Even though most of the books are about girls, in terms of loss issues the sex of the main character is irrelevant.

**For Pre-school and Early Elementary School Children**

This book explains death in a way that pre-school children can understand. You can see sample pages from this book on the Internet. Go to www.amazon.com. Under Search, put Books in the first box and When Dinosaurs Die in the second box. The search will take you to the title. Click on the title to go to the page for the book. Toward the bottom of the page, under Explore This Book, click on Search Inside. (Of course, you can look at the sample pages without ordering the book.)

This is an exceptionally interesting book about a little girl who participates in the rituals of her grandfather's funeral.


This is the most practical guide for parents and other adults who are faced with explaining death to a child while at the same time often struggling with their own feelings about death. It addresses many questions children may ask and provides suggestions for responding, keeping in mind the developmental age of the child and the unique circumstances of the individual loss. It provides read-along passages for children whose parents may need some help finding the words to express their responses. This book would be most helpful if read by parents first, before using the read along passages, as the author is sensitive to the grief process of the adults as they help their children cope with their own thoughts and feelings about death.

A poignant, touching story told through the eyes of a girl whose infant brother died of congenital heart disease. The family minister is sensitive and helpful and the story ends on an upbeat note.

This is a simply written and informative book about the life cycles of all living things. It tells about beginnings (birth) and endings (death) with living in between as natural and inevitable. It is a beautiful book for parents and young children to read and discuss together. It describes different lifetimes for different living things as well as lifetimes that are shortened due to unusual circumstances.

This is a beautiful book about a terminally ill dog who has been part of a loving family. As the dog's pain becomes less amenable to medication, the family makes a difficult decision and plans how they will spend Jasper's last day before bringing him to the vet. The unity of the family and its relationship to the pet who has given them such pleasure is told poignantly but straightforwardly as they are brought together at the final goodbye.

A little girl's reaction to the death of her grandfather makes for a compelling story. There is age appropriate confusion, bewilderment and boredom with the mourning rituals. This book is good because there is a consistent honesty in the child's feelings.

This is a beautiful story about a little girl whose father gets sick and dies. After a while the girl and her grandmother decide to make a quilt from her father’s garments. This book is highly recommended because it deals with the loss and mourning in a highly creative manner.

This is an excellent book about a kindergarten girl whose father dies in a car accident. She has a difficult time coming to terms with the loss. She uses denial and avoidance to diminish the pain of the loss. However, the reality of the funeral confronts her with what she is missing. Her mother and grandfather are there to help her with the confusion and denial. Because she goes through a range of emotions, this book is highly recommended.

For Elementary School Children

The author, a boy writing from personal experience, captures the grieving process of a 10-year-old boy whose father has died. He highlights the feelings most children express during this time. This is a thoughtful and sensitive book that parents, teachers, and therapists can use to help a grieving child to feel that they are not alone in dealing with the death of a parent.

The story is about a little boy's reaction to his dog being run over by a truck. The boy's feelings are captured accurately with much emphasis on the anger at the truck driver, parents and himself. The story is limited in scope and time frame (only one day). However, it focuses accurately on the boy's reactions and it portrays the adults as helpful.

This is a beautiful, well-told story of an eight-year-old boy whose ten-year-old friend died in a car accident. This is an excellent book for anyone who has lost a close friend.

This is an excellent book about the aging and death of a cat. The book has no shortcomings and is highly recommended because of its realism and sensitivity.

This is an excellent story about a little girl who tries to come to grips with the death of her grandfather. She is afraid to touch the grandfather’s picture, sleep in his bed, or sit in his chair. The element of fear, an important element of mourning, is handled in a thoughtful manner.

This is an excellent story about a little girl’s reaction to the sudden death of her father from a heart attack. The story is well told and it covers the whole gamut of feelings that the child would experience in response to the loss. It shows how the mother then tries to take the father’s place with limited success. The story is realistic and the emotional responses are honest and sincere. These qualities are seldom seen in children’s stories about painful subjects. At the end of the story there are some helpful tips for children grieving the death of a parent. This book is highly recommended for children ages 6-10.

