

Bereavement Books for children

Books for adults to give guidance on helping bereaved children.

Title	Author	Comments	Circumstances
A child's grief – supporting a child when someone in their family has died.	Winston's Wish	Available on request - A book for adults who are supporting bereaved children. It has ideas for activities and some information on where to get advice and support.	General
As big as it gets – supporting a child when a parent is seriously ill	Winston's Wish	Available on request - A book for families to create a toolkit to help children feel informed, loved and hopeful when a parent is seriously ill.	Preparing for death – long term illness
Beyond the rough rock – supporting a child who has been bereaved through suicide	Winston's Wish	Available on request - This book aims to give parents and professionals the confidence to involve children in discussions about the nature of death by suicide.	Suicide
Hope beyond the headlines – supporting a child bereaved through murder and manslaughter	Winston's Wish	Available on request - Offers practical advice for families in the immediate days and weeks when violence has been the cause of death.	Murder / manslaughter
Never too young to grieve – supporting children under 5 after the death of a parent	Winston's Wish	Available on request - Helpful tool for an adult who is supporting a very young child through bereavement	Under 5's, general
The family has been informed – supporting bereaved children and young people from military families	Winston's Wish	Available on request - To give an overview of the processes and experiences involved in military deaths.	Military deaths
We all grieve – supporting bereaved children who have special educational needs and disabilities	Winston's Wish	Available on request - Helpful tool for adults who are supporting SEND children through bereavement	SEN

You just don't understand- Supporting bereaved teenagers	Winston's Wish	Available on request - Offers practical advice for families and professionals supporting bereaved teenagers.	Teenagers, general
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Books for children

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A Birthday present for Daniel	Juliet Cassuto Rothman	Told by a young girl whose brother, Daniel, has died, she talks about how things have changed in the family. She also talks about the things she does when she is sad and how these differ from other members of her family. This book has small black and white pictures with minimal text but it conveys some important issues. It would be particularly useful to broach the subject of birthdays as it describes how the family remembered Daniel on his birthday.	Sibling death
A fault in our stars	John Green	Book for teenagers. This is a moving and funny book about a young teenage girl, Hazel, who has been diagnosed with lung cancer and attends a cancer support group where she meets Augustus. The couple embarks on a rollercoaster of emotions, including love, sadness and romance, while searching for the author of their favourite book.	Teenagers, Cancer
A monster calls	Patrick Ness	This moving fantasy novel is the story of a 13-year-old boy who is coping with the diagnosis of his mother's cancer. A book about stories and myths, about courage and loss and the fear of loss. Conor has the same dream every night, ever since his mother first fell ill, ever since she started treatments that don't quite seem to be working. But tonight is different. Tonight, when he wakes, there's a visitor at his window.	Cancer

Always and forever	Derbi Gliori Alan Durant	Story about 4 animal friends living together and one dies. Story continues to show how animals feel afterwards and can look back and remember happy times. A general story book good for any relationship of loss.	General
Angry Arthur	Hiawyn Oram	It's time for bed but Arthur wants to stay up so he gets really angry. Every time someone tells him 'that's enough' his anger gets bigger and bigger and takes over the world until he wonders why he was so angry in the first place. A wonderful imaginative story that many children (and adults) will be able to relate to.	General, anger
Are you sad little bear?	Rachel Rivett	About losing a grandmother, so useful for children who have lost grandparents or the older generation.	Grandparent
Badger's parting gifts	Susan Varley	Badger is old and knows he is going to die soon. When he does, the other animals think they will be sad forever, but they begin to talk about the memories they have of the things Badger taught them and learn to cope with his death. A lovely picture book that emphasises the importance of remembering the person who has died.	Preparing for death, Grandparent
Benny's Hat	Juliet Clare Bell	Recommended for younger children. Benny's Hat is an illustrated children's book, which gently deals with the difficult subject of a sibling's death to cancer in a way very young children can understand. Told from the point of view of Friz, the book tells the story of her brother Benny's illness, death and Friz's grief. The book shows how children might deal with serious illness and death differently to adults and gives adult readers examples of how to support children when a sibling is not expected to live.	Sibling death, cancer
Charlotte's Web	E.B.White	Charlotte's Web is a classic tale of friendship, bravery and some animal magic. Deals with the issue of death through Charlotte's death. Dealing with death as a sort of transfer of energy, as Wilbur did through Charlottes offspring, can be "comforting to anyone who is dealing with a fear of death, or experiencing loss and grief." (Brummer, 2008)	General

