Transitions
Reading
Resource

200 picture books to support children facing change, loss and bereavement

Janice Morris and Richard Woolley
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The books included in this resource are those available on loan from the Sibthorp Library at Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln. When accessing the texts through other libraries, or making purchases, readers should be aware that, in some cases, other editions are available.

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Foreword

This project is the third in a series developed at Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln. The first, the Family Diversities Reading Resource, was published in January 2008 (www.bishopg.ac.uk/fdrr) and explores how families are represented in picture books for children. This was followed a year later by the Disability Reading Resource (www.bishopg.ac.uk/drr), which includes a range of picture books based around the social model of disability.

This third project set out to develop an annotated bibliography suitable for use by teachers, students and teacher educators. Whilst it is by no means exhaustive, and will be updated on an ongoing basis, the intention is to provide a range of age-appropriate texts that can be used by carers and parents, by schools, and in other child-care settings, to support children facing times of change. Set against the backdrop of the Every Child Matters agenda this project has sought to identify high quality texts which can be used to support children’s well-being.

A reading group began to meet formally in mid 2008, consisting of the Children’s Literature Librarian, undergraduate students and a member of academic staff. A collection of books was gathered from the Sibthorp Library at Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln and the range enlarged by further purchases. These resources were further developed during 2009-2010. The project group was self-selecting and all those interested in participating received books on a rotation basis, meeting when possible to share reviews and develop the format of the project. Their collaboration, colleagueship and reviews have contributed to the depth and range of this resource. Particular thanks must be expressed to Rebekah Georgiou and Megan Harrison for their contributions.

Thanks must also be expressed to the University College, to the Head of Library Services, Emma Sansby, and to all the staff in the Sibthorp Library for their support during this project.

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Introduction

Life is full of transitions. Whether it is moving home, changing school or job, developing new friendships, maturing and growing older, or coping with loss, we all face some degree of change on a regular basis. Some changes are more traumatic than others; some are long-term or permanent. For children this can cause anxiety, particularly as they may not have prior life experience on which to draw as they prepare for or experience change. At other times transition and change provide the opportunity for celebration: for the changing seasons, religious festivals or rites of passage.

Any significant change in life can bring a sense of loss and feelings of grief. Whilst some of these situations cannot be anticipated, some change can be predicted or expected. The move from one class or school to another provides one such example. Teachers can prepare children for such change and help them to face transition with confidence. Facing loss is a difficult area for many teachers and other members of the children's workforce to address with children. Yet children frequently face loss – the loss of a friend, the death of a pet, the separation of family members; loss and grief are implicit to the human condition and to life experience. This resource provides materials to help address issues of loss and grief in a range of situations.

Each entry in the annotated bibliography presents a children’s picture book that the reading group felt to be of a high quality both in terms of illustration and narrative. It must be remembered that picture books are not solely for young children. Certainly the books contained within this resource are appropriate for a range of children across the primary phase of education. Some texts will need to be used sensitively. In the annotated bibliography the reviewers note any cautions or concerns about the use of particular books. Whilst we feel it important to indicate these, we would also wish to affirm that, in our view, the positive qualities of each book outweigh any limitations. Where this was not the case, books were not selected for inclusion.

It is our hope that this resource will help those working with children to consider how to prepare for times of change. Often, the time when resources and support are needed the most is the time when we are least able to access them. An aim of this resource is to provide materials in advance of any need. Sometimes it is most appropriate to discuss change, loss or grief with children at a time when none of them are facing them in an immediate sense. Using children’s stories, role play, persona dolls and other discussion-supporting techniques we can help children to explore their views and understanding and to begin to develop their skills.
Index of Categories
(Hyperlinked to the categorised groups of books)

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I Want Two Birthdays!
Katie Morag and the Birthdays
Kipper's Birthday
Not Last Night but the Night Before
Surprise! Surprise!
To Mum with Love

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Notes and Additions

(Please use this space for your own notes and additions)
Annotated Bibliography

Albert 3
By Lani Yamamoto
Published by Frances Lincoln, London
2006
ISBN 9781845071356

There is a new baby in Albert’s family. When his mum is putting the baby to bed, Albert’s dinosaurs begin to fight, and he gains the attention he seeks. Mum tells him to “be a big boy now.”

He wonders how big he is. Ever since the baby was born people have been telling him what a big boy he is. He compares himself with things in his environment: the sky, flowers, ants... some of them in the distance (which makes for some humorous comparisons). He concludes that no matter how big or small he feels, he always feels like Albert.

This book would be very useful with young children who have a new sibling. Many will feel the responsibility of having to be “grown up” now that a younger child is in the family. The bold, colourful pen and ink drawings and the use of gentle humour make this book appealing and engaging.

Albert 3 by Lani Yamamoto. Copyright © Frances Lincoln (2006)

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Aldo
By John Burningham
Published by Red Fox, London
1991
ISBN 978009185017

A young girl spends a lot of time on her own. She has books and toys and meals out, sometimes, but she doesn’t have a special friend. Except, that is, for Aldo. He is a friend that only she can see and only she knows about. Whenever she needs help or consolation, Aldo is usually there.

This story focuses on imaginary friendship, a subject which is often undervalued or unacknowledged. The simple and atmospheric drawings show enjoyment, nervousness and anxiety. Overall, the story brings a sense of reassurance and may well resonate with the inner thoughts of some children.

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All My Friends
By Gill Lobel
Illustrated by Jo Blake
Published by Tamarind Books, London
2009
ISBN 9781870516822

Keisha is trying to avoid starting a new school. Her mum allows her a day off and she reminisces about her friends in her old school. Heading out into the garden, she discovers a tiny set of Russian dolls. The dolls provide company for her in the moments when she is alone in her new school. However, her special doll is lost and Keisha has to rely on the support of her whole class in searching for it. Finally, she is able to show and share the doll and to articulate her friendship with the other children.

Jo Blake’s bold and colourful illustrations add a warmth to this engaging story. This is an ideal book to use with younger children starting a new school and to use to consider how children support and befriend one another.

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Always Adam
By Sheldom Oberman
Illustrated by Ted Lewin
Published by Victor Gollancz, London
1995
ISBN 9780575059887

Adam was a Jewish boy in Russia. The opening of the book provides some background context to his life and the ways in which it might differ from those of the readers. When conflict comes, Adam’s parents make the decision to leave home for a safer place. They leave Adam’s grandfather behind – and his parting gift to Adam is a prayer shawl inherited from his own grandfather. Time passes quickly, and the story ends with Adam passing the prayer shawl to his own grandson.

This is an endearing story about change. It makes clear that whilst some things change, others remain constant. It starts out in the past and concludes in more recent times. The illustrations add a great deal of atmosphere and detail to the storyline, and emphasise the passing of time by moving from monochrome to colour; there is a strong sense of family tradition.

This book would be useful when discussing migration or refugees with children. It might also be useful when teaching history or religious education.

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Always My Brother
By Jean Reagan
Illustrated by Phyllis Pollema-Cahill
Published by Tilbury House, Gardiner, ME
2009
ISBN 9780884483137

This is a sensitive story about the death of a brother. Becky and John were the best of friends. They played together and enjoyed each others’ company. They cared for the family dog, Toby, together. John was a goalie and Becky also loved to play football; they practised together.

Then John died. Family and friends came to stay, and then the family was left to cope with their feelings of loss as day to day life settled back into a routine. At school, Becky’s friends were not sure how to respond. Becky gradually begins to enjoy life again, but feels guilt when she forgets to mourn for John. At the end of the book she decides to become a goalie.

This book explores the feelings of loss when a sibling dies. It shows some of the grieving process and how some healing takes place over time. The style of the illustrations and some of the vocabulary reflect its American origins.

Amazing You
By Gail Saltz
Illustrated by Lynne Avril Cravath
Published by Puffin Books, London
2008
ISBN 9780142410585

This book describes itself as a first guide to body awareness for preschoolers. It looks at the parts of the body that are clearly visible, and other parts that other people don’t usually see. It introduces the proper names for the genitals and shows how the body will change as one grows up. There is also an explanation that a man and a woman who love each other may decide to make a baby. There isn’t an indication that this process can take some time or that conception can occur without love. However, this provides a positive message which may be supportive and age-appropriate for the young audience.

The illustrations are simple and clear, they include children from different ethnic backgrounds. There is additional background information for adults. The book uses occasional Americanisms including spelling.
**Angelo**

By David Macaulay  
Published by Andersen Press, London  
2008  
ISBN 9781842708422

This is a beautiful book which contains a highly engaging story. Angelo is undertaking work to repair a church when he comes across an injured pigeon. He cares for her and restores her to health. The pigeon remembers him and visits – fanning him in the hot weather and bringing refreshment. She performs for him at mealtimes and becomes a companion. They go on visits together to the countryside. Eventually, Angelo realises that he is becoming older. He worries about what will happen to the pigeon when he dies. After his death, we learn that he has made provision for the pigeon (but we will not say how, so the ending is not spoiled).

The illustrations are very detailed and add a good deal of humour to the book. The vocabulary is relatively complex, and I would suggest most appropriate for children in upper KS2. The book covers issues of care, concern, compassion and companionship. It is an endearing (and even emotional) tale. The reviewers liked this book a great deal.

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**Ants in Your Pants**

By Julia Jarman  
Illustrated by Guy Parker-Rees  
Published by Orchard Books, London  
2010  
ISBN 9781408305249

Leopard is having a party, “But only for really cool dudes.” He doesn’t want Aardvark to be included, because he does not like to eat party food. Aardvark does hear about the party but does not feel upset by being excluded; he has plenty to do in life without worrying about being with the others. However, one creature is forgotten: Ant is not invited and he summons all his friends to gatecrash the event!

When the ants arrive and begin to irritate the other guests by playing *Ants in Your Pants*, Aardvark suddenly becomes a welcome friend, able to help to solve the problem. Leopard apologises for leaving him out and promises to invite Aardvark and his sister to the party every year.

This story provides the opportunity to consider why people may be excluded from friendship groups. It also shows how a character can become a part of a group by being helpful. Young children may find the content very amusing.

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This is the story of a kingdom long ago. It was not a happy place: even nature and the seasons were affected by the death of the Queen. Before her death she had asked her three daughters to choose a gift by which to remember her. The youngest, Serenity, chose a simple wooden box: inside it were seven magical things that the Queen had collected as a young girl. When the time comes for the King to choose his successor each daughter tries to impress him: two by building tall towers and Serenity by planting a garden.

The book includes detailed and intricate images which lend themselves to careful examination. It provides an opportunity to speak about the grieving process and how bereavement can affect people; the death of the Queen has affected the whole kingdom. In addition, the King’s preparations for handing over the kingdom (presumably following his own death) might prompt discussion.

April Underhill, Tooth Fairy
By Bob Graham
Published by Walker Books, London
2010
ISBN 9781406321555

April Underhill is on a mission: there is a boy’s tooth to collect. Although her parents suggest that she is still far too young, April prepares for the job. The wind takes her flying through the skies to the boy’s home, where she slips under the front door. Eventually the tooth is found, although April has to dive to the bottom of a glass of water to retrieve it.

This is an imaginative story about how a tooth fairy might live and work. It explores a ‘rite of passage’ that is important to most children: the loss of a tooth. Children will respond to this book in a range of ways depending on their age and maturity. However, it provides a lovely way of introducing them to the traditional idea of a lost tooth being taken mysteriously and money left in its place. The cartoon style of some of the illustrations will particularly appeal to some children.
Are You Sad, Little Bear? A book about learning to say goodbye
By Rachel Rivett
Illustrated by Tina Macnaughton
Published by Lion Children’s Books, Oxford
2009
ISBN 9780745961378

This would be a lovely book to read with a class, particularly of children aged 5 – 7.

Little Bear and his mother are sad because grandma has died. They decide to look for some answers together. As they head into the woodland they come across a variety of aspects of nature saying goodbye: those migrating for the winter; the trees losing their leaves; the stream evaporating to form clouds; the dormouse preparing to hibernate; and the sun setting in the sky. Even the moon is changing. Each one is positive about saying goodbye, as they are moving on to new or different things or looking forward to the changing seasons. As the story concludes, Little Bear’s sadness is replaced by a sense of wonder as his friends shine in his heart like the stars in the sky.

This is an accessible and life affirming tale, which provides much opportunity to talk about change and how it can be approached. The book does not really deal with death as an issue, although the death of grandma is its starting point. It is clear that a sense of her presence remains at the end, and this is taken to be another positive. The reference to the Great One (final page) may infer a belief in some kind of spiritual power. The illustrations are beautifully drawn and fill the whole of each double-page spread. They are of a very high quality and add a great deal of warmth to the book.

Arrival, The
By Shaun Tan
Published by Hodder Children’s Books, London
2006
ISBN 9780340969939

This complex, moving, and gritty graphic novel may be suitable for some children in upper Key Stage 2. It addresses migration, being a displaced person or a refugee.

The sepia-toned images are powerful and portray the love within a family, the pain of separation, loneliness, rejection and desolation. The end papers include the faces of many people, any one of whom could be the main character in the book. The message is that a wide variety of people from different backgrounds could be separated from their families. The question remains, why?

This book will stretch children’s powers of inference and deduction. It will stimulate a wide range of questions both about the flow of the story and the issues faced by the characters. Who or what might the monsters and shadows represent? Where do the threatening armies come from? Why does the main character have to leave his wife and child?
The conclusion to the books seems to be positive and involve a reunion. However, the main messages and content of the book are open for the reader to interpret. Children’s questions and imaginations will push the boundaries of this surreal world.

**Badger’s Parting Gifts**
By Susan Varley  
Published by Random Century, London  
1992  
ISBN 1856811646

Badger is growing old, and realises that he will soon die. He is sanguine about this, but concerned about how his friends will feel. He leaves a note for his friends and drifts into a sleep in which he enters into the “adventure” of death, experiencing freedom as he does. The next day his friends find the letter. The story outlines their feelings and their responses to his death. They share special memories together; his friendship had left each with a special gift. At the end, Mole thanks Badger for his friendship in the place where he had last seen him. And we are told that “somehow” Badger was able to hear Mole.

This book looks at how memories can be a special gift. It might prompt discussion about what happens when someone dies. The animal characters could help to distance this from the death of a human friend or relative (this might also make the story more suitable for younger readers). The reviewers wondered about Badger leaving a note: clearly he was aware that he was ageing and might die, but to do this on the night he died might raise questions or concerns for children. It also made the reviewers think about suicide notes. The illustrations are detailed and reminiscent of Beatrix Potter books.

**Before You Sleep…**
By Benji Bennett  
Illustrated by Roxanne Burchartz  
Published by Adam’s Printing Press, Dublin  
2008  
ISBN 9781906818005

This colourful, bright and cartoon-style book presents a parent’s message of love for their child. It explains that they want their child to know how special they are, before they drift off into sleep. It expresses the things the parent would like to do with and for their child and uses imaginative and appealing situations to achieve this. It suggests how lovely it would be to work and play together.

This affectionate story would be ideal to read at bedtime, particularly with younger children. As such it might be best to have available for loan in a school library. It provides an excellent means for a parent to remind their child how much they are loved – and to express this. It focuses on the preciousness of the present moment. It might also be a helpful book to use with children when a sibling dies, to consider.
special memories and hopes that will not now come to pass. The book was a winner in the Irish Book Awards. Adam’s Printing Press donates a share of its profits to children’s charities in memory of Adam. More information is available at www.adamscloud.com.

Beginnings and Endings with Lifetimes Inbetween
By Bryan Mellonie
Illustrated by Robert Ingpen
Published by Belitha Press, London
1997
ISBN 1855617609

This book explains that everything has a beginning and an end, and that inbetween is living. It looks at a range of aspects of nature and explains that living can last for different times according to circumstances. There is a nice use of a refrain to support the idea that all living things are involved in this process.

The book emphasises the special nature of life. Having looked at plants and animals the book finally turns to people. It explains that they can live for sixty or seventy years, but also that sometimes they can become ill or get hurt and die. Whatever happens, dying is “as much a part of living as being born”.

The illustrations reflect aspects of the text. The watercolour pictures might appear dated to some readers. The reviewers liked this book. It stresses the normality of death as a part of the lifecycle process. We would not use it with a bereaved child: it would be more appropriate when learning about life processes and considering the normality of death and how it occurs throughout nature.

Best Friends
Illustrated by Mark Chambers
Published by Tango Books, London
2008
ISBN 9781857077117

Best Friends: a pop-up book is a must to go on any child’s (or teacher’s) wish list! From the moment one picks it up it is engaging and the reader will want to explore all its interactive features.