The story of a little boy whose best friend dies and his struggles to come to terms with the loss. The story is about the events leading up to the death, the loss and the funeral. At the end, with the help of adults, there is some resolution of the loss.

This book attempts to address the many questions children have, and perhaps have never even thought to ask, about death. It covers different customs, past and present, as well as myths about death in colorful cartoon form. From having wives and servants buried with the dead, through burial on a burning boat, wearing black at funerals, to God and reincarnation, just to name a few, it requires a great deal of discussion and adult involvement to prevent more fear about the topic than it supposedly intends to allay. The book begs the question of how much detail does a young child need about death? It is geared in form to a child of 6-10, but the content may be more advanced.

A seven-year-old girl attends her grandmother’s funeral. The main strength of this book is that the children continue to be children in spite of the solemnity of the occasion. The story is nicely told and demonstrates that this kind of book can be charming and realistic at the same time.

**For Older Elementary and Middle School Children**

*Coleman, Paul (1995).* *Where the Balloons Go.* Omaha, NE: Centering Corporation.
This is a touching story about a little boy and his grandmother who send balloons into the sky and then wonder what happens to them. Toward the end the grandmother dies suddenly and the boy continues this activity alone. While the story is well told, there is very little about the grandmother’s death and the boy’s subsequent reactions. Sending the balloons becomes an end in itself while the loss is treated as a secondary issue. Perhaps dealing with the feelings about the loss was just too painful.

This thoughtful, well-written book describes how a ten-year-old boy deals with the death of his grandmother in a constructive way.

This is a touching story of a young girl’s struggle to deal with her mother’s imminent death and of their interactions with each other. There are some tender moments between the parents and the child as the story builds step-by-step to the inevitable end.

This outstanding book was translated from Norwegian after winning numerous prizes and becoming part of a TV show. It is about a girl whose little brother dies and whose dog has pups. The book’s strength is that basic questions about life and death are handled in the course of daily living. The characters are interesting and they experience a range of feelings about each other. Even though this book is about the death of a sibling, it would be good reading for children who experience any kind of loss.

A well-told novel about two ten-year-olds, a boy and a girl, who become friends and build a fort in a tree together. While the boy is visiting Washington, the girl returns to the tree house. She falls in a creek, is knocked unconscious, and dies. It is only at the end of the book that the boy deals with her death. The reaction to the death is accurate but too brief.

**For Middle School Children**

This is an excellent book about loss. It is the story of a fourteen-year-old girl whose father is shot in a store robbery. The story describes the attempt by her, the mother, and the younger brother to cope with the loss in the course of a year. (Also for high school students.)

This is a beautiful story about the love and friendship between two sisters. When the younger one dies after falling out of a tree, the older one (thirteen years old) talks about her feelings in a very honest, sincere and realistic manner. An excellent book for children who have lost a sibling.

**For High School Students**

This is a very moving, beautifully written book about a high school girl, an only child, who is coping with her mother’s illness and anticipated death.

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Edelman, Hope, *Motherless Daughters*, 1994, and *Letters from Motherless Daughters*, 1996. Both published by Delta. *Motherless Daughters* is an excellent compilation of interviews with young women whose mothers died when they were young girls. The stories are poignant and the psychological comments that accompany the vignettes are accurate and insightful. The companion book, *Letters from Motherless Daughters*, written two years later, does not have the same impact although it is still interesting. The books are highly recommended, not only because of the subject, but also because of the clear and lucid writing style.

This is a most practical guide for parents and other adults who are faced with explaining death to a child while at the same time often struggling with their own feelings about death. It addresses many questions children may ask and provides suggestions for responding, keeping in mind the developmental age of the child and the unique circumstances of the individual loss. It provides read-along passages for children whose parents who may need some help finding the words to express their responses. This book would be most helpful if read by parents first, before using the read-along passages, as the author is sensitive to the grief process of the adults as they help their children cope with their own thoughts and feelings about death.

