

# **Recommended Books for Children Coping With Loss or Trauma**

Books can be wonderful tools to use with children who have experienced difficult times such as trauma or loss. Reading (or being read to) and talking with adults can help them understand and cope with their feelings in a developmentally appropriate way. Reading also offers a great way to spend time with a child, reinforce a sense of normalcy and security, and connect with them, all of which are important

## **PICTURE BOOKS**

### **Always and Forever**—Alan Durant (Picture Book)

A story for anyone who has experienced the loss of a loved one. When Fox dies, Mole, Hare, and Otter are devastated. They feel they will never get over their great sadness. How can life go on without him? Then one day Squirrel comes to visit. She reminds Fox's family of all the funny things he used to do. And as the friends share dinner and tell stories, they realize at last that in their hearts and memories, Fox is still with them, and he will be -always and forever.

#### **Product Details**

ISBN-13: 978-0152166366  
Pages: 32  
Publisher: Harcourt Children's Books  
Age Range: 3+

### **Badger's Parting Gifts**—Susan Varley (Picture Book)

A touching look at death, and how life goes on. Badger's friends are saddened by his passing, but they come to realize that everyone lives on through their gifts of kindness and the happy memories that remain.

#### **Product Details**

ISBN-13: 9780688115180  
Publisher: HarperCollins 1984  
Pages: 32  
Age range: 4+

### **Bear's Last Journey**—Udo Weingelt (Picture Book)

This gentle picture book succeeds in articulating the sense of loss and confusion that children may feel when a loved one dies. Old Bear is very sick. With his animal friends gathered around him, Bear tells them that that he must say good-bye, for he is going on a special journey. "But...but...you're not dying?" asks Rabbit, and Bear admits that he is. All the animals are saddened by the news, but the little fox is especially upset - hurt and angry and confused. He cannot imagine life without Bear. How Fox and the other forest animals

#### **Product Details**

ISBN-10: 0735817995  
Publisher: North-South Books- 2003  
Pages: 32  
Age range: 4+

### **Dead Bird**—Margaret Brown Wise (Picture Book)

A group of children find a dead bird and bury it in the woods, sing to it, and place flowers on its grave. Without any reference to religious concepts, the author addresses

**Everett Anderson's Goodbye**—Lucille Clifton (Picture Book)

A touching portrait of a little boy who is trying to come to grips with his father's death. Lucille Clifton captures Everett's conflicting emotions as he confronts this painful reality. We see him struggle through many stages, from denial and anger to depression and, finally, acceptance. In this spare and moving poem, the last in this acclaimed series, Lucille Clifton brings Everett Anderson's life full circle.

**Product Details**

ISBN-13: 9780805008005

Publisher: Square Fish- 1983

Pages: 32

**Rudi's Pond**—Eve Bunting (Picture Book)

When a sick boy dies, his friends and classmates remember him by building a schoolyard pond in his memory. Based on a true story, "Rudi's Pond" is a gentle, insightful book to help young readers deal with loss.

**Product Details**

ISBN-13: 9780618486045  
Publisher: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 1999  
Pages: 32

**Sammy in the Sky**—Barbara Walsh (Picture Book)

A tale of love, loss, and remembrance. Sammy, the best hound dog in the whole wide world, loves his girl and she loves him. When illness cuts Sammy's life short, the girl's family keeps his spirit alive by celebrating his love of chasing wind-blown bubbles, keeping loyal guard at night, and offering his velvety fur for endless pats and tummy scratches.

**Product Details**

ISBN-13: 978-0763649272  
Publisher: Candlewick  
Pages: 32  
Age range: 4+

**The Scar**—Charlotte Moundlic (Picture Book)

The story of a boy struggling with wild fluctuations of emotions: sadness, sympathy, and fear, following the death of his mother, which he tries to counteract by closing all the windows, holding his breath, and running around until his heart pounds, since he was told that she'll always be "in your heart." With tenderness, touches of humor, and unflinching emotional truth, Charlotte Moundlic captures the loneliness of grief through the eyes of a child.

**Product Details**

ISBN-13: 978-0763653415  
Publisher: Candlewick  
Pages: 32  
Age range: 5+

**Six Is So Much Less Than Seven**—Ronald Himler (Picture Book)

A bittersweet story of loss and love. The story follows a farmer's day as he remembers and mourns the loss of one of his seven cats. Though a farmer regrets the sad loss of one of his faithful companions, he realizes that life goes on.

**Product Details**

ISBN-13: 978-1887734912  
Publisher: Star Bright Books  
Pages: 40  
Age range: 5+

**Someone Special Died**—Joan Prestine (Picture Book)

An unencumbered, explanation of death for young children. Using language appropriate for younger audience, the book addresses some of the feelings that a young child may have about death. Instilled is the message that while the person is no longer here with them, there a ways in which they can be remembered.