In the book, a girl tells of the fun she has with her best friend. They embark on adventures to find dinosaurs, swashbuckling pirate escapades and take part in an Olympic sprint. Whether they are engaging in such imaginative play or just spending time together the story shows the
value of friendship. Incidental to the story is the fact that one of the two children uses a wheelchair.

Mark Chambers’ illustrations are both eye catching and appealing and the pop-up pages and interactive tabs and flaps mean that once you start to read you want to discover what happens next... not only what will happen in the story but also what will pop up on the next page, literally.

This book won the NASEN (National Association for Special Educational Needs) Book Award 2008 in the Best Children's Book category.

Illustration © 2008 by Mark Chambers from 'Best Friends', published by Tango Books.

**Billy and the Big New School**
By Laurence Anholt  
Illustrated by Catherine Anholt  
Published by Orchard Books, London  
1997  
ISBN 9781408302125

Billy is unsure about starting school. His nerves have made him lose his appetite. He talks to the birds about his feelings. He longs to be a bird so that life could be more simple. Then Billy notices that a new little bird is being picked on by the others. He takes this sparrow inside with his mum and they care for it. That night he dreams that he is the little bird and worries that he will be picked on at school.

When he heads to school he meets his new teacher, learns where to hang his coat and discovers the playhouse and the paints. Other children are also new. They tell the teacher about their pets. Billy tells about the little bird and receives applause from the teacher and his classmates. He feels very proud. That night he dreams about flying with the birds. When he asks a friend round for tea the little bird joins them for a picnic and we see how both Billy and the bird are now more confident.

This story provides a realistic insight into a child’s nervousness about starting school. The parallel with the little bird provides scope to discuss feelings and issues with children. The resolution is positive. The illustrations provide plenty of detail to augment and enhance the story.

**Blue**
By Philippe Dupasquier  
Published by Andersen Press, London  
2004  
ISBN 9781842704363

*Blue* is the story of one boy and his time with friends. As he visits each one, the initial excitement of a game or activity slowly turns to boredom. The friend then joins him in heading to the next friend’s house. By the time the four boys bump into Sabrina, the new girl, in the street they have exhausted all their usual activities.
Sabrina asks them to visit her house and together they lie on the roof terrace to look at the sky. As they concentrate, suddenly the world seems different.

This is a lovely story about how children interact with their friends, and how a new child brings a whole new perspective. It might support a child facing moving house or school. It might also help children to consider how sometimes imaginative games open up endless possibilities. The book is filled with collage-style drawings and abstract illustrations, which are highly engaging.

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**Brand New Baby**  
By Bob Graham  
Published by Walker Books, London  
1998  
ISBN 9780744561418

This story covers the preparation for the coming of a baby, it’s arrival and life afterwards. The family talk about possible names for the baby, the children feel it moving inside their mum, and later they are amazed by how tiny the baby is.

Once baby Walter is at home, the other children find that they receive less attention from their parents. It seems as though they have to be quiet when Walter can make as much noise as he wishes. The story concludes when mum and dad have more time to play with all the children again, and the family is gradually getting used to Walter.

This book shows how the whole family has to help when a new baby comes and that it’s about working together. There is a strong storyline, which includes a message to use with children. The bright and bold illustrations would appeal to children.

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**Bubble, The**  
By Josie Montano  
Illustrated by Matt Ottley  
Published by Lothian Books, South Melbourne, Victoria  
2004  
ISBN 9780734406842

Aditi is taken on a mysterious journey by a bubble. She is taken through wastelands of emptiness and sadness. The world seems eerie. She travels through a forest of serenity and deep within a sea of knowing. She passes through an atmosphere of dreams and comes to rest in a place of renewed awakenings.

This book is most appropriate for older children and will help in the consideration of a range of emotions. The account of Aditi’s experience will provoke much discussion and deep thinking. The illustrations provide heightened depth to the book and will, themselves, stimulate both reflection and introspection. It offers a stimulating means of considering some of the complexities of life’s journey.
**Butterfingers**
By Dennis Reader
Published by Collins, London
1991
ISBN 9780001913462

Benjamin Butters is a clumsy little boy, whose parents are expecting a baby. His parents are worried that he will be clumsy around the baby. He is sent to live with grandparents for a while, where he does a number of clumsy things.

But when baby Butters arrive, Benjamin holds her safe and is not clumsy around her.

This story is both humorous and entertaining - with a lovely, heart warming and endearing ending. The illustrations add significantly to the humour and fun contained in the book. It could be used with children of all ages and is appropriate for children who are nervous about having a new baby brother or sister.

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**Caterpillar Dreams**
By Jeanne Willis
Illustrated by Tony Ross
Published by Andersen Press, London
2010
ISBN 9781842709139

Two caterpillars dream about the life ahead of them. They enjoy the beauty of nature and look forward to the day when they can fly as butterflies. However, when the first emerges from her cocoon, she is alone. Her sister has developed into a moth. One flies by day and the other by night. In many senses both have attained their dream, but in different ways.

This story shows how dreams, hopes and aspirations can sometimes develop in unexpected ways. The soft illustrations provide a lovely accompaniment to the text. This book may be useful in helping children to think about changes in nature and also to consider how they would like their own lives to develop.

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**Changes**
By Anthony Browne
Published by Walker Books, London
1993
ISBN 0744530342

The book presents quite an unusual concept for a child to comprehend. The changing pictures - and idea that everything around him is turning into an animal - is a strange one. It is a good book to use when preparing a child for the fact that there is going to be change ahead, however, some children may become afraid of this. One issue raised by the reviewers is that the book gives the impression that the
baby comes from nowhere: there is no pre-warning for the child. In most cases this would not happen.

The changes in this story are not really negative but it gives a worrying initial impression for the child about their new sibling. There are numerous pictures of gorillas in the book, as Anthony Browne reminds us of his other work.

It is good how the boy is sitting in the dark and the baby arrives in the light; this gives the positive sense of new life and a brighter future. The reviewers felt that they would use the book but that it might benefit from adult support to explain the change and possible consequences.

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**Child’s Garden, A**  
By Michael Foreman  
Illustrated by Phyllis Pollema-Cahill  
Published by Walker Books, London  
2009  
ISBN 9781406312072

A boy lives in a world of ruin, ringed by a fence of barbed wire. He finds a small shoot growing in the rubble and nurtures it. Once established, the vine provides a home for butterflies and a pleasant environment in which children play. But one day, soldiers come and destroy the vine; the boy thinks his heart will break.

After a bitter winter he notices shoots sprouting on the other side of the barbed wire. A young girl comes and tends them. Then shoots also start to grow on his side of the fence and the two entwine. They gradually cover and hide the barbed wire. The boy longs for the day when the wire will be removed and he can visit the distant hills once more.

This powerful story of separation and segregation is filled with hope through the metaphor of the vine. It brings optimism – and colour – to the story. This book would provide a strong starting point for a discussion about separation, whether physical or emotional, disappointment and hope.

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**Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey, The**  
By Susan Wojciechowski  
Illustrated by P. J. Lynch  
Published by Walker Books, London  
1995  
ISBN 9780744540079

Jonathan Toomey keeps himself to himself; he is renowned in his local area for being a very grumpy man. When a widow and her son knock on his door one winter’s day they do not receive a warm welcome. The widow asks whether he could carve a set of nativity figures and also whether her son could watch this being done. Granting this request is the start of a Christmas miracle.
This story considers the situation in which one character has become hardened and isolated through grief at the loss of a wife and child. As a result of the repeated visits by the boy and his mother this changes. There is a moving end to the story.

The book is beautifully illustrated with detailed and atmospheric watercolour pictures. It provides an opportunity to consider the impact of grief and how friendship can bring new hope.

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**Cleversticks**

By Bernard Ashley
Illustrated by Derek Brazell
Published by Collins, London
1992
ISBN: 0006638554

Ling Sung has started school and has decided that he doesn’t like it because he cannot do the things that all the other children seem able to do. He feels like he does not fit in and wants to stay at home where he feels more included.

One day, Ling Sung discovers that he can do something that the other children cannot and something that even his teacher struggles with: he uses chopsticks to eat his food. This leads to greater acceptance from the other children – who want to learn to use chopsticks just like him. Ling Sung feels much better and decides that school is not such a bad place after all.

This story not only explores the themes of being different, accepted and included but also subtly includes families from different minority ethnic groups and religious backgrounds. The message in the book could be used with all ages but the text is perhaps most suitable for children in upper Key Stage 1. It could be used with individuals or with a whole class. It is a lovely book to use with children starting school to explore how difference and diversity are valued. This book is also included in the *Family Diversities Reading Resource.*

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**Colour of Home, The**

By Mary Hoffman
Illustrated by Karin Littlewood
Published by Frances Lincoln, London
2002
ISBN 9780711219403

Hussan joins a new school, having come from Somalia. He paints a picture of his former home, but then develops the picture to show the devastation he has witnessed. Fela comes to translate and to speak to Hassan and his teacher about the picture. There is a very positive ending – despite the trauma the child has faced.
The story addresses some of the issues faced by children who enter school from another location or cultural setting and who have a very limited knowledge of English. Hussan does not feel comfortable in his new surroundings; he knows few words and does not eat because he does not recognise the food. His story of being a refugee is engaging and develops in a way that gradually reveals certain issues.

This is a moving story suitable for children in Key Stage 2. The illustrations are appealing and age appropriate. It could be used to address stereotypes, to explore the experience of a refugee child, or to develop discussion about events in the news. It would also be useful for children who start school later than their peers. This book is also included in the Family Diversities Reading Resource.


Come Back Grandma
By Sue Limb
Illustrated by Claudio Munoz
Published by Bodley Head, London
1993
ISBN 0370318072

The book includes lovely, detailed and humorous illustrations, accompanied by brief text on each page.

Bessie thinks of her family and friends and how she loves them all – although they are mostly too busy or annoying to spend much time with. However, Grandma always has time for her and they enjoy special times together.

This book addresses some age stereotypes through the activities that Grandma enjoys. Her death is sudden and comes as a surprise part way through the book. We see Bessie at the graveside without any preparation or build up to this. Her mum explains that Grandma has gone to heaven; her father says she is now a part of nature; Krishna next door suggests that she has been reincarnated. When Bessie has her own daughter she gradually realises how like Grandma the little girl is. This raises some interesting questions in itself “Because, suddenly, it was as if Grandma had never been away.”

This book would prompt discussion about children’s views on life after death. It will need to be used sensitively with children, and may cause doubt in some children’s minds. It might be best used when the children are not facing bereavement. The illustrations add a great deal of atmosphere to the story. The reviewers’ only
concern was that the death comes suddenly and the story jumps from Grandma being well and active to her graveside in the space of a page turn.

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**Conquerers, The**  
By David McKee  
Published by Andersen Press, London  
2004  
ISBN 9781842703304

Once, there was a large country ruled by a general. From time to time the people would attack another country, just for their own good. Whilst those attached sometimes resisted, they were always conquered. Eventually there was just one country left to conquer: it had no army and no general, it offered no resistance when attacked. With little to do, soon the soldiers began to befriend the local population and to join in with day to day activities. Furious, the general sent them home and replaced them, only for the same thing to happen again. Eventually only a small army was needed, and even it assimilated into the life of the local population.

This story highlights that sometimes non-violence can be more powerful than aggression. It might provide a means of helping children to consider alternative ways of ending arguments and disputes. The twist in the tale provides ample opportunity to delve further into the implications of the story. It begs the question, “Who conquered whom?”

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**Daft Bat**  
By Jeanne Willis  
Illustrated by Tony Ross  
Published by Andersen Press, London  
2006  
ISBN 1842704761

This book tells the story of how all the wild, young animals think that Bat is mad – as they believe she gets everything the wrong way round. Bat talks about using an umbrella to keep her feet dry and notes that if the river rises she will get her ears wet! The animals tell the Wise Owl that Bat is mad and could be dangerous. However, Wise Owl soon has the animals hanging upside down from a tree so they can see Bat’s point of view!

This is a wonderful book. Its message of trying to look at other people’s points of view, which may make you think differently, is clear and superbly demonstrated. There are parts where you need to rotate the book to read the text (“upside down”) which children (and adults) will love.

The illustrations are lovely - with some super expressions on the faces of the animals. The reviewers thoroughly enjoyed reading this book.

The font size of the text aims it at children in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2, but it could be used throughout the primary phase as an effective starting point for
discussions on difference, inclusion and acceptance. This book is also included in the *Family Diversities Reading Resource.*

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### Dragon Kite, The

By Kenneth Steven  
Illustrated by Karin Littlewood  
Published by Tamarind Books, Northwood  
2003  
ISBN 9781870516846

Chang lived in a village in China many years ago. He would sit with his father making kites to sell in the town, whilst many of the other boys would play rough and noisy games. His father promises to make him the best dragon kite in the whole world.

However, when Chang takes the kite to try flying it, it blows away. He has to venture out to the volcano to search for the kite and there he discovers a real dragon. Far from being fierce it is lonely and begs Chang to be his friend. The story concludes with the villagers accepting the dragon during New Year celebrations.

This book is suitable for children in Key Stage 2. It includes information about Chinese New Year and kites. It provides an interesting fictional account of a boy’s interest in both kites and dragons, which links to the more factual detail about how new year is celebrated. It would also support a consideration of the transition from isolation and loneliness to acceptance and friendship and how we can support others in this.

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### Drop Dead

By Babette Cole  
Published by Jonathan Cape, London  
1996  
ISBN 0224045512

In this book, children question their grandparents: their grandparents reflect on their lives – from early childhood onwards. The drawings are amusing and detailed.

It is presented in Babette Cole’s signature style. It pushes the boundaries a little: using the words poo and pee, which will amuse children; and addressing “falling in love with the wrong person” and experimenting with smoking as a teenager. It challenges stereotypes about older people by showing they have had an exciting life along the way... and still do! And they will drop dead like everyone else at the end!

It questions what will happen after death and suggests possibilities. It might provide an amusing (and possibly irreverent) exploration of life and death which can engage older readers. Reviewers suggested that this book needed to be used with caution because of some of the themes. Readers will certainly ponder upon the inclusion of chickens at the end!
Ed Loves Sarah Loves Tim
By Edith Schreiber-Wicke
Illustrated by Carola Holland
Published by Cat’s Whiskers, London
2000
ISBN 9781903012154

Every time Sarah looks at Ed, he feels strange. He becomes enthusiastic about going to school. And then, Sarah asks him to be her boyfriend! All is well in the world. Then suddenly, things start to go wrong: on the day that he is late for school he finds that Sarah is sitting with Tim. There seems to be no room for Ed. He becomes miserable and feels like he is friendless. One day, when he is late for school again, the strange feeling returns when he meets Hannah.

This book explores the making and breaking of friendships. Some readers may feel that the “romantic” element of the story is inappropriate for younger children, but others will recognise the innocent boyfriend/girlfriend friendships which some children experience.

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Eddie’s Kitchen: and how to make good things to eat
By Sarah Garland
Published by Frances Lincoln, London
2007
ISBN 9781845075880

Mum and Eddie have forgotten that it is Grandad’s birthday. He telephones to remind them, and to say that he is coming for tea. Mum is busy and so Eddie embarks upon the task of making the bread dough, preparing sauce for the spaghetti and making baked apples. Mum is distracted by visitors at every turn, and so Eddie keeps on organising things with the support of his sister. Finally, they work together to bring all parts of the birthday meal together.

At the end of the book are the recipes to make the birthday meal organised by Eddie. Whilst the book infers that Eddie prepared the meal fairly independently, children will need adult support in order to access the text of the recipes and to prepare the meal safely with supervision.

This is a lovely story about the special relationships between three generations. The colourfully painted illustrations give the characters warmth and complement the text effectively.

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Ella lives with her mum in a flat in the big city. Mum has a special friend called Joe. He gets on very well with Ella, takes her to the park and plays games with her. However, sometimes she disagrees with him, and sometimes there is no room on the sofa for her when he and mum sit together.

When Ella and her mum come to move in with Joe, Ella’s doll is lost – taken by a dog which runs away. Joe makes chase and all ends happily: Ella settles happily with Joe and mum in the new house.

This story might help children consider their emotions when moving house or gaining a step-parent. Although Ella’s worries are resolved very easily, the story still provides an example of a positive experience which might give some support to other children.

