Children's Books About Death

These children's books about death and dying were recommended on more than one highly regarded list. List compiled by Steve Barancik and published on best-childrens-books.com. The term in parentheses refers to the specific loss/death the book addresses.

 Appearing on 4 bibliotherapy booklists

- **I Had a Friend Named Peter** by Miriam Cohen (friend)
- **Old Pig** by Margaret Wild (grandma)
- **Tenth Good Thing about Barney** by Judith Viorst (cat)
- **What's Heaven?** by Maria Shriver (grandmother)
- **When Dinosaurs Die: A Guide to Understanding Death** by Laurie Krasney Brown (people)

 Appearing on 3 bibliotherapy booklists

- **Accident, The** by Carol Carrick (dog)
- **Badger's Parting Gifts** by Susan Varley (friend)
- **The Fall Of Freddie the Leaf** by Leo Buscaglia (oneself)
- **Goodbye Boat, The** by Mary Joslin (aging loved one)
- **Goodbye Mousie** by Robie H. Harris (small pet)
- **Grandpa's Slide Show** by D. Gould (grandfather)
- **I'll Always Love You** by Hans Wilhelm (dog)
- **Jim's Dog Muffin** by Miriam Cohen (dog)
- **Saying Goodbye to Daddy** by Judith Vigna (father)
- **Saying Goodbye to Grandma** by Jane Resh Thomas (grandmother)
- **Sophie** by Mem Fox (grandfather)
- **Swan Sky** by Keizaburo Tejima (sibling)
- **When A Pet Dies** by Fred Rogers (pet)

 Appearing on 2 bibliotherapy booklists

- **A Gift for Abuelita: Celebrating the Day of the Dead** by Nancy Leunn (grandmother)
- **A Little Bit of Rob** by Barbara J. Turner (older brother)
- **Abuelita's Paradise** by Carmen Santiago Nodar (grandmother)
- **Alfie and the Birthday Surprise** by Shirley Hughes (cat)
- **Annie and the Old One** by Miska Miles (grandmother)
- **Black Dog Who Went Into the Woods, The** by Edith Thatcher Hurd (dog)
- **Cat Heaven** by Cynthia Rylant (cat)
- **Day Chubby Became Charles, The** by Achim Broger (grandmother)
- **Emma Says Goodbye: A Child's Guide to Bereavement** by Carolyn Nystrom (Aunt)
- **Everett Anderson's Goodbye** by Lucille Clifton (father)
- **Fireflies, Peach Pies & Lullabies** by Virgina Kroll (great-grandmother)
- **Fox Song** by Joseph Bruchac (great-grandmother)
- **Frog and the Birdsong** by Max Velthuijs (stranger)
- **Goodbye Max** by Holly Keller (dog)
- **Grandad Bill's Song** by Jane Yolen (grandfather)
- **Happy Funeral, The** by Eve Bunting (grandfather)
How Do I Feel About When People Die? by Sarah Levette (pets, friends and relatives)
How It Feels When a Parent Dies by Jill Krementz (parent)
How to Live Forever by Colin Thompson (oneself)
Jasper's Day by Marjorie Blain Parker (dog)
Let's Talk about When a Parent Dies by Elizabeth Weitzman (parent)
Lifetimes by Bryan Mellonie and Robert Ingpen (pets, friends and relatives)
Molly's Rosebush by Janice Cohn (miscarriage of a sibling)
Mustard by Charlotte Towner Graeber (cat)
Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs by Tomie DePaola (grandmother)
On Call Back Mountain by Eve Bunting (older friend)
Pearl's Marigolds for Grandpa by Jane Breskin Zalben (grandfather)
Remembering Mum by Ginny Perkins (mother)
Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes by Eleanor Coerr (oneself)
Saddest Time, The by Norma Simon (others, from illness, accident and old age)
When Someone Dies by Sharon Greenlee (others)
You Hold Me and I'll Hold You by Jo Carson (aunt)

(Compiler’s notes)

The books are fiction and non-fiction, picture books and mostly text. For that reason, you'll want to find out more about them to determine which is right for a particular situation.

Bibliotherapy is the use of books to help children understand and heal. This list of children's books about death was compiled by consulting some of the best bibliotherapy booklists on the subject (from the US, Britain and Canada) and finding the books that were common to more than one list.

The eight sources I consulted were:

- The Bibliotherapy Education Project at Oregon State University
- Children's Books About Death and Dying at The Logan (Utah) Library
- Death Booklist, culled from professional listservs by librarian Nancy Keane
- El Paso (Texas) Public Library bibliography booklist by librarian Laurel Indalecio
- Sensitive Issues: Death from the Seattle (Washington) Public Library
- Bereavement: A Booklist for Children and Young People from the Birmingham (UK) Public Libraries
- Children's Books About Death and Dying, Homewood (Illinois) Public Library
- Picture Books Concerning Death and Loss, Penticton (British Columbia) Public Library