RECOMMENDED BOOKS FOR GRIEVING CHILDREN

Reading books together can be a gentle way to approach difficult topics with your child. At this time of great change in your family, it can be a comfort to your child to be able to talk about what is happening. Listed below are a few books that might assist you and your family begin the difficult discussion about grief and loss.

Books for Children Ages 4-8:

**Parent Loss**

- **Everett Anderson’s Goodbye**
  Lucille Clifton
  The story of a little boy’s search for meaning after his father dies.

- **Rachel/up/down Heart**
  Eileen Douglas
  The death of a little girl's father causes her to draw all her hearts upside down, but as she grows she finds joy in her father’s memory and begins to draw her hearts right side up.

- **Aarvy Aardvark Finds Hope**
  Donna O'Toole
  With the help of his friend Ralphy Rabbit, Aarvy Aardvark comes to understand the loss of his mother and brother, after they are taken away to the zoo.

- **After Charlotte’s Mom Died**
  Cornelia Spelman
  After Charlotte's mother's sudden death Charlotte and her father are devastated. A counselor helps them find ways to talk and to build hope for their futures.

- **Saying Goodbye to Daddy**
  Judith Vigna
  Frightened, lonely, and angry after her father is killed in a car accident, Clare is helped through the grieving process by her mother and grandfather.

**Sibling Loss**

- **The Empty Place: A Child’s Guide through Grief**
  Roberta Temes
  A boy describes the feelings of loss, fear, and guilt that both he and his friend Betsy experience following the death of a sibling.
• **A Little Bit of Rob**  
  Barbara Turner  
  After Rob’s death, his parents and younger sister finally take their boat out crabbing again in an effort to get their lives back to normal.

• **Lost and Found: Remembering A Sister**  
  Ellen Yeomans  
  A preschool girl recounts her confusing thoughts and feelings after the death of her sister and the number of ways she continues to feel her sister's love.

**Grandparent Loss**

• **Nonna**  
  Jennifer Bartoli and Joan Drescher  
  A young boy realizes that when his grandmother dies he still has much of her living around him such as her garden and her cookie recipe.

• **Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs**  
  Tomie dePaola  
  Four-year-old Tommy enjoys visiting his grandmother, Nana Downstairs, and great-grandmother, Nana Upstairs. One day Nana upstairs dies, and Tommy struggles to understand what it means to lose someone he loves.

• **My Grandpa Died Today**  
  Joan Fassler  
  The story about the loving relationship between David, a young boy, and his grandfather.

• **Finding Grandpa Everywhere: A young child discovers memories of a grandparent**  
  Joan Hodge  
  After his Grandpa dies, a young boy discovers that his love and memories live on. Includes notes on how to help children understand death and experience grief.

• **The Memory Box**  
  Kirsten McLaughlin  
  A child shares his feelings after his Grandpa dies. He decides to make a memory box out of Grandpa's old tackle box, filling it with special items and memories of his Grandpa.

• **Thank You, Grandpa**  
  Lynn Plourde  
  The touching story of the relationship between a little girl and her Grandfather.
Other Family Member Loss

- **Losing Uncle Tim**  
  Marykate Jordan  
  When his beloved Uncle Tim dies of AIDS, Daniel struggles to find reassurance and understanding and finds that his favorite grown-up has left him a legacy of joy and courage.

- **The Saddest Time**  
  Norma Simon  
  Explains death as part of life and provides three situations in which children experience powerful emotions when someone close has died.

Pet Loss

- **Saying Goodbye to Lulu**  
  Corinne Demas  
  The story of a young girl and her aging dog, Lulu.

- **The Tenth Good Thing About Barney**  
  Judith Viorst  
  A grieving boy thinks of the ten best things about his deceased cat Barney.

The Death of a Friend

- **Timothy Duck**  
  Lynn Blackburn  
  The story of the death of a friend. Timothy Duck talks about all the feelings he has after his favorite boy gets ill and dies.