Elmer, the patchwork elephant, discovers all the birds hiding in a cave. They are avoiding the bully bird. He offers to speak up on their behalf, and when the response is not positive he calls on all the other animals to help him to deal with the situation. When he presents the bully bird with the threat of the “really big bird” and all the animals proclaim its arrival, the bully flies away. The really big bird proves to be all the small birds flying in formation.

The Elmer stories are always endearing and a favourite with young children. Here the message is that there is strength in unity and than friends can support one another when a bully strikes. The story would benefit from adult guidance when being discussed with children, who might consider how to stand up to a bully together. Adults may wish to question this as a strategy.
Emma’s grandmother is ill and in hospital. As she hears the news, Emma realises that this must be serious. She is sad because she will miss Grandma reading with her at school and caring for her at home time. She is distracted throughout the day and one mishap leads to another. There is a question on her mind, but she cannot bring herself to ask it.

Finally, she is able to visit the hospital. Grandma can sense that Emma has a question on her mind, and it is blurted out. Emma’s mind is set at rest. The positive end to the story is that Grandma recovers and feels optimistic about the future.

This is a super book which shows how questions prey on children’s minds and suggests that sometimes it is better to ask than to let worries fester. It is also reassuring as it demonstrates that a family member who is hospitalised can recover (a useful contrast with some of the books on bereavement in this collection). The bright illustrations make the book very attractive and give a positive feel, whilst also showing the range of emotions experienced by each of the characters as the story progresses.

First Day of School, The
By Toby Forward
Illustrated by Colin Thompson
Published by Doubleday, London
2004
ISBN 0385601921

This is a positive book which presents the idea that children enjoy going to school. It suggests the sense that children are not alone when they go to school: they are going through an experience shared with their peers. The focus on team work also helps to give children an appreciation of companionship at school.

The illustrations are engaging - with plenty of detail. The use of one large picture surrounded by smaller ones provides plenty of material for discussion.

Writing from a child’s perspective may help some children who are apprehensive about starting school. It may also give peace of mind to parents and carers as it will help them to appreciate that children do enjoy
school once they get there. It also allows parents to see that although they may think about their children all the time they aren't totally forgotten by their child(ren) either.

The reviewers would definitely read this book with a child and also recommend it for parents and carers; it shows both sides of the starting-school experience really well.

*The First Day of School* used by permission of The Random House Group Ltd.

**First the Egg**
By Laura Vaccaro Seeger
Published by Frances Lincoln, London
2009
ISBN 9781845079697

This book outlines the progression form egg to chicken, tadpole to frog and seed to flower. Then it progresses to consider the move from word to story and paint to picture. Finally, it introduces the progression from chicken to egg!

This apparently simple book introduces some profound ideas. Beautifully presented, with an ingenious use of cut-out sections to link aspects of progression, it raises questions about both the life-cycle and the process of creativity.

This book works on a range of levels and is accessible to all ages.

**Fly, The**
By Peter Horacek
Published by Walker Books, London
2010
ISBN 9781406313925

People don't like the fly being in their house. They try to swat and squish it. The fly avoids all threats and undertakes exercise by flying around the house: it enjoys a snack, annoys some animals, nearly gets eaten by a frog and participates in a range of other adventures.

This amusing book takes a simple idea and uses it to help the reader think about the life of an insect. It may help children to question why some creatures are easily killed, without much thought. The illustrations suggest that this book is aimed particularly at younger children, and groups of children will enjoy having the story shared with them, even if they dislike the main character!
**Four Feet, Two Sandals**
By Karen Lynn Williams and Khadra Mohammed
Illustrated by Doug Chayka
Published by Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, Cambridge
2007
ISBN 9780802852960

Lina lives in a refugee camp in Pakistan, having left her home in Afghanistan. She has not had any shoes for two years, but when an aid truck brings clothing to the camp she finds one sandal; another girl finds the other. Over time they become friends and share the pair of sandals. When Lina has the opportunity to travel to America she decides to give the sandals to her friend. However, they keep one each – to remember each other.

This is a tender story which uses the focus of the sandals to maintain a hopeful and accessible storyline, which is intertwined with information about the children’s bereavements and other difficult aspects of their lives. This provides an effective means of introducing issues about refugees to children in an age-appropriate way which handles the issues with sensitivity.

At the end of the book is information about refugees, which provides a wider context for the story.

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**Fred**
By Posy Simmonds
Published by Red Fox, London
1987
ISBN 0099264129

Following his death, Sophie and Nick discover that their pet cat, Fred, had secretly been leading a double life. The story starts by remembering the parts of his life known to them. They contemplate what to write on his headstone, after he is buried in their garden. But during the night they discover a whole host of cats have arrived to mark Fred’s passing with a ceremony of their own. It turns out that Fred has been famous... for whilst he slept all day, by night he was an acclaimed entertainer!

The book is beautifully illustrated with detailed cartoon-style drawings. It presents possibilities for discussing the death of a pet and for sharing memories. It also addresses death in an appropriately humorous and imaginative way. It suggests that there is more to people’s lives (and pet’s lives) than we know.

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This story is effective in highlighting family diversity and gives the reader an insight into a Jewish family as a girl and her Nana prepare to celebrate the Sabbath. This is the main strength of the book as it concentrates on not just a family, but also on the family’s religious practices.

The illustrations are excellent in capturing the family’s love for each other and also their religious beliefs. The last illustration and the one on the cover of the book itself are extremely imaginative and show the family through a window: the reader gains insight by looking in on family life. The illustrations are a further strength in highlighting family diversity. There are certain spelling variations due to its American origin. The Americanisms, ‘gray’ and ‘favorite’ may need some explanation in terms of spelling, but mirror the English meaning. Therefore, children would hopefully understand them in the context of the story.

This book would be an excellent resource for the classroom to provide a point of discussion about different families and their religious beliefs and practices. It is also included in the *Family Diversities Reading Resource* published by Bishop Grosseteste University College.

Mildred and Ed have been friends for years. One day she suggests trying something different: they could write poetry together. He agrees and Ed is the hit of the poetry class. When he becomes obsessed with sharing poems, even in the aisle at the supermarket, Mildred tries to sneak away and feels embarrassed.

Mildred dreams of being an ice skater, and on waking decides to head to the rink. Meanwhile, time passes and Ed misses Mildred. They live separate lives.

Mildred’s new friend has taught her to ice skate, but when she tries to take advantage of the friendship Mildred is having none of it. She heads home... and realises how much she misses Ed’s special baking. She sees Ed on the lake – trying to work out how to skate. When she looks properly she sees that he has carved out her name in the ice. They are reunited.
This tale of mice shows how, sometimes, friendships can be embarrassing but still worth hanging on to. It also shows how a new friend might not always make the best friend.

Friends
By Kathryn Cave
Illustrated by Nick Maland
Published by Hodder Children’s Books, London
2004
ISBN 9780340716083

This is an extremely positive book which portrays the mutual care involved in friendship. It begins with couplets of ideas – when I was in need, you were there for me. It then addresses friends falling out and making up, before moving on to show how I also care for you.

The bold illustrations set the mood for each emotion that is explored. This would be an ideal book to use with younger children when considering what friendship and friends mean to us.

Frog and the Stranger
By Max Velthuijs
Published by Andersen Press, London
1993
ISBN 9780862644314

When a stranger moves into the wood, Frog’s friends are suspicious. Frog, however, is not so sure. He sees the rat cooking and reports back that he looks “like a nice fellow.” The others remain sceptical. Frog decides to visit Rat, it turns out that he is bilingual and has travelled the world. The other animals continue to regard Rat as dirty, as a thief and blame him for everything.

Rat helps when Pig’s house burns down, he saves Hare from drowning and soon the animals decide that Rat can stay. When Rat decides that it is time to move on again, the animals know that they will miss him.

This is a story about stereotyping people, about the distrust shown to some people when they are new in an area and about how barriers can be broken down. It could be applied to a range of situations and needs. It is a good example of how being open to new people, or different people, can lead to friendship.
**Gervelie’s Journey**  
By Anthony Robinson and Annemarie Young  
Illustrated by June Allan  
Published by Frances Lincoln, London  
2008  
ISBN 9781845076528

This is the true story of Gervelie, born in the Republic of Congo in 1995. In her own words she retells the story of how she and her family fled Brazzaville in 1997 when the trouble started. The story is structured in sections, showing how Gervelie had to move to stay with different relatives in order to be safe. However, her new home with grandma in the Ivory Coast also became unsafe when war broke out in 2001. Eventually she reaches England with her dad. Gervelie outlines some of the immigration process and the feeling of helplessness. The book concludes with Gervelie feeling settled and looking to the future.

This is an engaging and powerful personal account of one child’s experience. It provides insights into some of the situations faced by refugee children and their families, including separation, insecurity and powerlessness. The colourful and evocative illustrations, accompanied by photographs, add extra realism to the story. At the back of the book is some additional information about the situation in the Congo.

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**Ginger**  
By Charlotte Voake  
Published by Walker Books, London  
1997  
ISBN 9780744549348

Ginger is a happy and contented cat. He lives with a little girl who takes great care of him. But one day she brings him a new friend – a tiny kitten. It follows Ginger everywhere, eats his food and never gives a moment’s peace. Ginger decides to leave home. The kitten begins to cause havoc in the home, and soon the little girl notices – and realises that Ginger is not at home.

After a search, Ginger is found and returned home. The kitten is given its own box to sleep in and its own plate to eat from. The story ends with Ginger and the kitten being friends... most of the time.

This story might be useful when considering how a new friend can make a difference within a group. It might also be applied to the changes experienced when a new baby comes into the family. It could be applied to issues of sharing, fairness and allowing one another some time and space to be independent.

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This is one of the series of books about Mog by Judith Kerr.

When Mog dies, Mr and Mrs Thomas and the children are understandably upset. The children remember special times with Mog, and Mog herself – watching over the family - interjects as the story develops. Then, one day, Mrs Thomas arrives with a new and very fearful kitten. The story progresses with a range of antics as the new arrival settles into its new home, with the help of the presence of Mog.

This is an amusing and engaging story which addresses the death of a pet in a supportive manner. The idea that Mog is somehow able to communicate with the new kitten is interesting and may lead to some discussion by older children.

The text makes some lovely use of repetition, which will make this a super book to read aloud. The illustrations are bright and attractive.

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Pappa spends time with his grandsons during their holiday stay with him. Following their visit he dies and the children are sad as they see things around his home that make them think of him. Although not shown in the illustrations, the children attend the funeral and put flowers on the grave.

This book takes on a more serious tone than some of the others in this resource. The detailed pencil drawings are intricate and set the mood for much of the book. The text is written in an interesting style using short, descriptive sentences which are quite poetic. I might use this book with children, but would choose the circumstances carefully. It could provide a way of highlighting how memories are special following a bereavement.

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This story is told by a young boy, who remembers the special times he shared as a child with his grandfather. Granddad explains how elements from nature pray and this is a main theme of the book. When his grandfather dies, the boy finds it hard to pray and wonders whether the earth really does pray. There is a strong sense of loss and loneliness at this point in the book. Later, as he grows older, the boy hears the earth praying in the sound of the breeze, the flowing of a stream and the song of a robin. He feels that his grandfather’s ideas have been affirmed and feels connected to him once again.

The book includes beautiful illustrations based around nature. This book examines loss in a powerful and compelling manner; it explores ideas of questioning and doubt. Ultimately it provides an example of a positive resolution to grief. It may be appropriate for use with older readers.
shared and in terms of being a memorial.

The book is very colourful, which reinforces the positive message of the story. It enables the consideration of the loss of a loved one in a gentle and sensitive manner.

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**Grandma’s Bill**

By Martin Waddell
Illustrated by Jane Johnson
Published by Simon and Schuster, Hemel Hempsted
1990
ISBN 0750002964

Bill visits his Gran’ every Thursday for tea. He discovers that his grandfather was also called Bill and they look at old photographs together. Grandma outlines Bill’s life, from early childhood to their marriage, the birth of little Bill’s dad and later of Bill himself.

This is a simple story about a Grandmother sharing memories with her grandson. It addresses how the family grew over time, introduces different relationships and includes the death of older Bill. Grandma has a sense of having two Bills – one in her grandson and the other in her memories.

The illustrations are detailed, adding a great deal of content to the memories briefly recounted by Grandma. They show the family at different points over past decades. They include changing fashions and show the characters ageing.

This book would be useful when considering family trees and developing an understanding that families change over time. It gives a sense of continuity through the generations.

**Grandpa’s Boat**

By Michael Catchpool
Illustrated by Sophy Williams
Published by Andersen Press, London
2008
ISBN 9781842706909

Grandpa’s boat is his pride and joy. He loves sailing and maintaining it. In many senses, his love of the boat is a mirror of – or a metaphor for - his love for his wife. His granddaughter loves to be on the boat – we see her experiencing this from being a young child. When granddad falls ill he looks forward to one last journey on the boat, but it is not to be. Following his death, the boat falls into disrepair.

Eventually dad decides to repair the boat and the family is able to enjoy sailing once again and to share special memories of grandpa. The disrepair of the boat may
reflect their sense of grief and loss and its repair how they come to deal with this over time – finding a new sense of freedom and celebrating memories. Rebuilding may act as a metaphor for their renewed optimism.

The illustrations are beautiful. They are detailed and large, providing a helpful accompaniment to the storyline (and at times a sense of action/movement).

**Grandpa’s Slideshow**
By Deborah Gould
Illustrated by Cheryl Harness
Published by Puffin Books, London
1990
ISBN 0140508716

The title of this book indicates that its focus is rather dated. The reviewers did wonder whether grandparents still show slides to their families in the age of digital photography.

Grandpa shares his slides with the family. He has sets on a variety of topics. Sam particularly likes seeing pictures of people when they were younger. On one visit, Grandpa is not present as he is ill in hospital. There is a clear explanation of this; he dies during the night. The children are shown giving different responses to his death: Sam cuddles his mother, whilst Douglas “acted silly”. This might be a useful resource for discussing how we respond to death and for gaining an understanding that different people react differently (according to age and maturity).

The story explains how mum and grandma tell friends and relatives about the death and shows the funeral and the wake. Dad attends the funeral and it appears that either he and mum have separated; he works away; or perhaps he just had to stay at home whilst the other members of the family stayed at grandma’s house. The story concludes with a slide show and the chance to share memories. Sam dreams about grandpa that night – which brings reassurance.

The illustrations appeared a little “American”. The strength of the story outweighs other “limitations”. There is a good deal of text in this book, which might make it most appropriate for sharing with a class or for an independent reader.

**Granpa**
By John Burningham
Published by Penguin, London
1988
ISBN 0140508414

This book is made up of a series of ideas about two generations. At times this seems like it might be a conversation between Grandpa and a little girl. The text is in plain and italic fonts, which again suggests some kind of dialogue. It seems to be a collection of ideas, rather than a story. The book includes intricate pencil drawings
with little text on each page. It starts with an intriguing question to engage the reader and allows the reader to develop their own response.

At the end of the book we see the girl presented in an “empty” monochrome drawing along with an empty green chair. It would appear that Grandpa has died. The final picture is of a girl with a pram, perhaps showing how life continues and renews itself.

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**Hair in Funny Places**  
By Babette Cole  
Published by Red Fox, London  
1999  
ISBN 9780099266266

Ted has seen children growing up and explains how Mr and Mrs Hormone are in charge of the process. He explains that mum and dad both experienced the Hormones turning them into adults. He explains that hair will begin to appear in “funny places”, introduces menstruation, how boys’ voices begin to change, spots might appear and semen be produced.

The book is useful for introducing information to children, although they will need other sources and conversations in order to add detail. It provides an hilarious starting point to support children’s questions and give background information. It uses the context of how a child’s parents met to create the opportunity to introduce issues, although not all children will have this family background on which to draw.

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**Hanukkah Lights**  
By Dian G Smith  
Illustrated by JoAnn Kitchel  
Published by Chronicle Books, San Francisco, CA  
2001  
ISBN 9780811832571

This book is prefaced with some historical information about the Jewish festival of Hannukah. It then outlines the practice of lighting candles during the festival and includes a rhyme that runs across the foot of each page, explaining that an additional candle is lit each day. The illustrations are enhanced by the foil “flames” on the candles. There is an explanation of gift giving and seasonal food as well as instructions on how to play Driedel.

This book provides a good introduction to Hannukah. It appears a little dated in terms of presentation, but the information remains useful.