The book deals addresses a difficult subject that most feel helpless in addressing. It is written to help the surviving parent or caretaker deal with the children’s particular grief when their parent commits suicide. It would also help teachers or mental health professionals to become aware of the additional complications for survivors of suicide. The author is a survivor of a parental suicide and addresses the issue in a compassionate and practical manner. The reader will learn what to tell the child, how the child will understand the news depending on his or her age, and what to expect later as the child grows up with this event impacting his/her life. Ms. Requarth also shares anecdotes of children at each stage, which make the book resonate with the reader. The book is practical, hands-on, and gives the reader hope that children may be helped to survive a parent’s suicide.

This is a clearly written book by a funeral director that provides helpful suggestions to parents and caregivers on how to inform children of death in many different situations. It respects the child’s need to know what has happened in a way that is appropriate for his or her age. It discusses listening to children’s thoughts and feelings and addressing common misperceptions. There is an excellent quick reference crisis section at the end of the book that clearly outlines various kinds of deaths, suggestions as to how to explain them to children in different age groups, and how to prepare them for what comes next. Various feelings are described with an attempt to understand each child’s unique coping needs surrounding the death experience. This is an excellent book to guide parents whose own grief may be interfering with their thinking about how to help their children.

This book is designed for parents, caregivers, teachers, and other adults who will be responding to children who have experienced a loss. Several topics are discussed: how to answer children’s questions about death, how children respond developmentally to loss, choosing literature about death for children, and understanding and responding to specific death and loss situations. he book is written sensitively and empathically so as to help the adult deal with the child’s feelings about loss.

This book consists of interviews with 70 people who lost a parent before the age of 19 because of illness, accident, suicide, or murder. The book is notable for the way the material is organized and presented as well as for the comments and
conclusions interspersed throughout. The interviews appear in small segments to illustrate the themes of each chapter. Each person interviewed digs deep into his or her own past to describe how, as a result of the loss, life was changed in their family and community relationships and how their orientation towards the future was changed. The authors are sensitive to childhood idealization of the deceased but honor its uses in coping. They note the role of current, real relationships in the mourning process and show how mourning may be delayed. They acknowledge that childhood parent loss may involve what may already have been lost “before the final loss” and show how ever-present the loss becomes. They underscore the need to construct memories from the time before the event in order to retrieve a past which the bereaved child can use for future adaptations. They are also aware that each child responds uniquely at each stage of development and that children need to be informed in a way appropriate to that age. Finally, both authors share the circumstances and feelings of their own parent loss in childhood and its effects on their lives. This book is not a how-to for survivors but a very readable resource for anyone who has experienced loss of a parent in childhood or knows someone who has.

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### Helpful Web Sites

**The Brave Little Parrot by Rafe Martin.** The tale of a spunky parrot’s heroic saving of the animals from imminent forest fire destruction against impossible odds.  
http://www.sinc.sunysb.edu/Clubs/buddhism/story/parrot.html

**How Night Came Into Being**  
http://www.healingstory.org/crisis/night/how_night_came_into_being.html

http://www.hospicesupportcare.org/help_children.html - Has downloads and activities for use with children


http://www.helpguide.org/mental/helping_grieving.htm - scroll down for valuable resources for parents and children

http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/helping-children-cope-with-loss-resulting-from-war-or-terrorism - information from Mental Health America

### STORIES TO HELP DEAL WITH LOSS AND GRIEF

**Activity Based Books - For Kids**

Healing Activities for Children in Grief by Gay McWhorter M.Ed  
Activities and book lists suitable for support group and grieving children, preteens and teens  
* Suggested books that are available in this kits

**When Someone Very Special Dies: Children Can Learn to Cope with Grief** by Marge Heegaard  
Activity book designed to teach basic concepts of death and help children understand and express the many feeling they have when someone special dies.

**Helping Children Cope with the Loss of a Loved One: A Guide for Grownups** by William C Kroen Ph.D LMHC  
Using anecdotes about real children and their families is it explained how children from infancy through age 18 perceive and react to death. Suggestions and strategies are shared on how to respond to children
Grief and Explaining Death

**Tear Soup** Illustrator Taylor Bills, Co-authors Chuck DeKlyen & Pat Schwiebert
A recipe for healing after loss is a family story book that centers around an old and somewhat wise woman, Grandy. Grandy has just suffered a big loss in her life and so she is headed to the kitchen to make a special batch of **Tear Soup**.