Dear Grandma Bunny	Bruna Dick	Recommended for younger children. Miffy and her family are really sad. Grandma Bunny has died and it's time for them to say goodbye and thank Grandma Bunny for everything she did for them. Suitable for very young children, this book tells the story of what happened and how Miffy felt and coped when Grandma died. This touching Miffy story celebrates the life and loss of loved ones. Simple illustrations and straightforward text combine to tackle the death of a loved one in a direct and uncomplicated manner.	Grandparent death
Figure it Out	Jenna Berman	Diary style book written by someone who was bereaved as a teenager.	General, Teenagers
Finding a Way Through When Someone Close Has Died	Pat Mood and Lesley Whittaker	Created by children for children - It offers advice based on their own experiences. Practical advice on how to cope with practical and emotional upheavals of bereavement.	General, primary age to younger secondary age
Gentle Willow	Joyce C Mills	About a tree that gets ill and eventually dies. Can be useful to explain death when the person got ill first and deteriorated in health before the death. It also addresses the feelings of those left behind.	Long term illness
Goodbye Mousie	Robbie Harris	Recommended for younger children. This beautifully illustrated picture book tells the story of a little boy who's told that his pet mouse has died. At first, he doesn't believe it, thinking it's just asleep, but by asking lots of questions & with the help of his family he begins to accept Mousie's death. This would be very helpful to introduce death to young children and a starting point to discuss what happens after someone dies and the different feelings one may have.	Pet death, General
Healing Your Grieving Heart – for Teens	Alan D Wolfelt	100 practical ideas – simple tips for understanding and expressing your grief.	Teenagers
Heaven is for real – for kids	As told by Colton Burpo to his mum and dad Todd and Sonja Burpo	A Christian book telling what a child saw when he visited heaven (in a coma) his parents include verses from the Bible that correlate to what the child says he has seen.	General, Christianity
Help for Hard Times Getting Through Loss	Earl Hipp	A book to explain grief and offer ideas for healing.	General, Older primary aged to secondary aged children

Her mother's face	Roddy Doyle	This book is a sensitive portrayal of a young girl's grieving as she struggles to come to terms with the loss of her mother. Siobhan was just three years old when her mother died and Siobhan can no longer remember her face. She is given encouraging words by a kind lady in the park who tells her to look in the mirror to see the face of her mother through her own reflection.	Death of mum
I have a baby sister in Heaven	Toni Tattis	For siblings who have lost due to miscarriage, stillbirth, neonatal and infant death. This book discusses ways that the family remembered their baby sister: balloons, planting flowers, memory boxes etc It also expresses how it is ok to be sad or angry and that hugs and talking makes us feel better.	Death of baby
I have a question about death (A book for children with autism spectrum disorder or other special needs)	Arlen Grad Gaines and Meredith Englander Polsky	Available on request - Designed specifically to help children with additional needs understand what happens when someone dies. Using straightforward text and clear illustrations to explain what death means, with information for parents and care givers.	SEN
I miss my sister	Child bereavement UK	Tells the story of how a little girl feels once her older sister has died. Sort of a story / diary of how the child feels e.g 'when my sister died I felt lonely.'	Sibling death
I miss you	Pat Thomas	About losing a grandma. Has anecdotes and 'what about you?' questions to prompt conversation.	Grandparent
Is daddy coming back in a minute?	Elke Barber and Alex Barber	Recommended for younger children. This honest, sensitive and beautifully illustrated picture book is designed to help explain the concept of death to very young children. It is based on the real-life conversations that Elke Barber had with her then three-year-old son, Alex, after the sudden death of his father and is written in Alex's own words. The book provides reassurance and understanding to readers through clear and honest answers to the difficult questions that can follow the death of a loved one.	Death of dad

