

Books and Resources: Key Stage 2

The suggestions below are suitable to use with children (not an exhaustive list). Books can help children experiencing loss make some sense of confusing and sad emotions. They can also help children to feel less alone. Try to select books that are appropriate for individual circumstances. The books and resources below will help with this:

Pre-bereavement

Us Minus Mum by Heather Butler

The boys think Mum is invincible. But they're wrong. Because Mum is ill. Really ill. It's up to George and Theo to keep Mum (and everyone else) smiling – which will almost probably definitely involve willies, shepherd's pie and Goffo's victory at the pet talent show. This book is funny and a little bit sad.

When your mum or dad has cancer by Ann Couldrick. Available from CBUK shop

This is a useful booklet for younger children (7+) to teenage children. It has an introduction for parents but then explains cancer in a simple way children can relate to. It also covers many questions children ask such as will the person die and what exactly happens, but tackles the answers with insight and honesty.

The secret C by Straight Talking About Cancer by Julie Stokes, Vicky Fullick

This illustrated guide for children provides a sensitive introduction for a child when a parent, sibling or a person close to them is diagnosed with cancer. It is aimed at children aged 7 to 10 years and will work best when an adult is present to expand on the simple messages in the text.

The Huge Bag of Worries by Virginia Ironside

Bereaved children and those in families where someone is expected to die, often have worries that they feel unable to share. This reassuring story will encourage them to voice their fears and concerns.

Books

Always and Forever by Alan Durant

When Fox dies the rest of his 'family' are absolutely distraught. How will Mole, Otter and Hare go on without their beloved friend? But, months later, Squirrel reminds them all of how funny Fox used to be, and they realise that Fox is still there in their hearts and memories.

The Tenth Good Thing About Barney by Judith Voirst

A lovely short story that by dealing with the death of a pet, takes a child through the rituals associated with any death. It addresses the feelings children have when faced by loss, and how we all deal with those feelings, learn from them, and grow. This book does not have religious overtones, so it can be used by families with different sets of beliefs.

Remembering Mum by Ginny Perkins

A simple photo journey of a real family whose Mum died. It shows how that family - a Dad and two primary-aged boys - coped with the anniversary of Mum's death, and how they are living without her but still including her in their daily lives. Very real and one that children will identify with.

Sad Book by Michael Rosen

Michael Rosen talks of his sadness after the death of his son. A personal story that speaks to adults and children. Minimum text with moving illustrations.

Am I Like My Daddy by Marcy Blesy

This beautifully illustrated and poignant book will help children bereaved when very young who struggle to remember the parent who died. Grace in the process of learning about who her father was through the eyes of others learns about who she is today. This book is American, but relevant to all.

What On Earth Do You Do When Someone Dies? by Trevor Romain

Child friendly, accessible text, this short book deals with the many questions that bereaved children of this age have when someone dies.

What does dead mean? By Caroline Jay and Jenni Thomas. Available Jessica Kingsley www.jkp.com

What Does Dead Mean? is a beautifully illustrated book that guides children gently through 17 of the 'big' questions they often ask about death and dying. Suitable for children aged 4+, this is an ideal book for parents and carers to read with their children, as well as teachers, therapists and counsellors working with young children.

Support if a teacher dies

The Copper Tree by Hilary Robinson and Mandy Stanley

When Olivia's teacher dies, the children at her school are encouraged to think of everything that reminds them of her. Written with sensitivity and sprinkled with light hearted moments, The Copper Tree approaches grief with sensitivity and sound judgement. A delightful and touching short story.

Workbooks to use with pupils

Remembering by Dianne Leutner. Available from CBUK shop

A workbook for children when someone important to them has died. Sensitively illustrated, it will help a child to talk about their memories and make some sense of how they are feeling.

Helping Children Think About Bereavement by Heather Butler. Available to buy on CBUK shop

This fun story and related short activities are presented as four, differentiated, lesson plans including one for pupils with learning difficulties. It helps pupils develop resilience and coping skills should someone they know die.

Someone I knew has died by Trish Philips

This is an innovative activity book with many unusual and interactive features, written for bereaved children to help them understand what it means when someone dies and to explore their thoughts and feelings with an adult. Although designed with pre-school and early years age groups in mind, some older children may also enjoy this book.

Talk to My Gran About Dying – my school project by Gina Leveté. Available from www.jkp.com

Teacher resource to promote class discussion. Written in a diary format in a fun and engaging tone, this illustrated book is an excellent way to talk to children about dying, to answer their questions and to help them understand what dying means. Questions to the reader throughout the book help to spark discussions and will allow the child to safely explore their thoughts and feelings. This is an ideal resource for teachers and parents to read with children aged 8-11.

Finding a Way Through When Someone Close Has Died by Mood and Whittaker

This workbook is written by children who have experienced the death of someone close. They offer advice based on their own experiences. The activities encourage young people to express their feelings and responses to death.

When Someone Very Special Dies by M.Heegard

A simple workbook designed to be used by a bereaved child with adult help. It will help a child or young person to understand and express the many feelings that they will have. Communication is increased and coping skills developed as they work their way through it.

We will meet again in Jannah by Zamir Hussain

This book helps children make sense of their experience following the death of a sibling. This book can be a valued resource for schools in the field of bereavement care for pupils. Lesson plans can be customised according to the topic and activities adapted around the needs and background of the children

Books to support staff

Talking about death and bereavement in school by Ann Chadwisck. Available from www.jkp.com

This short, easy to read book offers simple but important advice and guidance for school teachers and staff on what to do when a child is grieving. It includes advice on explaining death to children, insights into how children may be feeling and how they may react, and ways in which they can be supported. Age 4-11.

Good grief: Exploring feelings, loss and death with under 11's. Available Jessica Kingsley www.jkp.com
With twenty educators contributing ideas piloted with children of different abilities and backgrounds in their care, 'Good Grief' has been designed to explore and demystify the experience of loss - in different contexts - within the framework of the National Curriculum.

As big as it gets. Published & available www.winstonswish.org.uk
Supporting a Child when a Parent is seriously ill. This booklet provides a range of ideas for parents and carers so that they feel able to involve their children in what is happening. The book also includes some suggestions about what parents might say to children and how to offer support.

The Invisible String by Patrice Karst

In this heartwarming story, delivers a very simple approach to overcoming the fear of loneliness or separation from parents, written with an imaginative flair that children can easily identify with and remember. Specifically written to address children's fear of being apart from the ones they love, The Invisible String delivers a particularly compelling message in today's uncertain times that though we may be separated from the ones we care for, whether through anger, or distance or even death, love is the unending connection that binds us all, and, by extension, ultimately binds every person on the planet to everyone else.