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Happy Birthday Jamela!
By Niki Daly
Published by Frances Lincoln, London
2006
ISBN 9781845074029

Jamela is looking forward to her birthday. She goes shopping for a new dress and shoes for her party. When she cannot have the sparkly shoes she wants, and has to have sensible shoes for school, Jamela is disheartened. However, once back at home she adds bead and glitter to the shoes. Her mother and grandmother are furious. When a neighbour comments on the shoes Jamela ends up helping her to decorate other pairs to sell at the market. She makes enough money to buy more shoes for school. At her birthday party she finds that she has gifts of both new school shoes and sparkly princess shoes.

Not only does this book explore birthday hopes and show a party, it also provides the opportunity to consider disappointment and to explore appropriate and responsible behaviour. The book has a positive ending and the consequences of Jamela’s actions are not negative.

Harris Finds His Feet
By Christine Rayner
Published by Little Tiger Press, London
2008
ISBN 9781845065898

Harris is a very small hare... with very big feet. He talks to his grandfather about why this might be and begins to learn why hares are so equipped.

This lovely tale of a young hare learning from his grand parent is heart warming. It concludes with an acknowledgement that granddad is growing old, and that Harris needs to set out to explore the world on his own. It gives a lovely consideration of how different generations can relate to one another and shows Harris growing to take on more responsibility and independence. The painted illustrations are distinctive. (Winner of the Kate Greenaway Medal 2009).

Harry & Hopper
By Margaret Wild
Illustrated by Freya Blackwood
Published by Scholastic, London
2009
ISBN 9781407111391

Harry and his dog Hopper have been inseparable ever since Hopper was a puppy. Then, one afternoon, Harry returns from school to find that Hopper is not waiting by the gate. Dad has to break the news that Hopper was involved in an accident and has died. Harry does not want to say goodbye to Hopper before Dad buries him.
When Hopper returns to Harry in his dreams he is able to enjoy special time with his 
friend, although as each day passes his presence fades. Eventually Harry is able to say 
goodbye.

This is a tender story of the shock of grief and the ways in which grieving can occur. 
It shows that it is natural to experience sadness, illustrates the grieving process and 
affirms that memories and dreams are precious. It also suggests that it is ok for 
memories and grief to subside over time.

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Have You Seen Who’s Just Moved in Next Door to Us?
By Colin McNaughton
Published by Walker Books, London
1991
ISBN 9780744519495

This street must include the most unusual inhabitants one could possible come 
across... King Kong, Hells Angels, a shop selling wigs for pigs, a sculptor, piranhas, a 
super hero, ghosts and aliens. But how will they react when they see who has moved in next door to them?

In a fold-out section at the end of the book the whole community comes together to point and stare... at a remarkably “normal” looking family of two adults, two children and a couple of cats.

This book would encourage reflection on who makes up a local community. It might also provide amusing support for a child moving house. The illustrations provide a great deal to explore, challenge gender stereotypes and add a voice to the characters. The text rhymes which adds to the sense of fun and the humour of the narrative.

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Heart and the Bottle, The
By Oliver Jeffers
Published by Harper Collins Children’s Books
2010
ISBN 9780007182305

This is a very moving story of a girl who loves life and finds excitement in everything. Then, one day, she faces the loss of a special person in her life (who, from the illustrations, may be her grandfather). Feeling unsure of the situation, she puts her heart in a safe place. However, over time she finds that things are not the same as before. Her joy for life has waned. She longs for her former feelings to return, and a chance meeting provides a moment of friendship to make this happen.

This is a powerful and thought-provoking story about grief and grieving. The illustrations vary between detailed full page scenes and others that focus solely on the girl. It provides a stimulus to help us consider with children how we feel in times
of loss, and how sometimes our feelings can be numbed. There is an uplifting ending which shows that, with a little help, the sense of loss can abate with time.

**Heaven**

By Nicholas Allan  
Published by Hutchinson, London  
1996  
ISBN 9780091765378

Early one morning, Lily finds Dill the dog packing his suitcase. He explains that he is going “up there”, by which he means he is going to heaven.

Lily discusses this with Dill: he has to go alone – he has been invited and is expected. Then the angels arrive to take Dill. The parting conversation concerns the nature of heaven: the girl and the dog have very different thoughts about what it will be like. She reminds Dill that he has not always been good – so heaven might not be his destination!

Following Dill’s death, Lily is lonely and misses him. One day she meets a stray puppy and takes it home. She gives it all the things that Dill was hoping for in heaven.

This is a fascinating book, suitable for older children. The illustrations add some humour and show the relationship between Lily and Dill very well. It would be useful when discussing the death of a pet with a child, but might be more useful as a stimulus when considering death and what happens afterwards in a wider sense. It raises the issue of how some people may be aware that they are going to die and how they prepare for this.

**Hello! Is that Grandma?**

By Ian Whybrow  
Illustrated by Deborah Allwright  
Published by Alison Green Books, London  
2007  
ISBN 9780439944397

When Teddy tries to use the ‘phone he dials a range of wrong numbers. He speaks to Sheep and Duck, to Cow and Crocodile. Then Grandma rings and invites him to visit for some birthday tea with some special friends.

This rhyming book is very engaging and colourful and uses lift-up flaps to add an air of mystery to the story. It provides a lovely tale of Grandma’s birthday, and the party to which only friends are invited. Younger children will enjoy Teddy’s mistakes and the use of lift-up flaps.
Siobhan lives in Dublin with her father. Her mother had died when she was three years of age and she has no other family members. Now, at the age of ten, she wonders what her mother looked like. She has found some of her possessions around the house, but no photograph. She has various memories of her mother, but cannot recall her mother’s face.

One day she meets a woman in the park who listens to her memories and her concerns. She tells Siobhan to look in the mirror, to see how her mother looked when she was young and how she looked as she got older. The book closes when she is a mother herself, and her father shares his memories for the first time.

This is an engaging story, tinged with humour. It shows memories are special but also sometimes incomplete. Importantly it describes how some people, here the father, do not always share their memories or speak about those who have died. It also raises the prospect of becoming like one’s own parent as one ages.

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Sieta has many sad pictures inside her head. She has had to move from her own home, following the death of her parents, to join her aunty in the place that is “home now”. This place is full of people building new things and new lives.

She shares her memories – of a beautiful garden, of her mother and father, of her mother becoming ill and of her aunty coming to take her home. Her new home is a hive of activity and the people are friendly. One day, her teacher takes the class to an elephant park where she meets the orphan elephants. The smallest, Satara, makes a connection with Sieta and provides a new and positive memory. Later she sees her new home in a fresh way and is invited to play by other children. On returning home, her aunty is planting geraniums – just like the ones that were in her special memory of her old home. This is a lovely way to conclude the story and bring elements together.

The illustrations add significantly to the power of the story and are engaging through the detail and the atmosphere that they contribute. Sieta is shown wearing a red dress throughout, reminiscent of the red ribbons worn to mark World AIDS Day.
The book concludes with some information about AIDS and the situation in Africa (it would benefit from an associated reference to HIV). The reviewers would recommend this book for older readers. It addresses issues of change, a new home, the loss of a parent, being in a foster/new family, and death through illness. It is very effective and appealing; realistic, sensitive and emotional without being sentimental or depressing.


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**House Cat, The**  
By Helen Cooper  
Published by Little Hippo, London  
1998  
ISBN 9780590558297

Tom-Cat lives in a house inhabited by two families. The couple living downstairs think that he is their cat (and he matches their carpet), whilst the family living upstairs think that he is their cat. When the downstairs people move home they take Tom-Cat with them in a cardboard cage. They do not realise that he is not their cat; he is the House-Cat.

Tom-Cat does not like his new home and endeavours to find his way home. The reader shares his adventures along the way, until he is finally reunited with the house and meets a new family.

This story will support children talking about moving house, facing change and perhaps keeping in touch with friends and neighbours. Many children will enjoy the illustrations which detail Ton-Cat’s adventures.
**How Did I Begin?**
By Mick Manning and Brita Granstrom
Published by Franklin Watts, London
2004
ISBN 9780749656614

How did I begin? The child’s questions leads to an explanation that it was with a special cuddle between mum and dad. There follows a series of questions from children, thorough which the idea of the sperm meeting the egg, the penis entering the vagina, growth and development are all introduced. The child learns that they were made up of chromosomes from both parents and shows (through drawings) what they looked like as they grew. It explains birth, including by Cesarian.

This book provides a supportive and positive introduction to conception and birth. It will be particularly suitable for younger children who begin to ask questions about where they come from. It was shortlisted for the *Junior Science Book Award*.

Also in this series:
How Will I Grow ISBN 9780749656638
What’s My Family Tree ISBN 9780749656645

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**How Many Sleeps?**
By Amber Stewart
Illustrated by Layn Marlow
Published by Oxford University Press, Oxford
2005
ISBN 9780192791894

Toast is becoming very excited about the prospect of his birthday. His dad is also counting the days because he is running out of time to make a very special present.

This is a super story to use with children who are excited by a forthcoming birthday; it would help to consider patience with children and to discuss the passing of time. The amusing ending finds Toast starting to count the number of “sleeps” until his next birthday!

This book is ideal for use with children in a Foundation Stage unit or Nursery class. It includes gentle humour, the result of Toast’s excitement and his father’s weariness.

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How To Live Forever
By Colin Thompson
Published by Red Fox, London
1998
ISBN 9780099461814

One book is missing from a library that holds every book ever published. During the night, when the library is closed, the shelves come to life. Families live amongst and within the books. Peter, a member of the Robinson family, has heard of a book that will enable him to live forever. It is the missing book, and he is determined to find it. He searches for years, accompanied by his pet cat.

One night Peter finds four old men, hidden away in a dust-filled attic. They show him the book and take him to meet the Ancient Child. This child explains that he read the book and became immortal. As his friends grew up, he remained a child and has suffered the curse of loneliness and isolation. Peter decides not to read the book.

The illustrations in this book will cause hours of fascination. The story provides opportunities to consider what is important in life, whether living for ever might be a good thing if it were possible and to celebrate the imagination and excitement that are contained in books.

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I am Too Absolutely Small for School
By Lauren Child
Published by Orchard Books, London
2003
ISBN 9781841213545

Lola does not feel ready to start attending school: she is not big enough, and she is far too busy. Her sibling encourages her by explaining that she will learn to count, learn the letters of the alphabet and to read whole words. Lola has a reason why each is not necessary. Lola does not even want to make new friends, because she has a special invisible friend.

Eventually Lola decides that she will start school – in order to give support to her invisible friend. At the end of the first day she declares that he was nervous, but she was fine.

This imaginative story addresses starting school in an amusing way. The large illustrations fill most of each page. Children will enjoy searching for the appearance of Lola's invisible friend.

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I Don’t Want to go to Hospital
By Tony Ross
Published by Collins, London
2001
ISBN 0007109571

A princess does not want to go to hospital, but having experienced it wants to go back! Many of the things that adults tell her about hospital come true and she argues that she wants to return because “They treated me like a princess in there.” There is an enjoyable series of searches when the princess initially hides and later there is a positive outcome to the story.

This book has bright, vibrant illustrations that enhance the story by adding humour. The text uses repeated words and phrases to make it accessible and enjoyable and this is complemented by the cartoon-style illustrations.

This book addresses a concern that some children will face. It shows that people should listen to others who have experienced similar things and considers how perceptions can be changed as a result. This book might provide a very useful starting point if a child is about to go into hospital or if the children have a peer in that situation. It may also support those who are afraid of a situation or help children to consider advice that they have been given but not believed. This book is also included in the 'Disability' Reading Resource published by Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln.

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I Remember Miss Perry
By Pat Brisson
Illustrated by Stephanie Jorisch
Published by Dial Books, New York NY
2006
ISBN 9780803729810

Stevie starts a new school and is very apprehensive. His teacher, Miss Perry, is supportive, understanding and empathetic: she has a fond wish for each day. Then there is an announcement that Miss Perry has died in a car accident: the children are with their parents in the classroom to hear the news. The fact that she has died is stated clearly without the use of euphemisms. The book clarifies that the children will not see her again. A counsellor comes to be with the children and they share memories of all the fondest wishes: “And what do you think would be Miss Perry’s fondest wish today?”

The illustrations are colourful, lovely and lively. The story has a positive ending which majors on happy memories without being overly sentimental. It is probably suitable for children from Key Stage 1 and upwards. This is a very effective book all round, a well-told story with very good illustrations.

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I Want to Be
By Tony Ross
Published by Andersen Press, London
1993
ISBN 9780862644475

The Little Princess considers what she should be now that it is time to grow up. She speaks with a range of people around the palace and learns that she should be clever, healthy, caring and kind. There seems to be so much to think about when growing up. Finally, she decides that she wants to be tall, and then realises that she is, in comparison with the Little Prince.

This book is illustrated using Tony Ross’ trademark style, with clear and bold pictures. It provides an excellent means of helping children to consider the personal attributes that will develop as they grow, and also to think about what being ‘grown up’ really means.

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I Want to Go Home!
By Tony Ross
Published by Andersen Press, London
2006
ISBN 9781842705858

The Little Princess faces the prospect of moving to a new home now that the family has grown. There are also all the pets and the staff to take into account too! Her mother sells their current castle and the move to the new one: the Little Princess wants to go home. She convinces her mother to return to their old house and they set out just to have a brief look.

On arrival they find that things have changed. The new family has installed a new kitchen, cut down the trees and spends time vacuuming the lawn so that birds cannot come to eat any cake crumbs. Both mother and daughter escape back to their new home as quickly as possible.

This book is presented with Tony Ross’ signature style of illustration. It shows moving home in an amusing manner and reinforces the idea that home is where one’s own possessions, family and way of life are to be found.

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I Want Two Birthdays!
By Tony Ross
Published by Andersen Press, London
2008
ISBN 9781842707876

The Little Princess wants to know why she has one birthday when her mother has two. The Prime Minister grants her request and two birthday are booked. Then she decides that she would like three birthdays and then four, one for each season. Her
love of birthdays leads to every day being designated as one. But as the cakes get smaller, the presents less exciting and her friends find it too expensive to attend her parties, she begins to realise that there should be at least one special day in the year. She designates this as her “unbirthday” and plans how to celebrate in a special way.

This book provides an amusing look at celebrations and considers how special they can be. The illustrations add a lovely extra dimension to the humour.

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This is the story of Elfie, the best dog in the whole world. Elfie and her owner have a special friendship. They play together and Elfie is very much a part of the family. But it is her owner (identified as a boy in the blurb) who tells her each night how much she is loved. Elfie grows older and eventually dies. The boy is pleased that he has told her often how much she was loved. He decides not to have another pet just yet.

This is a lovely, simple story of a boy and his pet. It considers the death of a pet in a sensitive and straightforward way and it shows a part of the grieving process. It stresses the need to appreciate loved ones whilst they are alive. The watercolour style illustrations support the text well and add some humour and other emotions.

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A boy asks his dog “Is it because...?”

Is it because of all his flaws and failings that Peregrine Ffrogg is a bully? Or is it because he is jealous?

This lovely book, written in rhyme, focuses on the weaknesses of the bully, before revealing that he is a bully. It effectively undermines his power and ends with the affirmation that the boy is confident that he has friends and a loving dog – things that the bully does not have.

This is an excellent book to use when addressing bullying. It considers possible root causes of the problem and uses humour to make a difficult subject accessible. It could be used with children of various ages. The illustrations are very funny indeed!
Is it True Grandfather?
By Wendy Lohse
Illustrated by Jenny Sands
Published by Macmillan Caribbean, Oxford
1993
ISBN 9780333666814

Grandfather announces that the family is to explore the mountain tomorrow. The children can tell that a story is brewing in his imagination. He begins to recount his experience as an eight year old, when he took his younger sister exploring. When he entered a cave, he lost his sister and had to search with the other children.

In this beautifully illustrated book we see children enjoying memories from an older member of their family. They learn that he was once young like them and enjoy him recounting a tale. It might support discussions about valuing memories or appreciating shared experience between generations.

Island, The
By Armin Greder
Published by Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest NSW
2007
ISBN 9781741752663

This is the story of a man who is marooned on an island. Its inhabitants view him with suspicion, segregate him and later provide meagre care. They are uncomfortable at his presence and warn their children to beware of him. They spread rumours to alienate him. Eventually their fear and anger cause them to set him adrift on his raft. They punish those who supported him and turn the island into a fortress.

This book presents a powerful message about how strangers are treated. It could provide an effective catalyst for discussions about migration and how children relate to those who are “different” in terms of race, ethnicity or nationality. The illustrations are very atmospheric and add powerfully to the challenge of the storyline. This is an excellent resource to use with children in upper Key Stage 2.