Lifetimes	Bryan Mellonie and Robert Ingpen	This book explains life and death in terms of a natural process that occurs to all living things: plants, animals and humans. This book describes death in a de-personalised way. This is not a book about emotions or stages of death. It explains that different creatures have different life spans, and that this aspect of nature is neither fair nor unfair- It simply is.	General
Little flower bulb	Eleanor Gormally	Helping children bereaved by suicide. This book tells the story of Jamie, his mum and his twin sisters, and of how Jamie comes to deal with the death of his father. A beautifully illustrated book that will be helpful for parents when talking to children bereaved by the suicide of a close relative.	Suicide
Luna's red hat	Emmi Smid	An illustrated storybook to help children cope with loss and suicide. This beautifully illustrated storybook is designed as a tool to be read with children aged 6+ who have experienced the loss of a loved one by suicide. Suicide always causes shock, not just for the family members but for everyone around them, and children also have to deal with these feelings. The book approaches the subject sensitively and includes a guide for parents and professionals by bereavement expert Dr Riet Fiddelaers-Jaspers.	Suicide
Milly's bug nut	Winston's Wish – Jill Janney	A short, simple story of a young girl whose Dad has died. It talks about the ups and downs of a family finding their way through bereavement and how things slowly get easier as time goes. Milly misses her Dad and things are just not the same anymore. She knows when people die, they can't come back but she still keeps a wish to see her Dad one more time.	Death of dad
Missing mummy	Rebecca Cobb	Recommended for younger children. This extraordinary book deals with the loss of a parent from a child's point of view. Beautifully illustrated, the book explores the many emotions a bereaved child may experience, from anger to guilt and from sadness to bewilderment. And importantly, the book also focuses on the positive – the recognition that the child is still part of a family, and that his memories of his mother are to be treasured.	Death of mum

Muddles, puddles and sunshine	Diana Crossley	Available in our packs. An activity book with things for child to draw pictures of, talk and write down the story of who has died, what they liked / miss etc This was our favourite activity book – it had the right mix of activities and things to fill in.	Primary age, general
Mum's jumper	Jayde Perkin	A simple and heartfelt book that looks sensitively at loss and grief through the story of a young girl losing her mother. Told by the girl, this book explores the emotions of grief, including fear and anger, and draws on the personal experience of the author. This book can be used as a tool to introduce children to the concept of death, even if they haven't experienced it.	Death of mum
My sister lives on the mantelpiece	Annabel Pitcher	Told through the eyes of 10-year-old Jamie, this book sensitively tackles issues around grief, terrorism, racism and bullying. We meet Jamie in the midst of his family falling apart after the traumatic death of his older sister Rose – her urn on the mantelpiece is the only constant in an otherwise unsettling life. His mother leaves, his father turns to alcohol, and Jamie and his sister Jasmine are left to fend for themselves. With surprising friendships and cunning plans, Jamie and Jas muddle through in the way that only children can.	Sibling death, sudden death
No matter what	Debi Gliori	A rhyming story with large, bright pictures about Small, a young fox who is feeling cross because no one loves him. Large, then reassures him that she'll love him no matter what. A fun and imaginative book that only briefly talks about death but would be a useful to help support a young child through difficult times.	General
Nothing	Mick Inkpen	A 'little thing' has been stuck in the attic for so long, he has even forgotten its name. When the owners move house and leave him behind, he sets off on an adventure to discover who he really is. A lovely book about families and the feeling that you belong. It could be used in many situations, particularly with a child who is feeling unsettled.	General

