

Books and resources for children (and the adults who care for them)

We've split this into sections (pre-school, primary school, secondary school and neurodivergent children) as a general guide. You know your children best though, so please do look across the sections, in case there's something that could be helpful from another section.

PRE-SCHOOL

BOOKS

Emotions

The way I feel by Janan Cain (Ages 2-8.)

Feelings are neither good nor bad, they simply are. Children need words to name their feelings, just as they need words to name all things in their world. The Way I Feel uses strong and colourful images along with simple verses to help children connect these words with their emotions.

General anxiety/worry

The huge bag of worries by Virginia Ironside (Ages 3-8.)

Wherever Jenny goes, her worries follow her - in a big blue bag. Jenny decides they will have to go. But who can help her?

There is no such thing as a dragon by Jack Kent (Ages 3-7).

A story about the importance of talking about challenges facing a family before they become overwhelmingly large.

Cancer

Stickers on her bald head by Chelsey Gomez.

Explaining cancer and chemo hair loss to children in a fun way.

Nowhere hair by Sue Glader (Ages 3-8).

Explains cancer and chemo to kids through a child looking for her mother's hair.

Breast Cancer

Mummy's lump by Gillian Forrest and Sarah Garson. Ages 3-6.

A reassuring story about early breast cancer and treatment. It covers diagnosis, going to hospital, treatments and hair loss.

Out of print but available to read online/download here - <https://breastcancernow.org/download-and-order-publications/mummys-lump-bcc164/>

Haematological Cancer

Lucy and the good soldiers by Sarah Bee (for Anthony Nolan Trust)

Explains stem cell and bone marrow transplants in a child-friendly way.

Available to read online/download here - <https://www.anthonynolan.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/Lucy And The Good Soldiers.pdf>

Hospitals and admissions

Hospital (first time) by Jess Stockham (Ages 2-5).

An overview of what happens when we go to the hospital. It is written for children who will be going themselves, but can be useful because it introduces the environment, who works there, what happens there.

Maisy goes to hospital by Lucy Cousins (Ages 2-4).

Maisy breaks her leg and goes to hospital. Introduces staff, visiting hours and the concept of staying in hospital overnight.

Peppa Pig: Peppa goes to hospital (Ages 2-4).

Peppa goes to visit her friend who has broken their leg in hospital (on the children's ward). Introduces the environment and staff.

Going to hospital sticker book by Anne Civardi (Ages 2+)

A story about Ben who goes into hospital for surgery on his ear (again, about a child going into hospital, rather than an adult). There are stickers to go with key words to help young children understand these words.

Separation and bereavement

No matter what by Debi Gliori (Ages 3+).

There are two versions of this book, with different endings. For more specific to death, look for the earlier book. For more general regarding separation, look for the 2003 version.

A simple rhyming book exploring the idea of unconditional love between two characters (Small and Large) who can be applied to any adult-child relationship.

Death

Water bugs and dragonflies by Doris Stickney (Ages 3+).

This is a short story that uses the analogy of water bugs developing into dragonflies to help explain death, in an easy to understand way.

There's only one of me: A love letter from Mum / A love letter from Dad by Lisa Wells (Ages 2+).

Written by a mother with terminal cancer as a love letter for her children to remember her by. It is also a gentle and comforting message for any family coping with terminal illness or facing the challenges of bereavement together.

There are two versions – one for children losing their mother and one for children losing their father.

Lost in the clouds by Tom Tinn-Dinsbury (Ages 3-6).

A story of Billy learning to cope with the emotions of his mother's death. Through the metaphor of a cloud, Billy learns that his mother is in his heart even if not with him physically. A helpful guide for adults is at the end of the book.

I miss you (a first look at death) by Pat Thomas (Ages 3-5).

This reassuring picture book explores the difficult issue of death for young children. Children's feelings and questions are looked at in a simple but realistic way, to help children understand their loss.

Missing Mummy by Rebecca Cobb (Ages 3-6).

This book deals with the loss of a parent from a child's point of view, exploring the many emotions a bereaved child may experience (anger, guilt, sadness, bewilderment). It also recognises that the child is still part of a family, and that his memories of his mother are to be treasured.

Is Daddy coming back in a minute? By Elke and Alex Barber (Ages 3-7).

Explaining sudden death in words very young children can understand. Providing reassurance and understanding through clear and honest answers to the difficult questions that can follow the sudden death of a loved one. Emphasising the message that it's okay to be sad, but it's okay to be happy too.

ACTIVITY BOOKS

Bereavement

Someone I know has died by Trish Phillips (Ages 3-5).

An activity book written for bereaved younger children to help them understand what it means when someone dies and to explore their thoughts and feelings with an adult. (Currently out of print but will hopefully be reprinted soon.)