

Additional Resources on Sibling Death and Childhood Traumatic Grief

Books for Children and Teens

This list includes some of the many books available for children and teens who are dealing with the loss of a sibling. The list is organized by age group.

Please note that all descriptions are based on information provided by the publisher, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the NCTSN.

Inclusion on this list is not an endorsement of any book by the NCTSN.

Preschool and Early Grades

Blanford, C., & Childers, P. (2008). *Something happened: A book for children and parents who have experienced pregnancy loss*. Western Springs, IL: Cathy Blanford Publishing. (Ages 2–6)

This paperback picture book is designed especially for children whose families have experienced a miscarriage, stillbirth, or neonatal death. The simple, clear story helps children to understand what has happened and to deal with their feelings and fears. It also reassures them that they are loved and secure.

Johnson, J., & Johnson, M. (2003). *Where's Jess? For children who have a brother or sister die*. Omaha, NE: Centering Corporation. (Ages 3–6)

This easy-to-understand picture book for children is considered a classic about sibling grief. The authors wrote it after losing their daughter Jess to sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

Keough, P. (2001). *Remembering our baby: A workbook for children whose brother or sister dies before birth*. Omaha, NE: Centering Corporation. (Ages 4–9)

This workbook begins with the family finding out that the expected baby has died before birth. The book offers activities that allow children to express and share their feelings and to remember the brother or sister they never had a chance to know.

Munoz-Kiehne, M., & Dietrich, G. (2000). *Since my brother died: Desde que murio mi hermano*. Omaha, NE: Centering Corporation. (Ages 4–8)

In this bilingual Spanish-English paperback book for children, the young narrator talks about what it was like to lose his brother and how he learned to keep memories in his heart. The book includes a bilingual section for caregivers and teachers.

Old, W. C., & Friedman, J. (1994). *Stacy had a little sister*. Morton Grove IL: Albert Whitman & Company. (Ages 4–9)

In this illustrated hardcover book, Stacy is so jealous of her new little sister that she sometimes wishes the baby would “go away.” When the baby dies of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), Stacy feels guilty and begins to fear that she too might die in her sleep. Her parents try to comfort and reassure her. The book includes information and resources about SIDS for parents.

Roper, J. (2001). *Dancing on the moon*. Cheverly, MD: SIDS Educational Services. (Ages 2–6)

This paperback tells the story of five-year-old Carly, who is jealous of her new baby brother Nigel. But when he dies of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), she feels confused and sad. She dreams that she flies to the moon to find him but he tells her that he will always be with her in her heart.

Schwiebert, P., & Bills, T. (2003). *We were gonna have a baby, but we had an angel instead*. Portland, OR: Grief Watch. (Ages 2–8)

This illustrated paperback helps children aged two to eight to confront and deal with their grief when a baby brother or sister dies before or shortly after birth. It includes practical suggestions for parents on how to help children cope and remember the baby who died.

Schwiebert, P., & Bills, T. (2007). *Someone came before you*. Portland, OR: Grief Watch. (Preschoolers)

This paperback picture book is for very young children through preschool age who were born after their parents lost a child born earlier. It describes the parents' grief and sadness and how they eventually decide they want to bring another child into their lives. The book offers ideas for keeping the deceased child's memory alive.

Temes, R., & Carlisle, K. (1992). *The empty place: A child's guide through grief*. Far Hills, NJ: New Horizon Press. (Ages 4–8)

In this paperback for children, a nine-year-old boy has trouble facing the reality of death and the pain of his loss when his beloved older sister dies. His babysitter, who had lost her own brother as a child, becomes an empathetic role model who helps him learn to cope and heal.

Yeomans, E., and Derosa, D. (2000). *Lost and found: Remembering a sister*. Omaha, NE: Centering Corporation. (Ages 5–9)

In this paperback for children, a young girl explores what it means to “lose” her older and only sister to death. She copes with her grief as she tries to “find” Paige, and she learns that she and her family will always keep Paige in their lives.

Middle Grades

Aiken, S. (2001). *Anna’s scrapbook: Journal of a sister’s love*. Omaha, NE: Centering Corporation. Available at <http://www.centering.org/index.php?page=book&id=102&pid=499> (Grades 6-8)

When Anna’s preschool sister Amelia dies from an accidental fall, Anna deals with her grief by creating a scrapbook in which she can keep her memories of Amelia. The rest of the book offers readers blank pages in which they can create their own diary and scrapbook.

Couloumbis, A. (2000). *Getting near to baby*. New York: Putnam. (Grades 6–8)

This novel tells the story of Willa Jo and Little Sister, whose family falls apart after their baby sister dies. When their mother sinks into a serious depression, the two older girls are sent to live with their strict Aunt Patty and their more sympathetic Uncle Hob. But no one understands what the girls are going through until the morning they climb up onto Aunt Patty’s roof and refuse to come down. During that long, sad day, the girls and their family realize the healing power of love in the face of grief and loss.

