

A) Books and resources - Early years

Children under the age of five may not fully understand the concept of death but will be very aware that something important has happened. Books can be very helpful to share with a bereaved child to help develop their understanding of death. They need simple and honest explanations, possibly repeated many times.

For a list of books which may be useful to share with a bereaved child see Resources for children and young people on our website: childbereavementuk.org/resources-for-children-and-young-people

The books below are more suited for general use within your setting. These books can help to introduce topics such as death, grief and the life cycle to young children.

I Miss You: A First Look at Death

Pat Thomas

This helps children understand that death is a natural complement to life, and that grief and a sense of loss are normal feelings for them to have. It briefly covers a range of issues such as why people die, how you may feel when someone dies and what happens afterwards. A good one to use to introduce the subject.

Goodbye Mousie

Robie H Harris

The story of a young boy dealing with the death of his pet mouse is handled with the sure touch of an author familiar with children's tender emotions. Simply told by the boy, in a matter-of-fact tone with a dash of humour, he recounts his reactions to the death of his pet mouse.

When Dinosaurs Die:

A Guide to Understanding Death

Laurence Krasny Brown and Marc Brown

The authors explain in simple language the feelings people may have regarding the death of a loved one and the ways to honour the memory of someone who has died.

Dogger

Shirley Hughes

A sensitively written story, with which adults and children will identify. It is about a little boy who loses his favourite toy 'Dogger' and describes his feelings and responses as a result. Useful as a gentle introduction to the subject of loss.

What does dead mean?

Caroline Jay and Jenni Thomas

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.

Always and Forever

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.

Rabbityness

Jo Empson

This is the story of a very special rabbit. He enjoys doing rabbit things, but he also loves – well, un-rabbity things. His boundless creative talent is a source of joy and inspiration to the other rabbits. When Rabbit suddenly disappears, no one knows where he has gone. His friends are desolate. But, as it turns out, Rabbit left behind some very special gifts for them, to help them discover their own un-rabbity talents!

No Matter What

Debi Glori

'I'll always love you no matter what...' 'No matter what?' Small asks. But what if he turns into a bug, or a crocodile, or even a grizzly bear? Small has all sorts of questions about love, and his mummy must reassure him that her love will never, ever run out - no matter what.

Waterbugs and Dragonflies

D Stickney

Written from a Christian perspective, this book can be used to help explain the concept of death to young children. The story illustrates that death is inevitable, irreversible but natural. It is presented as something sometimes difficult to understand but a happy experience for the person who has died.

Lifetimes

Bryan Mellonie and Robert Ingpen

A beautifully illustrated book which aims to help explore the subjects of life and death.