, sounds, and sensations of a family visit to a noisy, exciting beach, until his father offers some creative ways to manage his anxious feelings.

The Goodbye Book by Todd Parr

Illustrations and brief text relate how a person might feel when they lose a loved one.

The Grouchy Ladybug by Eric Carle

A grouchy ladybug, looking for a fight, challenges everyone she meets regardless of their size or strength.

The Invisible Leash by Patrice Karst

Emily tries to comfort her best friend, Zack, whose dog Jojo recently died, by telling him about the "Invisible Leash" that connects each owner to his or her deceased pet.

The Rain Came Down by David Shannon

An unexpected rain shower causes quarreling among the members of a small community, until the sun comes out, and everyone in town ends up smiling and lending one another a hand.

The Very Lonely Firefly by Eric Carle

A restless firefly begins a search for other fireflies and is led to a lantern, a candle, the glowing eyes of a cat, dog, and owl, and a surprise celebration of light before he finds his friends and the reason for his journey.



Violet Shrink by Christine Balldacchino

Although her family loves parties, Violet suffers from shyness and social anxiety. After she talks with her dad, they come up with a solution that helps her feel less worried.

What's Up, Maloo? by Genevieve Godbout

Maloo the kangaroo has lost his hop. Can his friends help him find it again? This picture book explores the idea of sadness and the importance of friendship through ups and downs.

When Sophie Gets Angry, Really, Angry by Molly Garrett

A young girl is upset and doesn't know how to manage her anger but takes time to cool off and regain her composure.

When Sadness is at Your Door by Eva Eland

Sadness can be scary and confusing at any age. The author gives feelings a shape and a face and encourages the reader to give it a name to help demystify it and distinguish it from ourselves.

Books for Children Ages 6-10 (Elementary School; Grades 1 - 5)

A Boy Called Bat by Elana K. Arnold

When his veterinarian mom brings home a baby skunk that needs rehabilitation before it can be placed in a wild animal shelter, Bixby, a boy on the autism spectrum, resolves to prove that he is up to the challenge of permanently caring for the skunk.

A Land Called Grief by Maddie Janes (not in PGCMLS)

A story that helps youth understand the emotions that show up when we experience different stages of grief.

All Around Us by Xelena González

A girl and her grandfather contemplate circles, both physical and metaphorical, in this thought-provoking tale of family, community, and interdependence.

An Ordinary Day by Elana Arnold

An ordinary day in an ordinary neighborhood turns out to be extraordinary in this story about new life, death, and family.

Anxious Charlie to the Rescue by Terry Milne

Charlie follows the same routine every day because he worries that something bad might happen if he does not. When friends call one morning asking for Charlie's help, he forgets to follow his usual routine.

A Taste of Blackberries by Doris Buchanan Smith

When Jamie tragically dies because of an allergic reaction to bee stings, the narrator struggles to cope with denial, grief, guilt, and loneliness, before coming to terms with the loss.



Armond Goes to a Party: A Book about Asperger's and Friendship by Nancy Carlson

Dreading the noise, chaos, and socializing of a peer's birthday party, a boy with Asperger's is supported by the birthday girl, her mom, and good friends who know how to help him face the party's challenges and have fun.

Benny and Penny in How to Say Goodbye by Geoffrey Hayes

When their salamander friend dies, mouse siblings Benny and Penny learn how to say goodbye.

Breathe With Me by Miriam Gates

Offers guidance for children about how to be aware of their breathing and use it to stay calm, relaxed, and focused.

Friendship on the High Seas by Jane Yolen

A little fish's happy anticipation of playing with a new friend is temporarily overshadowed by personal insecurities before he discovers that he has nothing to worry about.

Grandma's Gloves by Cecil Castellucci

When her grandmother dies, a little girl inherits her grandmother's gardening gloves and feels closer to her memory.

Have No Fear! by Nicole C. Kear

Seven-year-old Veronica, who is good at solving problems, starts the Fix-It Friends after she, her brother, and their friends help a new classmate get over her fear of spiders.

I Miss My Grandpa by Jin Xioajing

A child asks different family members about her late grandfather and learns of his characteristics through the features he passed down to his children and grandchildren.

I'm Worried by Michael Black

An anxious potato who worries about everything struggles to embrace less-anxious perspectives. His friends, a little girl, and a pink flamingo, promise to always be by his side even though they cannot guarantee that everything will always be all right.