Ismat’s Eid
By Fawzia Gilani-Williams
Illustrated by Proiti Roy
Published by Wordbird Books, Chennai, India
2007
ISBN 9788181464057

Ismat is a shoemaker who has just managed to sell all his stock. He sets out to buy gifts for his family in preparation for the celebration of Eid. He buys clothing and bangles and is persuaded to buy some new trousers for himself. The trousers prove to be too long and Ismat cannot convince any of his family to make alterations.
Having shortened the trousers himself, various family members also decide to do the same as he is such a caring man. He ends up with very short trousers.

This is a humorous story about how a family celebrates Eid by giving gifts and by caring for one another. It concludes with the family visiting the Mosque together. The illustrations use simple block colour and accompany the story effectively. The book might provide an interesting introduction some of the ways in which a family celebrates Eid. It also provides a positive and accessible story about a Muslim family.

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**It’s Quacking Time!**
By Martin Waddell
Illustrated by Jill Barton
Published by Walker Books, London
2005
ISBN 9781844280094

A baby duckling is born and the story is told by a brother/sister. They discover that they were, themselves, once inside an egg. They discuss this with different family members and learn that all ducks come from eggs. They spend a good deal of time watching the egg and showing interest. There is also a sense of waiting for the birth.

This book is ideal to use with a younger class or child. It is a very visual book: also telling the story through the pictures. It is an accessible read which could be used as a happy and positive story around the time of a birth. It also highlights the members of the family, and how they are involved with looking after mummy duck when she has laid the egg.

The egg began to hatch a few times, which were false alarms. This could be a useful and realistic element to use with children when they are waiting for a brother or sister to be born. There were no complications with the birth.

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**Jamaica and Brianna**
By Juanita Havill
Illustrated by Anne Sibley O’Brien
Published by Egmont, London
1995
ISBN 9781405209366

Jamaica hates wearing her brother’s hand-me-down boots. But when she goes to get some new ones of her own she is faced with a dilemma: how can she have pink ones, when Brianna will say that she copied her? A feud develops between the two girls, with critical remarks made about boots. Eventually, the children are honest about their motives and a friendship starts.
This is a simple story of the rivalry between two girls. It will be recognisable to many adults – and children- who have experienced disagreements, jealousy and critical comments made about relatively small matters.

The story is presented in a warm and caring way, with a happy resolution. It would help children speak about rivalries, designer labels, feelings about competitiveness or hurtful comments. The story feels very authentic. Other titles are available in the series.

Janine, age three, was expecting a new baby in the family. She has a variety of questions as preparations are made for the arrival of her sibling. Mum explains who will look after Janine whilst she is in hospital. Meanwhile, at the playcentre, Janine’s friend Steve is getting a pet rabbit. Janine wonders whether she would prefer this to a new baby brother/sister. The story concludes when Janine visits the hospital and meets the new baby.

A strength of this book is the way it explores the preparations in the weeks leading up to the birth of the baby. It would be a lovely text to use with a child a they anticipate the birth of their sibling and consider their reactions to the birth.

This is the story of a boy who is receiving the unwelcome attentions of Jennifer Jones. His friends tease him that they are a couple. She sends messages and shouts in his ear. He considers that she could be launched in a rocket, be sent to the Arctic and then he discovers that she is moving away.

The boy is left with no one to sit with in class, he focuses on his school work and mopes around in the playground. When he receives a letter from Jennifer he is worried that she is having such fun that she may never return, but on hearing that she is coming back to school he runs to the local store to buy her a gift.

This is a sweet story of a boy and girl who are good friends, it is just that one of them does not realise this until half way through the story. It raises issues of how
boys and girls are friends in primary school. The suggestion of romance is interesting and would provoke lively discussion with children in upper key stage 2.

The illustrations are very colourful and include photograph collages.

**Jim’s Dog, Muffins**
By Miriam Cohen
Illustrated by Ronald Himler
Published by Star Bright Books, New York
2008
ISBN 9781595721006

Jim’s dog has been run over and killed. His teacher suggests to the class that they write a letter so that he knows that they care. On his return to school he is very quiet and finds it hard to concentrate. His friends comfort him.

But when Anna Maria sits with him and tells him that it does not help to be sad, Jim becomes angry and pushes her away. The teacher explains that perhaps Jim needs some time to feel sad. One the way home, Paul cheers Jim up and they laugh together – whilst still remembering Muffins.

This is a thoughtful story about a child trying to cope with bereavement. It shows some of his responses and also how other children react, sometimes in ways that are not particularly helpful.

It will be useful to share with children when a member of the class is finding it hard to cope with grief. It provides a warm, sensitive and realistic exploration of some issues. Emotion comes through well in the illustrations. Some of the American phrases may need explanation.

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**Jump Up Time**
By Lynn Joseph
Illustrated by Linda Saport
Published by Clarion Books, New York NY
1998
ISBN 9780395650127

The Trinidad Carnival is here! Lily is dancing around the kitchen in gleeful anticipation of the event. The family has been working hard to create a special hummingbird costume for Christine. Lily feels sad and jealous that she does not
have a costume. However, when her sister struggles to overcome her nerves, Lily offers support.

This book includes pastel illustrations which depict the children’s excitement at the preparations for the carnival. It shows how one family prepares for and celebrates the carnival and how a younger child looks forward to the day when it will be her turn to perform.

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**Katie Morag and the Birthdays**
By Mairi Hedderwick
Published by The Bodley Head, London
2005
ISBN 9780370328508

This book follows the population of the Isle of Struay and their friends and families through the course of a year. Each month includes the marking of a special occasion, whether it is a ceilidh, an April Fools’ Day prank, games on the beach or a ride in a helicopter. Katie Morag also celebrates her birthday in style.

This highly engaging story includes detailed illustrations which give the reader plenty to explore. In addition, there are activities including how to make birthday cards and gifts. There is also a year planner so that children can record special dates including birthdays.

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**Kipper’s Birthday**
By Nick Inkpen
Published by Hodder Children’s Books, London
2008
ISBN 9780340932063

Kipper is busy making invitations for his birthday party. He makes a cake and plans to organise balloons. At the appointed time he awaits his guests. Unfortunately he did not give out his invitations until the day of his birthday and they all asked the guests to arrive “tomorrow”. Kipper sits alone and dejected and then sleeps. He dreams of cake right through the night and is only woken when his friends arrive with gifts.

This amusing book makes interesting use of the term “tomorrow” and the fact that it never comes! Nick Inkpen’s engaging storyline and simple, bold illustrations provide a lovely way to think about how we celebrate birthdays.

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Kirsty’s Kite
By Carol Curtis Stilz
Illustrated by Gwen Harrison
Published by Albatross Books, Tring
1988
ISBN 0745914942

Kirsty’s mother has died and she is being cared for by her granddad. She watches kites flying from her window and ponders whether her mother is able to see her and whether she is in heaven. When granddad buys her a kite she is able to begin to understand her feelings of grief and to come to terms with them. Over time, she becomes very adept at flying the kite – just as her mother had been – and becomes more able to leave her granddad and to feel more confident. The story ends as she releases her kite and lets it soar into the heavens: it has become a metaphor for letting go and trusting her mother into God’s care.

This is a colourful book, with active and engaging illustrations, that might facilitate a discussion of grief and the grieving process. It uses the Christian symbolism of the rainbow throughout and particularly in the colours of the kite.

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Kite and Caitlin, The
By Roger McGough
Illustrated by John Prater
Published by Bodley Head, London
1996
ISBN 0370323718

After a couple of disinterested owners, the kite is finally given to Caitlan. At the beginning of the story she is unwell and has been in and out of hospital for two years. Her mother suggests that it would be lovely to fly the kite once she is well.

Caitlin decides that she wants to fly it from the top of a mountain and embarks on research to learn all about them. Then the kite takes her on a flight of fantasy around Britain across to the Alps and beyond. It flies to the Great Mountain of light where happiness awaits her for ever.

This book focuses on one main character. It may be inferred that she is terminally ill. The kite may present a metaphor for death or at least provide a sense of hope as Caitlin is enabled to escape from her pain through its impact on her imagination.

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Knuffle Bunny Too
By Mo Williams
Published by Walker Books, London
2007
ISBN 9781406313826

Trixie is excited because she is taking Knuffle Bunny to school. She plans to show him to all her friends. However, on arrival she discovers that another child has an identical toy. After some disagreement the teacher confiscates both the toys. They are returned at the end of the school day, and it is only at bedtime that Trixie realises that she has the wrong Knuffle Bunny! She wakes her parents and a swap is arranged. Trixie finds that she has a new best friend and they have their bunnies in common.

This story is set against the backdrop of Brooklyn. The illustrations are photographs of the city with the characters superimposed in cartoon style. This makes for a very distinctive book. This is a very good story of sibling rivalry, its resolution and how finding things in common can lead to friendship. Adults will appreciate the exasperation apparent on the faces of the parents in the epilogue.

Laura’s Secret
By Klaus Baumgart
Published by Little Tiger Press, London
2003
ISBN 9781854309552

Laura and her little brother Tommy cannot sleep because it is windy. They decide to pass the time by making a kite. Laura thinks about it flying in the night sky - the place where she spots and speaks to her special star each night. Laura believes that if you wish hard enough then it can make a difference to things.

On the way home from school they spot a bully and his friends playing with their kites. The bullies see Laura and Tommy’s kite and mock it. That night Laura asks her special star to help. When she wakes in the middle of the night her star is sparkling in her room. Laura feels full of hope and embarks on improving the kite. When she flies it again she and Tommy decide to set it free so that it can fly to the stars.

This is a positive story about how a child copes with bullying. It could be used to consider the power of positive thinking and how children support one another in difficult circumstances. Considering how wishing on a star can change the course of events will need to be addressed with sensitivity.
Leon is new to town and lives with his mum. His dad works away in the army. He shares his new bedroom with Bob, his imaginary friend. They do everything together. When a new family move in next door Leon decides to visit in order to be friendly. Suddenly he realises that Bob is not with him. What can he do? Can he visit the neighbours all by himself? Bravely he rings the doorbell and invites his neighbour to the park.

This story provides a positive message about moving from focussing on one’s own company to beginning to make friends with other children. The illustrations are large and show Leon as a small character in a big world. The end papers are beautifully illustrated and provide a comparison between the deserted park at the start of the story and Leon and his new friend enjoying the open space at the end. It might also be a useful book to facilitate conversations with children who have imaginary or invisible friends.

Letang’s New Friend
By Beverley Naidoo
Illustrated by Petra Rohr-Rouendaal
Published by Longman, Harlow
1994
ISBN 058212154X

This story explores Letang’s experience as she joins her new class, having moved from Botswana. After initial shyness, she begins to develop a friendship with Julie. The storyline is enjoyable and touches on difficulties to which all children should be able to relate.

The illustrations are delicate. The colour is not strong but the simplicity makes the focus the children. The book has a straightforward layout with consistently formatted text and a related picture on each double spread. It flows well and incorporates images that show the thoughts and feelings of the children. The illustrations show ‘disability’, but it is not mentioned in the text. Julie is shown as being able to do the same activities as other children.

This book would be useful to use with children when a new member of the class starts school or to demonstrate that children with disabilities, like Julie, can enjoy the same activities as everyone else. ‘Disability’ is approached in a sensitive way. This book should appeal to a wide range of children. It is also included in the ‘Disability’ Reading Resource published by Bishop Grosseteste University College.
Lights for Gita
By Rachna Gilmore
Illustrated by Alide Priestley
Published by Second Story Press, Toronto
1994
ISBN 0929005619

This book focuses on the Hindu story of Divali. Gita, a young girl, is excited at the prospect of some of her friends from school visiting her home to see the lights and join in the celebrations. It is her first Divali in her new home, and she thinks of all her relatives celebrating back in India.

However, the bad weather prevents the fireworks from being lit and some of her friends have to cancel their visit because of the icy conditions. Eventually the diyas light up the icy night and Gita sees that Divali can be celebrated – even in a new and different environment. The book shows Gita preparing for the celebrations with her mum and dad. It provides an interesting insight into celebrations in the home, supported by an engaging storyline.

The book has wonderful illustrations and will appeal to children in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2. It is a useful resource for comparing how Divali is celebrated in both New Delhi and in the UK. This book is also included in the Family Diversities Reading Resource.

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Little Monster Did It!
By Helen Cooper
Published by Doubleday, London
1995
ISBN 9780385406208

This is the story of a little girl who is struggling with the idea of sharing her parents with a new baby.

Mum has given the girl the present of a “little monster”. Unfortunately the monster does not like the new baby when it arrives home. It causes problems in the house and gets the blame for whatever goes wrong. Eventually, they come to a bargain: the little girl can keep little monster if mum and dad can keep the baby.

This is an imaginative story, supported very effectively by detailed and atmospheric illustrations, which could create good discussion with children. However, adults would have to be prepared to explain possible confusion. It is a little unclear whether the little monster is a soft toy or whether it is alive! Whatever the case, the monster provides a helpful metaphor for the girl’s misconceptions and concerns about having a new sibling.

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Lola and the Rent-a-Cat
By Ceseli Josephus Jitta
Published by Francis Lincoln Children’s Books, London 2007
ISBN 9781847801395

Lola and John have been married since they were young. They look after each other and do everything together. As they have aged they have changed and sometimes they feel sad as life becomes more difficult.

Then, one day, John dies. Lola is now alone for the first time in many years. She surfs the internet and discovers that she could rent a cat for companionship. The cat proves to be excellent company; Lola tells him all about her life with John.

This is a simple story of how one person copes with grief and loss. It shows the preciousness of memories. One may wonder whether it is possible to rent a cat from the internet but, this aside, this is a compelling and thought-provoking story.

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Look What I’ve Got!
By Anthony Browne
Published by Walker Books, London 2010
ISBN 9781406326353

It seems like Jeremy has everything. He has a new bicycle, a new football, a huge bag of sweets. But he will not share anything with Sam. Unfortunately for Jeremy, his new toys do not always bring pleasure.

When Sam heads out to walk in the country, a gorilla leaps out on him. It turns out to be Jeremy in a new costume. And when he tries out his new pirate costume, he ends up having to walk the plank!

The two characters provide children with a stimulus to consider whether it is material things or something more which is of value. Sam finds his pleasure in the natural environment and Anthony Browne presents the beauty of nature in his own special style. This is a fascinating story about friendship, rivalry, jealousy and what really matters in life.

This book tells the story of David who used to enjoy spending time with his Uncle Tim, outlining some of the interests and the adventures they shared. They spend time in his shop and play games. However, soon it becomes apparent that Uncle Tim is becoming easily fatigued. Daniel is concerned about him and asks his mother for information. He learns that his uncle has AIDS and that he might die.

Daniel becomes fearful that AIDS might be infectious. He feels very angry. He shares his fears with his father, who comforts him and clarifies the situation. When Uncle Tim goes into a coma, Daniel continues to visit and to speak with him. Then his uncle dies. Daniel attends the funeral and receives some special gifts from his uncle in his will. This includes one of the quilts, which they used to use to make tents or wrap up warm in cold weather.

The illustrations are detailed and use muted tones to capture some of the emotions of the story. Since the 1980s, some people have used patchwork quilts as a way of remembering people with HIV who have died. Overall, this is an effective story which focuses particularly on life before HIV affects Uncle Tim. It shares reflections on what happens when someone dies. It does not concentrate on his illness, which appears to be brief. Published in 1989, the text speaks of AIDS rather than HIV, which dates it somewhat.
to use with children whose pet has recently died but who are not yet ready for another one. It shows that grieving can take time and also that memories remain special even when another pet comes along.


**Lucy’s Baby Brother**
By Althea Hayton
Illustrated by John Farrell
Published by Eddison Press, St Albans
1995
ISBN 1872067050

This is the story of a four year old whose baby brother dies the day after he is born. It outlines Lucy’s excitement at the prospect of the birth and how she draws a picture to take to her new brother. She is able to see him, and hold him, after he dies. She shares the news of his death with her teacher at school and attends his funeral. The book ends two years later, following the birth of a new brother. It shows how memories continue to be special.

This book has a simple format. The story is told in a straightforward way through the eyes of the child. The line drawings are plain and without colour. At the end of the book is a helpful list of organisations that can provide information and support.

**Lucy’s Quarrel**
By Jennifer Northway
Published by Scholastic Children’s Books, London
1997
ISBN 0590542796

This is a beautifully illustrated story about two cousins who have a quarrel. Lucy has been talking about her forthcoming birthday party far too much and this has irritated Alice. When they quarrel and refuse to apologise to one another Lucy faces the prospect of holding her party without her best friend. One child is black and the other is white, although this is incidental to the story. The book illustrates an extended mixed ‘race’ family.