Gryte, M., & McClendon, K. (1999). *No new baby: For siblings who have a brother or sister die before birth*. Omaha, NE: Centering Corporation. (Ages 9–12)

This paperback is a first-person account about the different feelings children may have when a sibling dies before birth. It answers children’s most-asked questions and includes a section for parents and grandparents.

Jackson, A. (2004). *Can you hear me smiling? A child grieves a sister*. Washington, DC: Child & Family Press. (Grades 2–4)

This paperback recounts the illness and death of the author’s beloved older sister at age twelve. Both girls were adopted, and Jackson describes their sibling intimacy and the difficult and conflicting emotions she had to cope with following her sister’s death. The book includes a preface by the girls’ mother and an afterword by grief counselors that offers advice on how to help children cope with the anguish of losing a sibling.

Jampolsky, G. G. (Ed.). (1983). *Straight from the siblings: Another look at the rainbow*. Millbrae, CA: Celestial Arts. (Ages 9–12)

This collection of images and quotes from bereaved brothers and sisters is a memorial to love between siblings. The quotes and stories by the bereaved siblings who contributed to the book describe not only the sadness but also the difficult feelings—such as jealousy and guilt—which have troubled them.

Lowry, L. (2007). *A summer to die*. New York: Delacorte Books for Young Readers (ages 9-12).

A book crafted around sibling issues that will be familiar to many youngsters. But the two sisters have to deal with more than the usual squabbles when one becomes ill and the other copes with various emotions and her eventual grief.

Park, B. (1996). *Mick Harte was here*. New York: Scholastic. (Grades 6–9)

In this paperback eighth-grader Phoebe must come to terms with the death of her fun-loving brother Mick after he is killed in a bicycle accident at age twelve. The story leavens sorrow and grief with humor in capturing the pain that Phoebe and her family go through as they try to cope with their loss.

Rothman, J. C., & Gish, L. (2001). *A birthday present for Daniel: A child's story of loss*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books. (Ages 7–12)

In this paperback, young Ellen shares what her brother Daniel's death means to her, and especially how she and her parents resolve the painful issue of how to acknowledge his birthday each year. Highly recommended by grief counselors and support groups, the book helps parents support their children as family members explore different ways of grieving and communicating their feelings about their loss.

Samuels, V. R., & Clemmons, N. (2006). *Always my twin*. Victoria, BC: Trafford Publishing. (Ages 7–12)

This illustrated paperback tells the story of a young girl who loses her twin sister shortly after their birth. Based on the experience of the author, who lost a twin daughter in infancy, it is a story of heartache, healing, and hope. The book includes interactive pages that readers can respond to by using pictures and describing feelings. It also lists support resources for families that have experienced the death of a baby, including a twin or other multiple siblings.

Simon, J. (2002). *This book is for all kids, but especially my sister Libby. Libby died*. Kansas City, MO: Andrews McMeel Publishing. (Ages 9–12)

In this hardbound book, the author tells of the death of his younger sister Libby from a rare medical condition when she was 3½ years old. Jack was only five and, like other small children facing such a huge loss, he thought no one else could understand how he felt. However, the universality of his story captures the emotions of every grieving sibling.

Thomas, C. (2005). *Hugs & kisses from Brittany: A children's book about the death of another child, from a child's point of view*. Orchard Hill, GA: Brittany's Books. Available at <http://brittanysbooks.com/index.html> (Ages 8–12)

Shelby's discovery of the importance of hugs and kisses after her baby sister Brittany dies of a brain tumor opens the way for talks and sharing about grief, loss, hope, and healing.

High School and Beyond

Finneran, K. (2003). *The tender land: A family love story*. New York: Mariner Books.

This sensitive, restrained memoir searches for answers to the most painful of questions: Why would a bright, seemingly well-adjusted boy like the author's 15-year-old brother take his own life? The author frankly relates the profound effect her brother's suicide had on her family, including her own deeply personal struggles.

Linn-Gust, M. (2001). *Do they have bad days in heaven? Surviving the suicide loss of a sibling (2nd ed.)*. Albuquerque, NM: Chellehead Works. (Teens and adults)

This paperback recounts the author's personal experience of losing her younger sister to suicide. Considered the first comprehensive resource for sibling suicide survivors, it offers a journey of hope. It includes available research and practical advice for survivors and those who care about them and want to help them. The author is the creator of Sibling Survivors (www.siblingsurvivors.com).

Ruiz, R. A. (2001). *Coping with the death of a brother or sister*. New York, NY: Rosen Publishing Company. (Grades 7–12)

This hardbound book offers honest, descriptive narratives in which young survivors of sibling loss talk about how they handled their grief. When a brother or sister dies, everything changes for the survivors, even if the death occurred when the surviving child was very young. A chapter on finding additional help and resources speaks to youngsters who may be coping with feelings of anger or rage in the aftermath of their loss.