

BOOKS FOR YOUNG STUDENTS

Elifton, Lucille; *Everett Anderson's Goodbye*

A young child struggles through the stages of grief after his father's death.

Cohn, Janice; *I Had a Friend Named Peter*

A young child's best friend is killed in an accident.

Dougy Center; *After A Suicide*

A workbook addressing many issues related to suicide.

Greenlee, Sharon; *When Someone Dies*

This book presents various feelings and ways to cope.

Grollman, Earl and Johnson, Joy; *A Child's Book About Burial and Cremation.*

Discusses how the body is cared for and why it is important to say goodbye.

Hanks, Bernice; *Green Mittens From Grandma*

A little boy finds comfort in remembering all the things he loved about his grandma.

Hodge, John; *Finding Grandpa Everywhere*

A young boy discovers memories of Grandpa after his death.

Mellonie, Bryan & Ingpen, Robert; *Lifetimes*

Lifetimes of many living things are discussed.

Powell, E. Sandy; *Geranium Morning*

A young child deals with the death of his father.

Temes, Roberta; *The Empty Place*

Explores feelings and needs when a sibling dies.

Wilhelm, Hans; *I'll Always Love You*

A little boy's pet dog dies.

*For a more complete list of resources visit www.centering.org

BOOKS FOR PARENTS

Centering Corporation; *Sibling Grief*

Grief responses of siblings and suggestions of how to help.

Dougy Center; *Helping Children Cope with Death*

Information on child's understanding, how to explain death and ways to support children.

Fitzgerald, Helen; *The Grieving Child*

Support for parents in discussing situations with children.

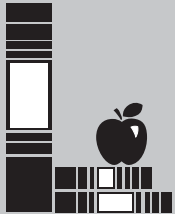
Lombardo, Victor S. & Lombardo, Edith Foran; *Kids Grieve Too*

Discusses children's response to grief.

Rofes, Eric; *The Kids Book About Death and Dying; by and for Kids*

Explains grieving from a child's point of view.

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HELPING CHILDREN WITH GRIEF

Adults who are willing to talk openly about death help children understand that grief is a natural feeling when someone loved has died.

There are no magic "right" words to say. It's the trying, the sharing and the caring-the wanting to help and the willingness to listen that says "I care about you". When we know that we do care about each other, then, together, we can talk about even the most difficult things and cope with even the most difficult times.

-Hedda Bluestone Sharapan

Crisis Response Team
Lincoln Public Schools

TALKING WITH CHILDREN ABOUT DEATH

- ◆ Be open, honest and loving.
- ◆ Use clear language (i.e. died, dead). Using phrases such as “passed away” or “at rest” can be confusing to children.
- ◆ Give facts in terms children can understand.
- ◆ Allow for questions, even if you don’t have the answers, it’s all right to say, “I don’t know” and find someone who does have the answer if there is one.
- ◆ Use the name of the person who has died. Over time, continue to discuss memories. It is important to help children see that the person who died has not been forgotten.
- ◆ Help children understand that all people grieve differently. They may see others expressing a variety of emotions or none at all. It is important not to make judgments about how they or others “should” or “should not” be feeling.
- ◆ Remember your message comes through your voice tone, body language, and eye contact. It’s fine to share your emotions as you talk with children. Through your actions, you are modeling ways for them to express themselves.

DEALING WITH TRAUMA

- ◆ Trauma alters the sense of safety and predictability that children need to feel secure in the world. This increases the need to discuss their safety concerns and re-establish a sense of normalcy.
 - ◆ Trauma can occur even when there is not a personal connection to those directly involved in the situation.
 - ◆ It is most helpful to the child to have the opportunity to process their experience and feelings as soon after the event as possible.
 - ◆ The trauma must be addressed before the healing process may begin.
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- ◆ If the traumatic incident is highly covered in the media, it is important that children not be over exposed and be re-traumatized.
 - ◆ Many of the responses listed in **How Children Grieve** will be similar to children who have experienced trauma, especially heightened anxiety, needing reassurance of their safety, asking many questions, in addition to reliving the situation and feeling helpless.

HOW CHILDREN GRIEVE

- ◆ Children tend to go in and out of grief. This may be confusing to adults and children alike.
 - ◆ Emotions may be expressed through behaviors. Especially young children do not have words for their feelings. Anger, withdrawal, anxiety, or attention seeking behaviors are all common responses.
 - ◆ Reactions such as stomachaches, headaches, sleep disturbance, nightmares and the inability to concentrate or focus are physical ways children respond to death.
 - ◆ Children may go back to behaviors of a younger age to seek comfort and safety, such as thumb sucking, clinging, and whining.
 - ◆ A lack of questions or showing of emotions does not mean the child is not grieving. Children are protective of people they care about and feel responsible for causing their emotions. Explaining to children they are not the cause of that emotion is important.
 - ◆ Children’s reactions differ depending on their level of emotional development, their relationship to the deceased, the information they receive concerning death, and their past experiences with death.
 - ◆ Children may learn healthy coping skills through books you can read together.
 - ◆ Children process their grief through play. It is helpful to allow children to express themselves by providing activities such as art materials, puppets or journaling.
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- ◆ It is common for children to grieve a death when they reach a new stage of development. Reprocessing information may help them gain a better level of understanding.

A CARING ADULT'S ROLE

- ◆ Adults need to be aware of their own feelings and ways of coping with death. Those able to confront, explore and learn from their own experiences are then able to help children develop healthy attitudes as well.
 - ◆ Children need to be surrounded by loving, supportive and accepting adults who will listen to them and encourage them to express their questions, thoughts and feelings. Extra time and patience are important to provide.
 - ◆ Choices made to try to spare a child from the pain of grief, many times excludes children from what can be a very healing experience. Allow children to make choices about how they might be included in rituals, such as funerals, viewings and burials. Prepare children for what they might experience. If children aren’t comfortable, they should not be forced to participate.
 - ◆ Try to provide as much consistency and routine as possible. Children may test the limits and need to see that the same rules and consequences are enforced. This provides a sense of security that is important.
 - ◆ It’s common for children to wonder if something will happen to them or their family. It is important to assure children that someone will be there to care for them. Children also need to know what the adults in their life are doing to keep them safe.
 - ◆ If you have specific concerns about your child, or need help finding additional resources, contact your school counselor or school social worker.
 - ◆ Remember, you are their model. How adults respond when someone dies has a major effect on the way children react.
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