The book presents a realistic view of how friends relate to one another and some of trials that they face. Children will recognise the common experience of “falling out”. The text explores what a good relationship the children have and how they miss each other but find it difficult to say sorry. In the end they are reunited. This book is particularly recommended for use with children in Key Stage 1. This book is also included in the *Family Diversities Reading Resource*.

Further texts by the same author and in the same series are:
Maisie Middleton at the Wedding
By Nita Sowter
Published by Collins, London
1988
ISBN 9780001842625

Aunt Rosie has some good news: she wants Maisie to be the bridesmaid at her wedding. Maisie is concerned, because she does not want to have to wear a frilly, scratchy or silly dress. When George comes for tea he explains that he will be a pageboy at the wedding and he encourages Maisie by sharing some of knowledge about what will happen. When the great day arrives she feels special in her dress and enjoys the occasion.

The book shows the wedding, including the making of vows inside the church and the taking of photographs afterwards. The detailed, colourful illustrations also show the reception and speech-making. It would give children an idea of what can be involved in a traditional church wedding. At the end, Maisie and George have become good friends and play at weddings.

Although this book was published over twenty years ago it still provides a useful resource to introduce children to a traditional Christian wedding, and it may be of help to a child nervous about attending or having a role in a ceremony.

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Man Who Wanted to Live Forever, The
By Selina Hastings
Illustrated by Reg Cartwright
Published by Walker Books, London
1988
ISBN 0744520770

Bodkin is a man who wants to live for ever. He visits a variety of old men in his quest to discover the secret of longevity. As he meets each old man in turn he discovers that, although they will live for a long time, they will not live for ever. He continues on his quest. He settles with the Old Man of the Mountains but eventually longs to return to see his home village. There he finds great change has taken place. The story ends with a twist.

This book could be used to enable children to discuss the idea of living for ever, the pros and cons and how things change over time as we age and grow. It is beautifully illustrated. It is an appealing version of a traditional tale.

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Mayfly has only one day of life and makes the very most of it. This isn’t any day, it is the best day she will ever experience. The reader is guided through her experiences and shown some of the wonders of nature.

This simple story, accompanied by Tony Ross’ intricate illustrations, is a celebration of life and its joys. There is a positive sense of the continuity of life into the next generation. The brevity of the Mayfly’s existence would contrast well with Colin Thompson’s *How To Live Forever* (also included in this resource).

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Mr McAllister has a shed at the bottom of his garden and, one day, agrees to share what it contains with a young visitor. Inside is an array of coloured bottles, each one holding a special memory. He explains how useful they will be one day if his own memories start to fade. Together they bottle the memory of today.

This book will help children to consider how important memories are and also to consider how, sometimes, older people find remembering difficult. It also provides an opportunity to consider one’s own special memories and to think about what experiences and events it might be important to collect and record for the future.

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This book tells the story of a group of mice, the Hardy family, which moves in next door to another family. The story outlines the stereotypes of having mice living next door – as perceived by the father and told by the children of the neighbouring family.
The father has a negative attitude to the new neighbours, because they are different, yet the mother seems more positive and welcoming. She sees ignorance and sometimes hypocrisy in what the father is saying.

In the end, because of the mice’s helpfulness, the father’s stance is altered and the families become friends. The mice could represent any new family moving into an area. The book challenges the stereotypes held by the father – and the focus on a family of mice makes it possible to apply the ideas to a range of settings and to discuss them in abstract ways which do not directly affect particular individuals.

The book needs to be used sensitively as some of the expressions used by the father may be a little “close to the bone” depending on the circumstances of the children reading the text. It may be best used as a shared text, rather than being read by individual children, so that a teacher can support discussion and address any stereotypes or prejudices held within a class. It is also included in the *Family Diversities Reading Resource.*

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**Michael Rosen’s Sad Book**  
By Michael Rosen  
Illustrated by Quentin Blake  
Published by Walker Books, London  
2004  
ISBN 0744598982  

In this book, Michael Rosen shares some of his sadness at the death of his son, Eddie. It is a personal story which will touch many readers.

Michael Rosen considers the nature of sadness. He personifies it. He considers where it is found and from whence it comes. He reflects both in prose and poetry. He reaches out to the reader to help them consider similar ideas. He presents a realistic and compelling exploration of sadness with which many will identify. There are feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, but these are balanced well by ideas for doing things which are enjoyable, things to be proud of and holding special memories dear. The book is not sentimental. It is compelling and highly engaging.

The illustrations provide an excellent accompaniment to the text. They are atmospheric, bleak and amusing in turn. At the close of the book the contrast between the numerous candles on a birthday cake and the single candle, with Rosen keeping vigil, is very powerful.

This is an excellent book for older readers.

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Milly, Molly and Jimmy’s Seeds
By Gill Pittar
Illustrated by Cris Morrell
Published by Milly Molly Books, Gisbourne
2003
ISBN 1869720075

Jimmy loves school and getting involved in everything that happens. His favourite interest is gardening. One day he fails to come to school and by the end of the week his desk is still empty: this is very unusual. Then Miss Blythe, the teacher, explains to the class that during the night Jimmy had died. They share a group hug and cry together. Their enthusiasm is gone. They keep Jimmy’s desk for a while, and decorate it with flowers. When they are all ready, his desk is taken away. The children collect together his belongings to give to his mother and find a packet of seeds. They decide to plant them, and nurture them until a great sunflower has developed: “Jimmy was back again, right in the middle of everything.”

This book provides a sensitive example of a teacher telling children about the death of a classmate. It shows both teacher and children grieving, making a temporary memorial and gradually getting to the point where Jimmy’s things can be moved. There is a sense of time being taken to support the children and a great deal of sensitivity is shown. The use of Jimmy’s interest in gardening to introduce new activity, to give a sense of purpose and to find a way of remembering is also very effective.

The book is well illustrated with simple, colourful pictures which support the storyline effectively. The book maintains a positive tone throughout, and the illustrations add significantly to this. The format and language are aimed at younger readers. Overall, a lovely book which would provide support for children in similar circumstances.

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More and More Rabbits
By Nicholas Allan
Published by Red Fox, London
2006
ISBN 9780099477587

Mr and Mrs Tail just cannot stop having babies. From their initial three children they have three more, and then more... They wonder where the babies are coming from. They buy a new bed, they blame the cat, they accuse the moon, try sleeping on the opposite sides of the bed, but all to no avail. Eventually the house is full of children – and they love each one dearly – but they decide to sleep in separate beds.

This hilarious counting book is very enjoyable to read. Whilst it leaves the question of where the babies come from unanswered, it offers a means of introducing an understanding of reproduction to younger children.

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Moving
By Michael Rosen
Illustrated by Sophy Williams
Published by Puffin Books, London
1995
ISBN 9780140548952

When a family moves house the cat is taken from its world of freedom and exploration and confined in a travel basket. It finds the journey difficult and is disorientated on arriving at its new home. It roams and explores and settles down to hide – out of the sight of the family that has transformed its world.

The family becomes worried that the cat is missing and entice it out with a meal of fish. The cat cannot help itself and comes to eat, despite the resentment it has felt for the family.

This book is full of atmosphere and emotion, drawn from both the story and the dark illustrations. It provides a lovely way of considering how an animal might find a change of environment difficult, but also raises possibilities for considering how humans might also respond to moving home and coming to terms with new surroundings.

Mr Bear’s New Baby
By Debi Gliori
Published by Orchard Books, London
1999
ISBN 9781860394096

This is an endearing story about how to get baby bear to sleep. All the neighbours come and try to help, bringing gifts that helped their own off-spring. However, their efforts are all in vein.

There is a good balance of gender roles in the story, with both Mr and Mrs Bear sharing the childcare responsibilities. Eventually it is small bear that comes up with the best idea of how to get to sleep. Whilst the reviewers were concerned about the baby sleeping in the parents’ bed, they did note that Mr Bear remained awake to make sure it was ok.

The use of animals in the story makes this text appropriate for younger children, reaffirming that all members of the family can help to make a new baby feel safe and settled.

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This heart warming story stresses how friends can come in all sorts of shapes and sizes. It is atmospheric with lovely cartoon-style illustrations.

Mr Big was so large that wherever he went people were scared of him. Cafes would empty, buses would become deserted and even the swimming pool would empty on his arrival. Then he sees a piano, alone like him, in a shop. He takes it home. Now all that was big was the mystery of the wonderful pianist – people flocked from all around to hear the wonderful music wafting on the night air. A letter arrived asking Mr Big to join a band... and from there Mr Big’s popularity grows and grows.

Mummy Laid an Egg
By Babette Cole
Published by Red Fox, London
1995
ISBN 9780099299110

Mum and dad do not appear to know how babies are made! They explain to their children that girls come from sugar and spice, boys from slugs and snails, that some are delivered by a dinosaur and others are found under stones. Some are *squished* out of tubes and once mummy laid an egg on the sofa.

The children are amused, but know better. They draw pictures to show mum and dad where babies come from. These illustrations include both the physical act of intercourse and a variety of amusing sexual positions which show that sex is for both procreation and recreation. The children show the process from conception to birth.

This book uses humour to introduce information about sex between a man and woman. Whilst teachers and parents/carers will want to consider its use with children carefully, it does present sex as being both purposeful and fun. The latter is an aspect missing in many books of this kind.
This lift-the-flap book includes simple and direct text and detailed pencil drawings. It suggests a range of reasons why Mummy’s tummy might be growing, including a packet of seeds, a fairy with wings, the man in the moon and a big red balloon. The final answer is that it is a new baby!

This is a helpful book to help children to understand that a baby initially grows inside its mother. The final flap does not show the baby in the womb, but rather wrapped in a cloth after birth and being hugged by its siblings. The use of the word tummy might also cause some confusion, as it is often used as a synonym for stomach. However, used carefully this book will be useful for young children and provides a simple understanding of pregnancy.

*Mummy, Mummy, What’s in Your Tummy?*  
By Sarah Simpson-Enock and Linzi West.  
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**My Big Brother, Boris**  
By Liz Pichon  
Published by Scholastic Press, London  
2004  
ISBN 9780439977029

Little Croc has a big brother called Boris. They use to be the best of friends, but recently Boris has been playing loud music and choosing the company of friends his own age. All Boris seems to do is eat and sleep when he is away from his new companions.

When Boris returns home with a snout ring, his parents are furious. However, when his grandparents arrive for his birthday party with pictures of his parents when they were younger, it turns out that they were rebellious teenagers too.

This hilariously funny story will appeal to those with older siblings, particularly those reaching their teenage years. The appealing illustrations are combined with text and speech bubbles. The message of the story is that we were all young once, although we might sometimes choose to leave the memories aside!
My First Day at School
By Monica Hughes
Published by Heineman Library, Oxford
2003
ISBN 9780431186207

This book takes the reader through the process of a first day at school, starting with breakfast, nervousness and finding the classroom. It uses photographs to present the story as realistic. Lenny and Chloe are able to join in activities, play outside, find where the toilets are, eat lunch and enjoy action songs.

This book is ideal to share with children as they prepare for their first day at school. The photographs still look current and they show a variety of experiences that a child might encounter. It will be important to explain to children that this is a representation of some of the things that happen in a school and that their first day at school might be a little different.

My Growing Body
By Caryn Jenner
Published by Franklin Watts, London
2010
ISBN 9780749695194

This book combines factual text with photographs in a manner appealing to the eye as it outlines the process of growing up. It addresses the human life cycle, how babies develop basic skills; being a toddler and moving through childhood into being a teenager. It includes brief explanations about childhood tantrums and how emotions can be intense during puberty. It includes information about changes for girls during puberty including monthly periods. It also explains that although boys may become able to father a child this does not mean that they feel mature enough to face parenthood. At the end is a useful glossary of terms.

This is an accessible book which will be most suitable for children in key stage 2 or primary education. It provides thoughtful reflections on some of the changes that children will face as they reach puberty, set within the context of growth and change in a wider sense.

Name Jar, The
By Yangsook Choi
Published by Dell Dragonfly Books, New York, NY
2001
ISBN 9780440417996

Unhei is in a new school, a new town and a new country. Having arrived from Korea with her family, she now considers a new name after finding children on the school bus have made fun of her Korean one. She wants to make sure that her new friends
and school-mates will be able to pronounce her name, but the difficulty comes in trying to choose.

Unhei’s mother affirms that although they are in a new country, they can still enjoy their Korean culture. The children in her class put names in a jar to help her to consider her options. Having made friends with Joey she comes to realise that her Korean name is the most special, and her classmates learn how to pronounce it correctly.

This book explores a range of issues about identity and change. It is a positive story about coming to terms with a new locality and valuing one’s own culture and background. The painted illustrations are striking and expressive.

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**Next Place, The**
By Warren Hanson  
Published by Mission Publishing, Minneapolis, MN  
1998  
ISBN 0859536343

This is a beautifully illustrated book which includes some imaginatively presented text. The format particularly attracted and engaged the reviewers. It presents a journey of thought, written in a gentle rhyme, which considers what it will be like after death and reflecting on the special memories that will be left behind.

Reviewers felt that the book is peaceful, calming, spiritual and relaxing. It is attractive and explores what “might come next” in a way that is not scary. There are no characters and there is no storyline; in contrast with other books in this resource this publication provides a reflective and almost meditative stimulus.

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**Nicky**
By Tony Ross and Zoë Ross  
Published by Andersen Press, London  
1997  
ISBN 9781842706114

Nicky does not want to go to school. For each excuse that she suggests, mum finds a positive response. They are reunited at the end of the day and Nicky is excited by the wonderful time that has been had. Nicky has made a new friend – called Nicky. As she describes her friend’s attributes, mum imagines what the new friend must be like. It is interesting that when she imagines the friend being “naughty” her thought is that Nicky might be a boy.

Finally readers meet Nicky, and the children appear to head home together for tea and a sleepover. Reviewers wondered whether this was particularly likely after the first day at school. The punchline comes when the children are shocked that they have to go to school again – tomorrow!
This is an amusing book which could be useful when talking with children about starting school. The detailed pencil/crayon illustrations have a lovely child-like quality.

**North Star, The**  
By Peter H Reynolds  
Published by Candlewick Press, Somerville MA  
2009  
ISBN 9780763636777

A boy embarks on the journey of life progressing from crawling to walking and then running. At times he falters and sometimes he sleeps. He wonders about the beauty of nature and heads off on a path that is sometimes easy and sometimes difficult. Although the path is well-worn, it is not always easy to follow and at times the boy feels lost. He follows his star and comes to appreciate that everyone is on a different but special journey.

This story provides a metaphor for growth and the search for ways to learn, develop and progress in life. It shows that others are different and have varied hopes and aspirations. It gives a positive message about change in life and about exploring opportunities.

The illustrations are simple and sensitive. The book provides an opportunity to consider aspirations and ambition and to consider what is precious in the present. The metaphor will stimulate children’s thinking and provides an open-ended stimulus for discussion.

**Not Last Night But the Night Before**  
By Colin McNaughton  
Illustrated by Emma Chichester Clark  
Published by Walker Books, London  
2009  
ISBN 978140630426890100

This story is written in rhyme. Three cats, the man in the moon, three little pigs and Little Bo-peep, Little Miss Muffet, Jack and Jill and other characters from Nursery Rhymes come knocking at the door. They all gather to sing Happy Birthday and leave gifts. The book ends with the young boy sleeping in a now peaceful house, surrounded by his presents.

This story could help children to consider what would make their birthday special. It also provides a super opportunity to remember favourite rhymes and characters.
Once There Were Giants
By Martin Waddell
Illustrated by Penny Dale
Published by Walker Books, London
1991
ISBN 9780744517910

This book shows the world through the eyes of a child. Initially they feel themselves to be in a world of giants, for they are so small and the adults seem so big. It follows the child through special events in their childhood, like playing in the park, starting school, moving on to secondary school, living independently and getting married. The amusing ending is that now the child is the giant – and her daughter seems so small.

There is a lovely sense of the cycle of life in this book. Penny Dale’s subtle drawings show a variety of everyday activities within family life; they add a great deal of detail to the more straightforward storyline.

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One Round Moon and a Star for Me
By Ingrid Mennen
Illustrated by Niki Daly
Published by The Bodley Head, London
1994
ISBN 9780370318978

When a star falls from the sky, a young African boy awaits the birth of a new baby in the family. Relatives and friends bring gifts and there is a sense of excitement at the birth. But, over time, the boy is troubled. His father is very proud of the new child: but is he also the boy’s parent? When the boy asks, it gives his father the opportunity to reaffirm how special his son is. As night falls he shows that there is also a star in the sky for his son.