**Product Details**

ISBN-13: 978-1577686828

Pages: 32

Publisher: Brighter Child

Age Range: 3+

**Where Do People Go When They Die**—Mindy Avra Portnoy (Picture Book)

The answers to the age old question may be as varied as the individuals asked. Some thoughtful answers are provided in this book. Suggestions for parents, on providing honest, age and developmentally appropriate answers to this and related questions are also addressed by the author, Portnoy, a rabbi.

**Product Details**

ISBN-13: 978-1580130813

Pages: 24

Publisher: Kar-Ben Publishing

Age Range: 5+

**Where The Tomorrows Go**—Manoj S. Abraham (Picture Book)

This picture book reminds children of the importance and support that family pets provide. They are beloved companions, very much a part of daily life. Sometimes those pets, such as the main character's dog, become ill and die, leaving a painful gap in the family. The child in the story is saddened by her pet's death, and wonders how to keep her memories alive. As the author illustrates, writing stories about one's experiences with her dog helps accomplish that task, and gives the little girl hope for the future.

**Product Details**

ISBN-13: 978-0-9887965-7-7

Pages: 21

Publisher: Sennin Group LLC

Age Range: 6+

**GENERAL****A Terrible Thing Happened - A Story for Children Who Have Witnessed Violence or Trauma**—Margaret M. Holmes

Sherman Smith saw the most terrible thing happen. At first he tried to forget about it, but soon something inside him started to bother him. He felt nervous for no reason. Sometimes his stomach hurt. He had bad dreams. And he started to feel angry and do mean things, which got him in trouble. Then he met Ms. Maple, who helped him talk about the terrible thing that he had tried to forget. Now Sherman is feeling much better. This gently told and tenderly illustrated story is for children who have witnessed any kind of violent or traumatic episode, including physical abuse, school or gang violence, accidents, homicide, suicide, and natural disasters such as floods or fire. An afterword by Sasha J. Mudlaff written for parents and

**Bird**—Zetta Elliott (More appropriate for older children)

Mekhai, otherwise known as “Bird”, loves to draw. As Bird struggles to understand the death of his beloved grandfather and his older brother's drug addiction, he escapes into his art. Drawing is an outlet for Bird's emotions and imagination, and provides a path to making sense of his world. A look at a young boy's path to coping with real-life troubles.

**Product Details**

ISBN-13: 978-1600602412  
Publisher: Lee & Low Books  
Pages: 48  
Age range: 7+

**Chester Raccoon and the Acorn Full of Memories**—Audrey Penn (More appropriate for older children)

Chester Raccoon's good friend Skiddel Squirrel has had an accident and will not be returning - ever. Chester is upset that he won't get to play with his friend anymore. Mrs. Raccoon suggests that Chester and his friends create some memories of Skiddel, so that they will have good memories when they miss him. Chester, his brother Ronny, and their friends decide to gather at the pond, where they combine their memories and create a touching celebration of their friend's life.

This sweet story will help children to understand the positive purpose behind memorial services and how "making memories" can provide cheer and comfort when missing an absent loved one.

**Product Details**

ISBN-13: 978-1933718293  
Publisher: Tanglewood Press  
Pages: 32  
Age range: 3+

**The Fall of Freddie the Leaf: A Story of Life for All Ages**—Leo Buscaglia

A warm, wonderfully wise and strikingly simple story about a leaf names Freddie. How Freddie and his companion leaves change with the passing seasons, finally falling to the ground with winter's snow, is an inspiring allegory illustrating the delicate balance between life and death.

**Product Details**

ISBN-13: 9780943432892  
Publisher: Slack Incorporated- 1982  
Pages: 32  
Age range: 4+

**Good-bye, Sheepie**—Robert Burleigh

Goodbye Sheepie portrays the love between a boy and his dog, the boy's grief related to the death of his dog, and the supportive love and understanding of the parent, as the boy says his goodbye. The story fuses the sadness of loss with the hope Sheepie will remain a pleasant memory. No form of afterlife is mentioned and no religious beliefs are referenced.

**Product Details**

ISBN-13: 978-0761455981  
Pages: 32  
Publisher: Amazon Children's Publishing  
Age Range: 6+



each side of the family mourns is very different. This book is a good vehicle to explain the rituals of death to children.

**Product Details**

ISBN-13: 978-0689801853

Pages: 32

Publisher: Atheneum

Age Range: 4+

**Lifetimes: The Beautiful Way to Explain Death to Children**—Bryan Mellonie Page



**Product Details**

ISBN-13: 9780689604489

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing- 1997

Pages: 32

Age range: 2+

**Saying Goodbye to Lulu**—Corrine Demas

The portrayal of a young child learning to understand and cope with the mixed emotions that come with the loss of a loved one. A young girl and her lovable dog, Lulu, are the best of friends. Lulu is the best dog a girl could ever hope for, but when she grows older and gradually becomes weak, the girl must face the sad possibility of losing her dear friend, and inevitably, cope with the death of her canine companion. Though she is deeply saddened by Lulu's passing and misses her very much, over time the little girl discovers that the sweet memory of her beloved Lulu will live on forever... in her heart.

**Product Details**

ISBN-13: 978-0316047494