- **I Had a Friend Named Peter: Talking to children about the death of a friend**  
  Janice Cohn  
  When Betsy learns about the death of a friend, her parents and kindergarten teacher answer questions about dying, funerals, and the burial process.

- **Badger’s Parting Gifts**  
  Susan Varley  
  Warm and sensitive illustrations reflect the hopeful mood of this tale about woodland animals coping with their friend Badger's death.

General Grief & Loss

- **When Dinosaurs Die: A guide to understanding death**  
  Laurie Krasny Brown & Marc Brown  
  Explains in simple language the feelings people may have regarding the death of a loved one and the ways to honor the memory of someone who has died.
• **The Dead Bird**  
  Margaret Wise Brown  
  A group of children find a dead bird, bury it, and return to the woods to sing to the dead bird and place fresh flowers on its grave. A sensitive book about death.

• **The Fall of Freddie the Leaf**  
  Leo Buscaglia  
  The changing seasons act as a metaphor for death and the natural life cycles of all living things.

• **When Someone Very Special Dies**  
  Marge Heegaard  
  A workbook to help children understand the concept of death and develop coping skills for life.

• **Tell Me, Papa**  
  Joy and Marvin Johnson  
  Explains what death is, what happens at a funeral, and how a funeral service is a way of saying goodbye.

• **Day of the Dead**  
  Tony Johnston  
  Describes a Mexican family preparing for and celebrating the Day of the Dead.

• **Lifetimes**  
  Bryan Mellonie  
  This book offers a nature-based approach to explaining death to children.

• **I Miss You: A first look at death**  
  Pat Thomas  
  This book helps kids understand that death is a natural complement to life, and that grief and a sense of loss are normal feelings for them to have following a loved one's death.

• **After the Funeral**  
  Jane Loretta Winsch  
  Discusses the various feelings accompanying the death of a loved one, including sadness, grief, and the fear of death itself.

• **A Bunch of Balloons: A Book & Workbook for Grieving Children**  
  Dorothy Ferguson Wofford  
  A book and workbook to help children understand loss.
Books for Children Ages 9-12:

Parent Loss

- **Daddy’s Climbing Tree**  
  C. S. Adler  
  Eleven-year-old Jessica can’t believe the reality of her father's death when he is killed in a hit-and-run accident.

- **Sunflowers and Rainbows for Tia: Saying goodbye to daddy**  
  Alesia Alexander  
  A young girl’s story of how she and her family express their feelings after their father dies.

- **Something Very Sorry**  
  Arno Bohlmeijer  
  The true story of a young girl’s struggle to cope with the aftermath of a car accident: her mother's death, the injuries of her father and sister, and her own grief, anger, and fear of the future.

- **Dad! Why’d You Leave Me?**  
  Dorothy Frost  
  Although ten-year-old Ronnie feels anger, sorrow, and confusion over the sudden death of his father, his life slowly calms as he experiences the support of his loving family and God.

Sibling Loss

- **A Birthday Present for Daniel: A child’s story of loss**  
  Juliet Cassuto Rothman  
  A young girl whose brother has died describes how she feels and tells about some of the things her family does to help them accept his death.

- **Home from Far**  
  Jean Little  
  When her twin brother is killed in an accident, Jenny, feeling that part of her is gone, is convinced that she will never heal from the loss.

General Grief & Loss

- **Thank You, Jackie Robinson**  
  Barbara Cohen  
  The story of the relationship between a 12-year-old boy and an elderly cook who suffers a fatal heart attack.
• **Flip-Flop Girl**  
  Katherine Paterson  
  A fictional story of a girl who moves in with her grandmother after her father dies.

• **The Kids’ Book about Death and Dying**  
  Eric Rofes  
  Fourteen children offer facts and advice to give young readers a better understanding of death.

• **Missing May**  
  Cynthia Rylant  
  A fictional story about Summer, who has lived with her Aunt May and Uncle Ob since she was six years old. After Aunt May dies, Summer is afraid something will happen to Uncle Ob. This is the story of how Summer and Uncle Ob find the strength to go on living.