This book shows a way of welcoming a child into the world which may be different from that experienced by children in the UK. It also acknowledges the feelings of insecurity that can be felt by a child on the birth of a sibling and affirms his place in the family.

This book is beautifully illustrated, with detailed drawings of the South African countryside; they show the warmth and intimacy of a loving family.

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This is a super story which presents the adage “Two’s company... three’s a crowd” in a format for children to consider.

Oscar and Arabella are the very best of friends, but when Ormsby arrives on the scene things are not so pleasant. Oscar was not very keen on Ormsby, although Arabella quite liked him. In fact, Ormsby seemed to be seeking to impress Arabella and he and Oscar soon come to blows.

Meanwhile, Arabella wanders into danger and the two male characters charge to her rescue, becoming friends along the way. There is a happy ending with all three becoming friends, most of the time.

This is a heart warming story about how rivals can become friends. Whilst a romantic element may be inferred, this need not be the case. The focus on animal characters (and mammoths in particular) means that this aspect of the story may be more accessible than those books which consider boyfriend/girlfriend style relationships involving children.

Our Baby Inside!
By Mick Manning and Brita Granstrom
Published by Franklin Watts, London
2009
ISBN 9780749686710

This books shows the story from mum finding out that she is pregnant, through having a scan, learning about how the foetus grows and develops through to birth. Using lift up flaps, additional information is revealed in a manner that will support children’s questioning and enquiry.

This is a colourful and engaging book which can be used with children of a range of ages throughout primary education, with more support for younger children and greater independence for older ones. The language used is clear and accessible. The detail about the development of the foetus provides a good focus, which also will allow for wider learning about pregnancy and child birth.
Our Cat Smudge
By Judith Byson Schachner
Published by Cat’s Whiskers, London
2000
ISBN 9781903012246

Smudge is an old cat who has started to feel that life may not be worth living. It seems that nobody needs him anymore. He remembers some special times in his life, which gives a lovely sense of the passing of time and different transitions in Smudge’s life. Then, one day, a new kitten is introduced to the house and Smudge finds new purpose in caring for it and teaching it. He finds renewed happiness and a sense of purpose in life.

This story is heart-warming and helps the reader to consider the both preciousness of memories and the importance of feeling needed. It provides the opportunity to consider lifecycles and change. The warm and detailed illustrations make this an ideal book to share with a class of children.

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Peace Book, The
By Todd Parr
Published by Megan Tingley Books, New York
2009
ISBN 9780316043496

What is peace? In this book, Todd Parr provides some suggestions for the answer using his inimitable style of bold, colourful illustration. Peace can be reading a book, watching it snow, sharing a meal, planting a tree or caring for the environment. Peace can mean valuing differences which are parts of different cultures, locations or nationalities. The book ends with the affirmation that “Peace is being who you are.”

This book addresses issues relating to compassion and hope. The blurb suggests that it can be used to enhance emotional development, celebrate multiculturalism and promote character growth. It could be used to raise issues with children of all ages.

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Petar loves to play the violin. Whenever he plays everyone listens; whatever the season or celebration there is joy at the sound of his music-making. However, when war breaks out Petar, his mother and sister have to evacuate, leaving father behind. They travel on foot for three days over the mountains and cross the border to reach safety. They are tired, cold and hungry; they find a place in a doorway to sleep. A local man gives the mother work in his café and provides a shed in which they can live. Petar does not feel creative and cannot play his violin. However, this changes suddenly one evening. He returns home and plays a new tune – a tune of hope that one day he will be reunited with his father. The book ends with a double-page illustration of a ruined village.

This is an endearing story of a boy’s sadness at the loss of his home and separation from his father. It does not end with a happy reunion, although there is some sense of hopefulness. Caroline Binch’s illustrations are rich in detail and add significantly to the expression of emotion. This book would be ideal to use when discussing issues relating to separation, displacement and refugees.

Petar’s Song by Pratima Mitchell and Caroline Binch. Copyright © Frances Lincoln (2003).

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Place in my Heart, A
By Annette Aubrey
Illustrated by Patrice Barton
Published by QED Publishing, London
2007
ISBN 9781848350045

As Andrew leaves school at the end of the day, he reflects on how sad it feels at home following grandad’s death. He speaks with his dad about why granddad had to leave them. Dad explains that it is perfectly normal to have sad feelings and mum affirms that each member of the family shares the feelings.

After a special meal – made from grandad’s favourite ingredients – they share memories and look at photographs. They laugh and cry together. Eventually, one of Andrew’s friends comes round to ask him to play. They enjoy themselves and share
a picnic. Andrew is able to speak about his grandfather. He has gained a sense that his granddad will always have a special place in his heart.

This book looks at bereavement in an age-appropriate and realistic manner. It shows how those of different ages grieve and also provides an example of how one family begin to cope with their loss by sharing memories together. The ending affirms that, although life may go on, the dead person can still be a part of that life through special memories.

This book is a part of the Understanding... series. At the end of the book is a useful guide to using the text with children. Other books in the series address adoption, divorce and bullying.

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<td>By Caroline Binch</td>
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<td>Published by Jonathon Cape, London</td>
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This book is effective in addressing different issues. Not only does it focus upon the death of a parent but it also addresses the process of coming to terms with it. When Genevieve’s father is lost at sea and does not return, Genevieve, her mum and her new brother grieve and then begin to accept his death. When Genevieve’s mum introduces Cedric to her children their relationship develops. Death, grief, single parenthood and step families are topics addressed within the story. The strength of this story is that these topics are not focused upon explicitly. Instead, a story is woven around the issues to engage the reader, whilst subtly addressing several issues.

The main story involves Genevieve imagining that she is a princess of the castle across the sea. However, her fear of water – a result of her father’s death - prevents her from going onto the beach. Cedric builds up her confidence and takes her and her family to the castle where she set all her stories. This makes for a positive ending. The book could provide a stimulus for discussing different types of family, although this is not the main focus of the story.

The watercolour illustrations are lovely and demonstrate the relationship between the members of the family, whilst also supporting the text. They bring the story to life. This book would be suitable to read with a whole class or for children to read independently.

The story may appeal more to girls because of the princess theme, however the wider topics presented within the story will hopefully interest all children. The themes are broad and apply universally. This book is also included in the Family Diversities Reading Resource.

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Duck, squirrel and cat live together in a lovely home in the woods. Together, they make the most tasty pumpkin soup, each fulfilling their role. Indeed, they do many things together, each contributing a particular skill. Then, one day, duck decides that it would be good to take charge of stirring the soup. A bitter squabble ensues and the harmony of the home is lost. Duck walks out and as time passes the other two realise how much they miss him. They search and search and begin to fear that he might have found some better friends. Thankfully, there is a happy ending.

This is a lively story – made more so by the very active and detailed illustrations – that will be ideal when discussing the value of friendship with children. The way that duck storms out of the house and cat shouts, "You'll be back," is reminiscent of all kinds of arguments. The sense of loss experienced by the friends, and their growing concern for one another, is endearing and reflects the emotions felt when friends argue or become jealous of one another.

Rainbow House
By Vivian French
Published by Tamarind, sine loco
1999
ISBN 1870516443

Diandra always walks home past the Rainbow House on Mondays after school. She knows that it is the most wonderful house in town and makes up stories about the people who live there. When a coffee morning is held, Diandra is able to visit the house with her mum. The interior is large and airy. She gives a gift of a book and a jigsaw to the residents and arranges to return for another visit.

This book presents a positive image of different generations relating to one another. Diandra's visit provides a welcome distraction from the television. It provides an appropriate resource to support children's understanding that some older people cannot live in their own homes and need particular care and provision.
Rebecca’s Passover
By Adele Geras
Illustrated by Sheila Moxley
Published by Frances Lincoln, London
2003
ISBN 9780711219595

Rebecca’s family is preparing to celebrate Passover. They will sit down on the first two evenings for a special meal called a Seder and eat Matzah for eight days. They will ask special questions and sing songs as well as listening to the amazing story of Moses and the Israelites escaping from slavery in Egypt many years ago.

This book provides a very good resource to support learning about this Jewish festival with children. The amount of text and detail might make it particularly useable with older children. The illustrations combine the story of the family with this account of Moses. It also includes additional details about Passover and a recipe for Haroset (an apple and cinnamon mixture eaten during the special meal).

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Remembering
By Dianne Leuter
Illustrated by Daniel Postage
Published by Child Bereavement Charity, West Wycombe
2009
ISBN 9780952166184

This book is intended for a child who has recently been bereaved. It provides spaces for the child to write about what is happening at the moment, to share feelings and to explore emotions. It suggests that bereavement is like a dark cloud that hangs over us, and that “After a while it will blow away and it’s lovely and light again.” However, the book is realistic as it acknowledges that the cloud can come back, sometimes at unexpected times.

This book provides a lovely format for recording memories. It gives the chance to consider how life has changed and to think about saying goodbye. The illustrations are quite subtle and embellish the pages whilst leaving plenty of room for children to write, draw and stick things into the book.

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Rotten and Rascal: the two terrible pterosaur twins
By Paul Geraghty
Published by Red Fox, London
2007
ISBN 9780099438663

This is a very amusing story about argumentative twin baby pterosaurs. Rotten and Rascal shout, screech and scream. The other dinosaurs encourage them to compete to see who has the best beak, who can swim the best... and who can argue the least. The Rex suggests that the tastiest one should be the winner. The twins
Saddest King, The
By Chris Wormell
Published by Red Fox, London
2008
ISBN 9780099483847

There once was a country where everyone was happy... all the time. No matter what befell the population they smiled and laughed. But one day a young boy broke the law and cried. He is taken away by the kind’s guards and has to face the monarch himself. There he discovers that the king only appears happy – because he wears a mask! It turns out that the king is heartbroken because his dog died and has been pretending to be happy so that other people can be. The story ends with the affirmation that it is fine to feel the way that you feel.

The book has lovely illustrations of the main characters, set against plain backgrounds. This puts the focus on the people in the story and their feelings. It provides a useful story to stimulate discussion about how we show our feelings and to explain that at times it is ok to be upset or sad. It also illustrates the grief felt following the death of a pet.

Samira’s Eid
By Nasreen Aktar
Illustrated by Enebor Attard
Published by Mantra, London
2002
ISBN 1-852-69183-2 (Panjabi and English)

This book tells the story of a young girl, Samira, and her brother, Hassan, and their experiences of Eid. It explains details about the festival, when it takes place and the kinds of observances and customs that are followed.

The story presents Eid as an enjoyable time where families get together in a loving atmosphere. Samira is shown with her parents and also with her Nani, who arrives towards the end.

This book provides an accessible introduction to the festival of Eid. It will be useful in RE lessons and as a resource to show the importance of families. It also provides an opportunity to address the negative stereotypes of Islam that appear in the news.
media and to provide Muslim children with a positive illustration of a situation that may reflect their own home life.

The illustrations are appealing. The book could be used as a shared text in Key Stage 1 or as an independent reader in Key Stage 2. It is available in ten dual language editions. This book is also included in the *Family Diversities Reading Resource*.

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### Say Hello

*By Jack Foreman*

*Illustrated by Michael Foreman*

*Published by Walker Books, London*

*2007*

*ISBN 978140630724590100*

This simply illustrated book includes very brief text on each double-page spread. Its staccato tone communicates effectively loneliness and isolation, which for a dog and later a boy finds resolution and friendship. The moral of the story is to look out for those who are on their own and to say hello. The end papers include that greeting in a variety of languages.

This is a very accessible text, rhythmic and to the point. It could be used with children of a variety of ages and presents an effective sense of how it feels to be left out or lonely.

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### Scaredy Cat and Boo

*By Michael Broad*

*Published by Hodder Children’s Books, London*

*2007*

*ISBN 9780340917787*

Scaredy Cat is scared of everything. No matter where he goes, or what he tries, the fear just does not go away. Then, on day, he meets Boo the mouse. Boo offers friendship and gradually shows Scaredy Cat that the world is not such a frightening place.

The bright, detailed illustrations add a great deal of humour and action to this story of how an unlikely friendship brings courage. This would be a super book to use when discussing friendship and mutual support with younger children.

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An old hermit lived up in the mountains at the end of a rainbow. One day, a young man appeared asking for the end of the rainbow. He was hoping to find treasure, having come from the other end of the rainbow where there were great riches. On heading home, he became a very successful merchant, but did not find happiness. He remembered the old hermit and his message of peace. When the hermit is summoned to the palace he does not find pleasure in the riches he experiences and shares his message of finding peace and harmony in the simplicity of nature. The message is that peace comes from within rather from the material world.

The intricate illustrations are reminiscent of batik or stained glass windows. They provide vivid images of the beauty of the world. This text is ideal for discussing the nature of happiness and the contrast between inner peace and outward material success.

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This book includes letters from Ruby to Grampa (sic) and his responses. A special letter includes a secret extra part – shiny things have been hidden for Ruby and treasure is discovered in the tree. It alludes to the traditional rhyme about Magpies.

This book considers intergenerational issues, including the relationship between grandfather and granddaughter. It also includes the birth of a new baby in the family. At the end of the book it is not clear whether the grandfather has died, although this may be inferred.

The illustrations are stylised and colourful. The reviewers felt that it would be important to consider how to use this book with children. The reviewers reacted to this story with a range of responses; the blurb on the back cover suggests that it is a “profoundly moving” story.

This text is a reworking of *The Magpie Song* (Picture Mammoth, 1995) with revised text and new illustrations. The earlier version is more suitable for older children in primary schools, particularly as some of the illustrations are darker and more atmospheric. The later version includes messages for Ruby under “hidden” flaps.
Shopping Basket, The
By John Burningham
Published by Red Fox, London
1980
ISBN 9780099899303

Steven is asked to pop to the shop by his mum. He sets off on the adventure, past the house with the nasty dog, the full litter bin, the men digging up the pavement and the gap in the railings. He buys everything on her list (which provides a lovely counting activity to enjoy with children). However, on his way home he encounters a range of animals who try to take his shopping. Steven outwits each one and beats the bullies.

This is a very positive story about facing challenge in a confident way. It will engage younger readers and provides plenty of opportunities for counting and recounting. It provides an interesting insight into how responsibility increases with age. It could also support discussion about stranger danger and how to cope with bullying or threatening situations.

Siddharth and Rinki
By Addy Farmer
Illustrated by Karin Littlewood
Published by Tamarind Books, London
2009
ISBN 9781848530089

Siddharth has just come to live in Britain. He has special memories of the heat and colours of India and of the friends he left behind. Rinki, his toy elephant, is the only one who he feels understands his situation. However, when Rinki is lost Siddharth has to enlist the help of the other children to help in his search, through which he finds both friendship with them... and Rinki.

Karin Littlewood’s illustrations are beautiful and enhance the story. Effectively they provide a second source of narrative which makes the book accessible to pre-readers. This is a positive book about starting school, valuing memories and making new friends.

Sidney and the Little Blue Elephant
By Sharon Renatta
Published by Alison Green Books, London
2009
ISBN 9781407105949

Sidney and his friends love to play games. Some Sidney likes, but his friends are not so sure. Others, his friends like but Sidney is not so sure. Sidney’s secret is that he cannot ride a bike. He tries and tries and repeatedly has mishaps and accidents.
With his friends to support him he achieves success – and even manages to ride unaided.

This is an inspiring book about friendship and how, whilst we each have likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses, together we can provide support for one another. This endearing tale focuses on the main characters throughout, with the illustrations often majoring on the animals rather than any broader background. The text provides a good introduction to the use of speech in written form and the layout and font size add to the impact of the words.

**Silly School**
By Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick
Published by Frances Lincoln, London
2007
ISBN 9781845075897

Beth does not want to go to school. Aunty Bea tells her that there will be singing, Ann tell her that there will be toys, Aunty Mel mentions that there will be the opportunity for painting, Grandad suggests that games might interest her. Uncle Ben and Gran cannot convince her that lunchtime is appealing. Daddy asks what she would like to do. On discovering that all her friends will be at school Beth decides to attend… and then does not want to return home.

This simple and repetitive story is enhanced by the humour contained in the illustrations. It provides an accessible tale to share with children who are apprehensive about starting school and includes an element that may appeal: the fact that their friends will be there.