I Remember Miss Perry by Pat Brisson (out of print; used copies available)

It's his first day at a new school, and Stevie is scared. When his teacher, Miss Perry, invites Stevie to join her for lunch, a bad day becomes a good one. When Miss Perry dies in a car accident, everything is suddenly sad and complicated. Stevie and his classmates must find their way to happiness again.

Maybe Tomorrow? by Charlotte Agell

Elba carries grief and sadness wherever she goes, until Norris comes along and helps her enjoy life again.

Michael Rosen's Sad Book by Michael Rosen, Quentin Blake (Illustrator)

The narrator talks about emotions that accompany his sadness over the death of his son, and how he tries to cope. Michael Rosen explores the experience of sadness in a way that resonates with us all.



Mimi by John Newman

Mimi is determined not to give up on anyone or anything, but since Mammy died, her father never smiles, her sister Sally is in a bad mood, brother Conor keeps to himself, and the family dog does not want to go for walks.

My Father's Arms Are a Boat by Stein Lunde

Unable to sleep, a young boy climbs into his father's arms and begins to ask questions about the birds, the foxes, and whether his mom will ever wake up. Loss and love are present as the father's answers and assurances about the cycle of life calm his worried son.

Playing Possum by Jennifer Reinhardt

Meeting strangers makes shy possum Alfred anxious, and he plays dead. He has trouble making friends until Sophia the armadillo reveals that when she gets anxious, she rolls up in a ball. A witty friendship tale inspired by animal behavior.

Remembering Crystal by Sebatian Loth

When Zelda's best friend dies, she refuses to accept it and sets off to find Crystal by traveling to the highest mountain, deepest ocean, and eventually back to a favorite garden.

Sally Goes to Heaven by Stephen Huneck

A beloved dog dies and goes to Heaven where she lives happily and helps to find her family on earth a new pet.

Small Things by Mel Tregonning

An empowering graphic picture book that gets to the heart of a young boy's anxiety and opens the way for dialogue about acceptance, vulnerability, and the universal experience of worry.

The Day We Lost Pet by Chuck Young

Balloon characters harness the language of poetry, science, and nature to help children understand some of life's most difficult moments. For anyone who has lost a beloved family pet, this imaginative resource helps explain loss and feelings of grief.

The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes by Mark Pett

Every student, teacher, and perfectionist should read this book about learning and growing from your mistakes.

Things You Can't Say by Jenn Bishop

Three years after his father's death by suicide, twelve-year-old Drew embarks on a journey toward understanding, forgiveness, and hope.

What If ...? by Anthony Browne

An apprehensive young boy accompanies his mother on a walk to a party, wondering whether he will have a good time and indulging in wild imaginings about each house they pass before finding reassurance at the end of their journey.

What's Happening to Grandpa by Maria Shriver

A sensitive picture book that gently explains the memory loss associated with Alzheimer's Disease through the story about the relationship of a boy and his grandfather.



When Aunt Mattie Got Her Wings by Petra Mathers

A sad and humorous picture book that explores death of a loved one from a child's perspective following the experiences of Lottie the chicken, who says farewell to her beloved Aunt Mattie and remembers special shared times while eating her aunt's favorite sandwiches.

Where Are You Now by Tyler Burke

Using a simple but powerful metaphor of disappearance and reappearance, the story and its illustrations help explain death by drawing on examples from nature.

Where Lily Isn't by Julie Paschkis

It is hard to lose a pet. There is sadness, but also hope—for a beloved pet lives on in your heart, your memory, and your imagination.

Why Do I Feel So Sad? A Grief Book for Children by Tracey Lambert-Prater (not in PGCMLS)

Broad enough to encompass many forms of grief, this book reassures kids that they are not alone in their feelings and even suggests simple things they can do to feel better, like drawing, dancing, and talking to friends and family.

Wish You Were Here by Nicole C. Kear.

When Ezra's beloved guinea pig, Ziggy, passes away, Veronica, Cora, and Jude try to cheer him up by urging him to forget his pet, until a memorial for Ziggy helps the team members realize that only time can heal grief.