**I Miss You** ~ a first look at Death by Pat Thomas
Reassuring picture book explores the difficult issue of death for young children children’s feelings and questions about this sensitive are looked at in a simple but realistic way. This book helps them to understand their loss and to come to terms with their feelings.

**The Next Place** by Warren Hanson
An inspirational journey of light and hope where earthly hurts are left behind. Beautifully poetic and heart warming illustrations.

**What’s Heaven?** By Maria Shriver illustrated by Sandra Speidel
Calming story of a Kate a little girl whose great grand-ma has just died. She seeks answers and her mother helps her learn about heaven.

**When Dinosaurs Die: A guide to Understanding Death** * by Laurie Krasny Brown and Marc Brown
Question and answer book about death honestly told with delightful illustrations.

**Nature explaining death**

**Lifetimes: the beautiful way to explain death to children** * by Bryan Mellonie and Robert Ingpen
*Lifetimes* is a moving book for all ages. It let’s us explain life and death in a sensitive caring and beautiful way. It tells about beginning and ending and about life in between. It talks about plants, animals and people having their own special lifetimes.

**The Fall of Freddie the Leaf** ~ Leo Buscaglia Ph.D
The Fall of Freddie the Leaf touches children and adults alike, illustrating the delicate balance between life and death. It is a warm thought-provoking story about how Freddie ad his companion leaves change with the passing season and the coming winter.

**Death of Family Member or Friend**

**Nadia the Willful** by Sue Alexander. This is a wonderful story about the different reactions to death told through a child’s eyes. It is a somewhat simplistic story about a sister and her family's loss of the oldest brother. When you lose a loved one you have two choices; to try to block out the pain and in the process block out the memory of that person or to celebrate that life keeping the memory alive in your heart.

**The Saddest Time** * by Norma Simon picture by Jacqueline Rogers
Three stories deal sensitively with the death of a young uncle with a terminal illness, of a classmate killed in an accident and of a grandparent. The process of grief, saying good-bye and remembering is beautifully told.

**Daddy’s Promise** by Cindy Klien Cohen, John T. Heiney illustration by Michael J. Gordan
The story of a little boy’s journey of discover after the death of his father. Jesse is angry and filled with questions that are answered by his mother and by dreaming about visits with his father in a special place.

**Mending Peter’s Heart** by Maureen Wittbold, illustrated by Larry Salk
A special story for any one who has lost a much-loved animal or person. Young and old come together in this beautiful story.

**No New Baby** by Marilyn Gryte
For siblings who have a brother or sister die before birth

**Where’s Jess?** * By Joy and Marv Johnson, The Goldstein’s Heather, Ray and Jody illustrated Shari Barum
When you have a baby sister or bother who dies this activity book will help you make a book about your feeling and questions.

**Balloons for Trevor** by Anne Good Cave, illustrated by Janice Skivington
A little boys best friend Trevor dies. A gentle story about feelings, grief and loss.

**Missing someone**
When I Miss You by Cornelia Maude Spelman, illustrated by Kathy Parkinson
Delightful story that explains how a child may feel when a parent goes to work and then comes back at the end of the day.

Pets

The Tenth Good Thing About Barney * by Judith Viorst, Illustrated by Erik Blegvad
Barney the beloved cat dies and the small boy begins to understand his feelings, grief, and remembering ten good things about Barney.

Cat Heaven by Cynthia Rylant
If you have ever been lucky enough to have a special cat in your life, then you know there is a place called Cat Heaven. Easy reading poetry story

Dog Heaven by Cynthia Rylant
If you have ever been lucky enough to have a special dog in your life, then you know there is a place called Dog Heaven. Easy reading poetry story

Mending Peter's Heart by Maureen Wittbold, illustrated by Larry Salk
A special story for any one who has lost a much-loved animal or person. Young and old come together in this beautiful story.

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