Only one of me - dad	Lisa Wells	This tender and moving rhyming poem, with charming illustrations which is both a love letter to Lisa's own daughters and a testament to the unwavering strength of parental love, a timeless message for families facing the challenges of bereavement. Mother of two, Lisa Wells, was diagnosed with terminal cancer at the age of 31 and these two books grew from her determination to leave a lasting legacy for her daughters and her desire to help other families.	Death of dad, preparing for death
Only one of me – mum	Lisa Wells	This tender and moving rhyming poem, with charming illustrations which is both a love letter to Lisa's own daughters and a testament to the unwavering strength of parental love, a timeless message for families facing the challenges of bereavement. Mother of two, Lisa Wells, was diagnosed with terminal cancer at the age of 31 and these two books grew from her determination to leave a lasting legacy for her daughters and her desire to help other families.	Death of mum, preparing for death
Out of the Blue	Winston's Wish	Available in our packs. A workbook for teenagers to go through. Activities to help them create memories of their loved ones.	Secondary age, general
Rabbityness	Jo Empson	A short story of a rabbit who loves doing music painting and dancing. When the rabbit disappears there is darkness in the forest, until his friends find that rabbit has left behind some gifts of paints and musical instruments in his rabbit hole and then they enjoy using them to decorate the forest. A story for when time has passed a little and we need to understand how we can still include those who are dead in our lives through the time we had with them and the things they shared with us.	General,
Reuben's Rainbow	Reuben's Retreat publication – Catherine Whitmore and Heather Dickinson	Available on request - A story about a boy who loses his brother and finds reminder of him in the colours of the rainbow.	Sibling death
Sad book	Michael Rosen	Available on request - For older children really. Tells how author felt when his son died.	General
Sad isn't bad	Michaelene Mundy	Not a story setup. It is pointers for children on how they might feel when going through grief. Good for starting discussions about feelings with your child.	General

Saying goodbye to daddy	Judith Vigna	Clare's Dad died in a car accident and this book looks at changes in the family, difficult feelings, funerals and memories through the eyes of Clare. It would also be a good book to help parents understand the child's perspective. It gives good examples of how adults can answer children's questions, emphasising the need to be clear and honest.	Death of dad, sudden death, traffic accident
Saying goodbye to Hare	Carol Lee	Hare is old and tired, the young animals know hare will die soon. The book charts the journey for a young animal and how he felt when hare died.	Preparing for death
Someone I know has died	Trish Phillips Child Bereavement UK	A book of drawings mostly and some activities to do. Discusses how losing someone makes us feel (as a child)	General, workbook
Something else	Kathryn Cave	Something Else doesn't belong and has no one to be friends with, until one day Nothing knocks at his door and although they seem very different, they get along and become friends. These unusual looking characters capture the feelings of young people in a sensitive and fun way. A lovely book that could reassure children who feel unsettled within their peer group.	General
Stewart's tree	Cathy Campbell	Recommended for younger children. A book for brothers and sisters when a baby dies shortly after birth. A colourfully illustrated children's book to help explain sibling loss to young children. Ellen's new baby brother Stewart has been 'lost'. Ellen looks in all the cupboards for Stewart and even in the washing machine – then her family helps her understand that Stewart has died and isn't going to come back. The book ends with a guide to bereavement for children written by qualified clinicians	Death of a baby
Straight Talk about Death for Teenagers: How to Cope with Losing Someone You Love	Earl A. Grollman	This book was written after the author spoke to thousands of teenagers and found they often felt forgotten after someone has died. Written in short, clear sentences that are easy to read, it covers feelings, different types of death and the future. This book gives the reader many options of what can happen, how s/he may feel, giving advice and reassuring readers grief is normal.	Teenagers