Additional Related Suggestions:

Everett Anderson's Goodbye by Lucille Clifton (addresses stages of grief in a boy after the death of his father)

Five Things About Ava Andrews by Margaret Dilloway (addresses anxiety)

Good Enough by Jen Petro-Roy (addresses eating disorder; anorexia nervosa)

Hurricane Season by Nicole Melleby (about a child coping with a parent living with mental health issues)

See You in the Cosmos by Jack Cheng (about a neglected child coping with a depressed parent)

Taylor Before and After by Jennie Englund (addresses depression)

The Remember Balloons by Jessie Oliveros [A 2019 Schneider Family Award Honor Book]

The Year I Didn't Eat by Samuel Pollen (addresses eating disorder, anorexia nervosa)

The Space Between, Before, and After by Sue Stauffacher (child grieves a parent lost to suicide)

Train, I Ride by Paul Mosier (child grieves death of parent and grandparent)

When Dinosaurs Die: A Guide to Understanding Death by Laurie Krasny Brown

Where the Watermelons Grow by Cindy Baldwin (child coping with a parent with schizophrenia)



Books for Children Ages 11-14 (Middle School; Grades 6-8)

Avenging the Owl by Melissa Hart

Uprooted to Oregon where he befriends a boy with Down Syndrome, Solo Hahn - named in honor of the Star Wars action hero - must complete eight months of community service at the local raptor center and uses his screenwriting passion to convey his feelings about his father's attempted suicide.

Aviva Vs. the Dybbuk by Marie Lowe

Offers an intimate look at a contemporary Orthodox Jewish community in this story about a girl regaining her footing after her father's death, thanks to the support of her Jewish community, especially its women.

A Taste of Blackberries by Doris Buchanan Smith

When Jamie tragically dies because of an allergic reaction to bee stings, the narrator struggles to cope with denial, grief, guilt, and loneliness, before coming to terms with the loss. The story is set in a suburb of Washington, D.C., the author's birthplace.

Fighting Words by Kimberly Bradley

Della relies on her older sister, Suki, for comfort and guidance during difficult times, but after Suki attempts suicide, it becomes apparent that she is struggling more than she lets on.

Grandfather and the Moon by Stephanie Lapointe

Tells the story of a loving granddaughter who worries about her grandfather's depression after the loss of her grandmother and enters a contest to travel to the moon, with unexpected results.

In Your Shoes by Donna Gephart

An anxious boy devoted to his family's bowling center despite his phobias and a girl whose dreams of happily-ever-after are challenged by her residence above her uncle's funeral home use their imaginations to help each other find new beginnings.

The Thing about Jellyfish by Ali Benjamin

Twelve-year-old Suzy Swanson wades through her intense grief over the loss of her best friend by investigating the rare jellyfish she is convinced was responsible for her friend's death.

The Shape of Thunder by Jasmine Warga

Cora is dealing with the loss of her sister in a school shooting. Her best friend, Quinn, is trying to come to terms with her brother being the school shooter. They begin working together on a time travel plot to attempt to fix things and find solace in their friendship.



NON-FICTION RESOURCES

General Mental Wellness

All About Anxiety by Carrie Lewis

Anger Management by Judy Peacock

Depression by Richard Spilsbury

Smart Girl's Guide to Worry: How to Feel Less Stress and Have More Fun by Judy Woodburn

Stress Less: A Guide to Managing Your Stress by Heather Schwartz

Under Pressure: The Science of Stress by Tanya Kyi

Understanding Anxiety by Holly Duhig

You Are Enough by Jan Petro-Roy

What to Do When You Are Cranky and Blue: A Guide for Kids by James Crist

What to Do When You Are Sad and Lonely: A Guide for Kids by James Crist

What to Do When You Worry Too Much: A Kid's Guide to Overcoming Anxiety by Dawn Huebner

What's in Your Mind Today? by Louise Bladen

Meditation and Mindfulness

Alphabreaths: The ABCs of Mindful Breathing by Christopher Willard

Calm: Mindfulness for Kids by Wynne Kinder

Just Breathe: Meditation, Mindfulness, Movement, and More by Mallika Chopra

Just Feel: How to be Stronger, Happier, Healthier and More by Mallika Chopra

Meditate with Me: A Step-by-Step Mindfulness Journey by Mariam Gates

Mindful Me: Mindfulness and Meditation for Kids by Whitney Stewart

Mindfulness for Anxious Kids: A Workbook to Help Children Cope with Anxiety, Stress, and Worry by Catherine Cook-Cottone

This Moment is Your Life (And So Is This One): A Fun and Easy Guide to Mindfulness, Meditation and

Yoga for Kids by Sussanah Hoffman

Yoga for Teens and Tweens by Mariam Gates