The cat mummy	Jacqueline Wilson	Verity's Mum died the day she was born but she rarely talks about her. Verity doesn't want to upset her Dad or Grandparents. This humorous but sensitive story mainly focuses on Verity's missing cat Mabel but reveals some of the misunderstandings and anxieties children can have about death. It also shows it can be good to be open, honest and to talk about difficult issues.	Death of mum,
The copper tree	Hilary Robinson	Helping a child cope with death and loss. When Olivia's teacher, Miss Evans, dies the children at her school are encouraged to think of everything that reminds them of her. Written with great care, touching sensitivity and humour The Copper Tree is about love and legacy and will help children understand that while sadness is an inevitable part of grief, death is not the end for what we leave behind can be everlasting.	General
The day the sea went out and never came back again	Margot Sunderland and Nicky Armstrong	Eric is a sand dragon who loves the sea very much. Each day, he watches it going out and coming back. His sea is beautiful indeed to him. But one day, the sea goes out and does not come back. Eric waits and waits, but it does not come back. So he falls on the sand in terrible pain. It feels to him as if he has lost everything. After many bleak days, Eric sees a little wild flower. It is dying. Eric knows he must save it. He finds water. More and more flowers appear and so Eric starts to make a beautiful rock pool garden. And as he does, he finds the courage to feel the full pain of his loss, instead of closing his heart. He realises that his memories of his precious sea are like a special kind of treasure in his mind, a treasure he will never lose. A lovely story book which may help children with understanding that what they feel is ok, and that there may be a way forward in the future.	General
The Grieving teen	Helen Fitzgerald	A book for teenagers, covering lots of situations teens may find themselves in when grieving a death.	G e n e r a l , teenagers

The huge bag of worries	Virginia Ironside	This is not a bereavement book as such, but is a good starting point for discussion when the death of a loved one has made a child begin to worry about things. The story tells of a girl called Jenny, who wherever she goes, her worries follow her - in a big blue bag. They are there when she goes swimming, when she is watching TV, and even when she is in the lavatory. The book continues to show that it was only when Jenny spoke to someone about the worries, that the worries began to ease.	General
The I love you book	Todd Parr	This book celebrates the unconditional love between a parent and child. From the heartfelt to the light hearted and with many moments in between that are sure to make readers smile and reminisce, this book helps families to remind children how much they are loved, each and every day	General
The invisible string	Patrice Karst	This is another of our favourites and isn't solely a bereavement book. It tells a story of how we are connected to everyone we love with an invisible string. It tells how it reaches everywhere and on one page the child says 'even up to Uncle in heaven?' There is also an Invisible String workbook to go with this book which can be filled in.	General
The Lost Boys' Appreciation Society	Alan Gibbons	Teenage life is difficult enough for Gary and John, but when their Mum dies in a car accident, things get steadily worse. John struggles to keep the peace as Gary goes off the rails, saying his new mates are now his family. With GCSE exams looming and his Dad going out on dates, things become unbearable for John. A gripping book exploring relationships and how different people react to life events.	Teenagers, sudden death, traffic accident
The Magical wood	Mark Lemon	This magical story sensitively offers children and families an opportunity to share the journey of its characters finding their way through grief. With its imagery and language exploring the themes of bereavement; this story offers children and families time and a safety within which to talk about death, loss and emotions.	General

The Memory Tree	Britta Teckentrup	<p>A beautiful and heartfelt picture book to help children celebrate the memories left behind when a loved one dies.</p> <p>Fox has lived a long and happy life in the forest, but now he is tired. He lies down in his favourite clearing and falls asleep for ever. (just make sure children understand with this wording that dying is not the same as falling asleep). Before long, Fox's friends begin to gather in the clearing. One by one, they tell stories of the special moments that they shared with Fox. And so, as they share their memories, a tree begins to grow, becoming bigger and stronger with each memory, sheltering and protecting all the animals in the forest, just as Fox did when he was alive.</p>	General
The Scar	Charlotte Moundlic	<p>When the boy in this story wakes up to find that his mother has died, he is overwhelmed with sadness, anger and fear that he will forget her. He shuts all the windows to keep in his mother's familiar smell and scratches open the cut on his knee to help him recall her comforting voice. He doesn't know how to speak to his dad anymore, and when Grandma visits and throws open the windows, it's more than the boy can take – until she shows him another way to hold on to the feeling of his mum's love. With tenderness, touches of humour and unflinching emotional truth, Charlotte Moundlic captures the loneliness of grief through the eyes of a child, rendered with sympathy and charm in Olivier Tallec's expressive illustrations.</p>	Death of mum
The secret C	Winston's Wish – Julie A Stokes	<p>Available on request - This booklet is aimed at supporting parents or carers to explain to their child what cancer means and how it may affect their family and encourages open communication and questions about cancer within the family. Through pictures, captions and straightforward language, it explains how tumours are formed, what the various treatments are and how these may affect the person with cancer. It stresses the need to keep to family routines and, importantly, to still try and have fun. 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.</p>	Cancer, preparing for death

The sunshine cat	Miriam Moss	Sunny the cat is loved by all his human family, but one day there is a knock at the door – Sunny has been killed in an accident. A sensitive story which aims to help children come to terms with death.	Sudden death, pet death
Up in Heaven	Emma Chichester Clark	About an old dog who goes to heaven and sees his owner (a child below). He sends him dreams to let him know he is ok and he should get a new dog to replace him. Good for children who have lost pets and has some relevance to losing others. However, care should be taken because the story is about 'replacing' the dog, which can create issues with children if they relate this to their loved one.	Death of pet
Waterbugs and Dragonflies	'looking up' revised version Pilgrim Press	Available in our packs. It is a story book about how waterbugs see friends disappearing and don't know where they've gone. From the other side, the dragonflies can see their friends below in the water, but can't return once they have their wings (heaven analogy). This is one of our favourite books and really helps to explain death if you are teaching your child that their loved one has gone to heaven.	General
Weird is normal – when teenagers grieve	Jenny Lee Wheeler	Written by someone whose dad died when she was a teenager. She shares her own grief journey and reassures teens that they can grieve in their own way and time,	General, teenagers
What does dead mean?	Caroline Joy Jenni Thomas	Available on request - A really useful book full of questions children may ask after a death in the family. Provides answers for these questions too. This was really helpful in explaining practical things and we could dip in and out of it to discuss specific things such as what might happen at the funeral.	General
What happened to daddy's body?	Elke Barber	Recommended for younger children. Explaining what happens after death in words very young children can understand. This picture book aims to help very young children to understand what happens to the body after someone has died. Through telling the true story of what happened to his daddy's body, we follow three-year-old Alex as he learns about cremation, burial and spreading ashes. Full of questions written in Alex's own words, and with the gentle, sensitive and honest answers of his mother, this story will reassure any young child who might be confused about death and what happens afterwards.	General

What on earth do you do when someone dies?	Trevor Romain	This book for older children is a factual guide, answering questions such as 'why do people have to die?', 'is it okay to cry?' and 'what is a funeral/memorial service?' It is written in a straightforward way, with practical tips, advice and information about different faiths and beliefs. It describes the strong, confusing feelings you might have and suggests ways to feel better. He tells you it's okay to cry, talk about the death, grieve, and go on with your life.	General
When Dinosaurs Die	Laurie Krasny Brown and Marc Brown	This isn't a story book, but more of a guide tackling the types of issues that may come up when a family member dies. Illustrated using dinosaurs instead of people, it may appeal to younger children and be easier to access than books about people.	General
When someone has a very serious illness	Marge Eaton Heegaard	A workbook for young children to work through to help them when a loved one has a terminal illness.	Terminal illness
When someone very special dies	Marge Eaton Heegaard	A workbook for young children to work through to help them process the death of a loved one.	General