**Six Is So Much Less Than Seven**
By Ronald Himler
Published by Star Bright Books, New York NY
2002
ISBN 9781887734912

Each morning a man wakes up to the company of his friendly cats. They are with him as he eats breakfast, works on the farm, takes a rest and cleans the house. Towards the end of the book we see that one friend is missing, and much missed.
This is a lovely story about how one missing friend seems so important. At its end we see that life goes on, as one of the cats has new kittens.

This book has stunning watercolour illustrations which add impact and warmth to the brief text on each double-page spread. It might be useful as a support for a child when a pet dies or when talking about loss and grief.

**Skin I’m In, The: a first look at racism**
By Pat Thomas
Illustrated by Lesley Harker
Published by Barron’s, Hapauge, NY
2003
ISBN 9780764124594

This book presents a clear and frank consideration of racism. It asks children what they know about their own family background and heritage. It explains how diverse the human race is, and outlines that racist people want to cause division in society. Racist people are identified as bullies and cowards. The book provides strategies to use if bullying occurs and asks children if they have ever faced racist comments.

This is an accessible and direct book, which includes useful websites, a glossary of terms and suggestions on how to use the book with children. Used thoughtfully it has the potential to raise issues with children in a supportive and structured way and to consider how changes may be needed in individual views and attitudes.

**Sniff**
By Yokococo
Published by Walker Books, London
2010
ISBN 9781406323269

Fennel the dog has Granny’s slipper on his nose. He heads to the park, the railway station and the seaside. In each place he is not able to bark in response to those he meets, but only to sniff. At the close of the book the slipper is replaced and the reader realises that Fennel has been remembering Granny and her favourite places through his sense of smell.

This is a poignant story which makes the reader consider special memories and associations of those who have died. It does so in an accessible and, at times, amusing manner. This warm story will appeal to a variety of ages.
Something Beautiful
By Sharon Dennis Wyeth
Illustrated by Chris K. Soentpiet
Published by Doubleday, New York
1998
ISBN 9780385322393

A young girl longs to see beyond the difficult surroundings in which she is growing up. She thinks that everyone should have something beautiful in their life and wonders what her thing is. She asks family and neighbours what is beautiful. Their responses include food, music and dance. The optimism she finds from their answers helps her to start making a difference in her neighbourhood and to identify hopes for her future.

This book has intricate and powerful painted illustrations which show the despair, hope and joy in the settings encountered by the girl. It focuses on the positive experiences of many people, the beauty that they see around them and the inner beauty of hope. Real strengths of the book are the sense of empowerment experienced by the girl and the message that there is strength in community.

Something Else
By Kathryn Cave
Illustrated by Chris Riddell
Published by Puffin Books, London
1994
ISBN 9780140549072

*Something Else* tells the story of a creature called Something Else who is excluded from his neighbours’ activities because he behaves and looks different. Something Else desperately wants to be like the others, but somehow can never belong, until one day when Something appears on Something Else’s doorstep. Could it be that there are others who don’t quite fit in? And could it be that he has finally found a friend after all?

One strength of the book is the complexity it shows in the character Something Else. Instead of being a stereotypically good character, Something Else shows that he has his own prejudices. When Something tries to make friends with Something Else, he initially doesn't want to know. Something Else excludes the creature, seemingly unknowingly, for the same reasons the others excluded him. In the end, Something Else recognises himself in the sad face of the creature, and has a change of heart.

The story ends on a lovely note when a human arrives. In comparison to the other characters in the book he really does look unusual. They move up and make room for him straight away: showing what has been learned about inclusion and acceptance through the story.

This story gently helps children understand how people can be different as well as showing them ways to accept others who are different to them. It is a charming story with beautiful illustrations. Cute, funny and extremely well-done, it
communicates an important message about friendship in an engaging and attractive way.

**Splat the Cat**  
By Rob Scotton  
Published by Harper Collins Children’s Books, London  
2008  
ISBN 9780007284542

It is Splat’s first day at Cat School. He wakes early and is very apprehensive. When his mum comes to help him to get ready, Splat finds lots of excuses about why he should wait until tomorrow before attending.

Splat is given a very warm welcome at school and his teacher soon makes him feel at home. He is full of questions and eager to learn. His mouse-friend Seymour saves the day when the milk cupboard will not open and all the cats learn that mice are their friends!

This is a hilarious tale of a first day at school, which provides a way of addressing apprehensions in a realistic and sympathetic manner. It shows that starting school can be enjoyable and we see Splat looking forward to his second day.

**Star for Bobby, A**  
By Helen Keenor  
Published by Bosun-Publications, London  
2005  
ISBN 0954693213

This is the story of the birth of three baby birds. One is weaker than its siblings and soon dies. Bella and Timmy speak with their parents about the death of their brother. They visit his grave. The parents reassure them that Bobby is now happy and is playing “high above the clouds now”. As it grows dark they see a special star – Bobby’s star – which will always remind them of their love.

This is an accessible story which might be appropriate for children whose sibling is stillborn or dies soon after birth. It has simple, illustrations in a child-like style. At the end of the books are included details of support groups, including the Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society, which co-published the book.
This book tells the story of a group of children who are starting school. They arrive on the first day, meet their teacher, have a look at the toilets, sit together on the carpet, pay their dinner money and discover everything that is in their classroom. The pattern of the school day is outlined, with many of the features that one would expect including drawing, playing and finishing with story time.

The second day is outlined, with children growing in confidence. Then the pattern for the first week is addressed. The book shows that sometimes children (and staff) are happy and at other times they are not. It closes with the end of term, the nativity play and a party.

This is a classic book about starting school. It provides a good overview to give children some idea of what might be encountered. The reviewers felt that it would be useful to explain to children that this is just one example and not a template for their experience of school. They also noted that children start school at varying times of year.

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This is the story of Hippo and Monkey, two very close friends who love to share stories. Hippo is older and very wise. They laugh together and enjoy telling tales. Then Hippo begins to explain that he is getting old and will die. They speak about this and whether this means that there can ever be a “happily ever after” to their story. When Hippo dies, Monkey is very upset. When the little Chameleon comes along to ask for a story, he isn’t convinced at first. However, they start to tell tales, to laugh and to sing – and to remember their special friend, Hippo.

This is a well told story which considers friendship and death. It provides a lovely model of how remembering can be cathartic. It also shows how life goes on after a bereavement and provides reassurance. Dying was a main part of the story but the use of animals gives it some distance from our lives and it focuses positively at the end on the fact that Hippo’s stories still lived on through Monkey.

The illustrations support the story well – particularly at the point where Monkey is grieving. This is a very effective book which could be used to help children to speak about bereavement and grief, and to prepare for both. It might cause some children to raise questions about death.
**Surprise! Surprise!**
By Michael Foreman
Published by Andersen Press, London
1995
ISBN 9780862645724

Little Panda is planning a surprise for his mum’s birthday. The problem is that he only has one small coin in his piggy bank. The shopkeeper can only sell him one very small plant, but Panda accepts this and heads home to hide it until the birthday. He waters and nurtures the plant. The book ends with a fold-out page – large enough to display the enormous plant that Panda had grown for his mother.

This story emphasises that effort and imagination can contribute to finding a suitable present for a birthday. This does need to involve great expense. It could be used to encourage children to make or to grow gifts for others. It also has the message that patience pays off.

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**Tadpole’s Promise**
By Jeanne Willis
Illustrated by Tony Ross
Published by Andersen Press, London
2003
ISBN 9781842700693

Tadpole met caterpillar at the place where the willow meets the water and they fell in love. They both promise to never change. But the next time they meet, tadpole has two legs beginning to grow. Although they continue to promise not to change, nature has other plans for them.

One day, when the caterpillar has become a butterfly, she flies around looking for her lost love. On meeting a frog she asks if he has seen her mate, but before she can finish the question he eats her.

This book uses a landscape orientation in order to show above and below water across two pages. It raises issues about how friendships change over time and would support discussions about how people who are quite different find love. The ending comes as a surprise and may cause mixed emotions for children, including perhaps some hilarity.

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**Talk Peace**  
By Sam Williams  
Illustrated by Mique Moriuchi  
Published by Hodder Children’s Books, London  
2005  
ISBN 9780340883808

This book encourages children to talk peace wherever they are. Whether in the sky or underground, playing with friends, eating, meeting people in the street, whatever the weather, whether dancing or partying and in whatever location. Two words should be on the lips of all people: talk peace.

The book represents people from around the world in colourful and simple illustrations. The illustrations support the text effectively and present the message in their own right: this book might be appropriate to use with children not yet able to read the text.

This attractive book presents its message in a concise and “punchy” manner.

**Tenth Good Thing About Barney, The**  
By Judith Viorst  
Illustrated by Erik Blegvad  
Published by Aladdin Books, New York NY  
1988  
ISBN 0808525484

Barney the cat is dead. The family hold a funeral for him and bury him in the garden. The children then discuss whether Barney might be in heaven. A range of issues are raised, including uncertainty about heaven. What is sure is that Barney is now contributing to the garden and to the growth of the seeds that are planted.

This book would support discussions about what heaven might be like and gives children the opportunity to question whether they believe it exists. It would need to be used sensitively so that parent’s and carer’s views and religious beliefs are taken into account. However, it does provide prompts to help children to discuss and form their own views.

The illustrations are monochrome and intricate, reflecting the book’s publication date of 1971.
**That Summer**  
By Tony Johnson  
Illustrated by Barry Moser  
Published by Voyager Books, London  
2007  
ISBN 9780152058562

This is a powerful book which outlines the summer that Joey discovered that he was dying. He discusses this with family members. His grandmother is sewing a quilt and he adds patches to reflect his interests. When his hair starts to fall out and he has to have his head shaved, his brother joins him in an act of solidarity.

This book would be appropriate for thoughtful use with children in Key Stage 2. It includes monochrome photographs throughout, which add to the reality of the story. Presenting the text through the brother’s eyes enhance the emotion of the story. It might be particularly useful for use with a class where a peer or sibling has a terminal illness.

**There’s a House Inside My Mummy**  
By Giles Andreae  
Illustrated by Vanessa Cabban  
Published by Orchard Books, London  
2002  
ISBN 9781841210681

A little boy awaits the arrival of his new sister or brother. He learns that he used to live inside his Mummy, although he doesn't remember much about that. His dad tells him that it is a lovely place to be and he can see that Mummy is growing larger by the day. Sometimes Mummy feels sick, which he understands. He wishes that the "house" had a window so that he could see inside. He looks forward to the arrival of the new sibling and cuddles Mummy and talks to the new baby.

This bright and colourful book shows how a young boy anticipates a new sibling and addresses a range of associated issues. The language is appropriate for young children. This book is ideal to use with children who are preparing for the birth of their first sibling. Adults will also find humour in the text.

**There’s Going to be a Baby**  
By John Burningham  
Illustrated by Helen Oxenbury  
Published by Walker Books, London  
2010  
ISBN 978074454996690100

This book begins with a conversation between mother and child: there is going to be a baby; what will it be called; will it be a girl or a boy? They consider what the baby
might grow up to be: a chef, an artist, a gardener, a zoo-keeper, or a sailor. Each idea is followed by a double-page spread showing the baby performing the task (as a baby). Some show it facing dangers and perils, reflecting the boy’s nervousness at the arrival of a new sibling.

The story ends with the boy and his granddad heading to the hospital to visit mum and the new baby. They know that they are going to love the new member of their family very much.

This humorous and warm story follows a child’s questions in the time before the birth of a sibling. It will help children in such a situation and might take away some of their apprehensions, or at least open up conversations so that they can think through the changes ahead. The illustrations – in a distinctive Art Deco style - provide a great deal to discuss, and are particularly accessible to readers not yet able to read text. This book is going to become a firm favourite of many parents/carers, children and those working with children in schools, libraries and other settings.

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To Mum With Love
By Vivian French
Illustrated by Dana Kubick
Published by Walker Books, Oxford
2002
ISBN 978744594638

On the day before mum’s birthday Stanley visits Rex, his big brother. They plan what to give as a special birthday present, but whatever Stanley chooses fails to work out: his flowers fade, he cannot find any money to buy toffees and he drops his homemade mud cake. After a sleepless night he presents an apparently empty box – a box full of kisses for this mother.

This story provides the opportunity to consider the importance of gifts and the motivation for giving. It might help children to consider imaginative ways of making gifts for their parents and carers. It will also help a consideration of what is valuable and valued.

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Tom and Sophia Start School
By Henriette Barkow
Illustrated by Prascilla Lamont
Polish translation by Jolanra Starek-Corile
Published by Mantra Lingua, London
2006 (Polish and English)
ISBN 1844445763

Tom and Sophia are children from families living in the same building who both start school on the same day. We see them preparing for school: meeting their new teacher; buying new clothes; and feeling excited and apprehensive. In their new classroom they begin to learn the routines and enjoy a variety of activities. Tom has
Ted hidden in his pocket to give him comfort. The children meet a wide and diverse group of new friends and soon begin to settle.

This is a lovely book to support children as they prepare to begin school. The story includes a great deal of detail about what happens during a school day and shows both children's concerns and sense of anticipation. The amount of text means that it will be most appropriate to read with a child, which provides a context in which to discuss the issues and dispel any anxieties.

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**Trouble with the Tucker Twins**  
**By Rose Impey**  
**Illustrated by Maureen Galvani**  
**Published by Viking Books, London**  
1991  
**ISBN 0670828572**

Mick claims to feel poorly. Whilst he likes school he feels apprehensive about attending because he does not like the Tucker twins. They may not be tall or tough, but there are two of them! Whenever Mick goes, they seem to be there causing annoyance.

When Mick returns to school, he finds that one of the twins is not in attendance. The other twin is miserable without him. Mick ends up offering support. He comes to realise that the twins are not as unpleasant as they seemed.

The style of illustration makes this book look rather dated. The story might help children to consider how they perceive one another and how they are perceived by others. The resolution to the bullying is rather straightforward and will need discussing carefully with children.

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**Tusk Tusk**  
**By David McKee**  
**Published by Andersen Press, London**  
2006 (first published 1978)  
**ISBN 9781842705797**

Once the world only had black elephants and white elephants. While they loved all creatures, they hated each other. They stayed in separate parts of the jungle and plotted to kill each other. Some peace-loving elephants escaped into a secluded part of the jungle to hide, but for the others the battle was lengthy and eventually they were all dead.

Many years later, the grandchildren of the peace-loving elephants emerged from the jungle: all were grey.
This is a lovely story of how difference is overcome. It also shows how destructive hatred can be. The book might be useful when discussing issues of racism with children, but it could raise issues about any kind of diversity, difference and similarity.

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**Two Monsters**  
By David McKee  
Published by Andersen Press, London  
1985  
ISBN 9780862641221

Two monsters live on opposite sides of the same mountain. Sometimes they communicate through a hole... and one day a disagreement leads to a sleepless night and then to the start of aggression. As they hurl stones they also hurl insults. Gradually the stones become larger and the mountain is knocked to pieces. For the first time they see each other. This is an amusing tale of a disagreement that gets out of control. The insults used by the monsters add humour to the situation – for the reader at least. The fact that the monsters begin to fight without ever having met is interesting: when they finally see each other they also see each other’s viewpoint. This would be a useful text to use with children when considering disagreements, name-calling and insults and also to explore how sometimes anger can escalate when we are left to think about situations alone, rather than working out issues face-to-face.

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**Up in Heaven**  
By Emma Chichester Clark  
Published by Andersen Press, London  
2004  
ISBN 184270331

Daisy, the family dog, does not always feel well and is tiring easily. One night she dies in her sleep and goes to heaven. The book shows Daisy in heaven where the sun shines, she can do her favourite things and where she makes new friends. Daisy wishes she could tell Arthur about her new life. He is a young boy and misses her very much. Daisy sends Arthur dreams to let him know that she is ok and to
encourage him to buy a new dog. This brings Arthur a sense of peace about having a new pet, and brings Daisy pleasure – as she knows Arthur is happy.

This is a beautifully illustrated book with colourful images that express emotion and mood. The reviewers liked the ideas presented by this book, as lots of children will loose pets and it is an issue that many will face in their time at school. The reviewers would display this in their classroom all the time because it explores the issues in quite a light hearted way and has a happy ending. Losing a pet can happen quite often within the school community.

This is a reassuring story which addresses death in a positive and unsentimental manner. One issue it does raise is whether dogs do go to heaven, and whether they can still communicate with their former owners: this may result in questions or discussion.

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Very Best of Friends, The
By Margaret Wild
Illustrated by Julie Vivas
Published by Bodley Head, London
1989
ISBN 0370314352

Jessie and James live on a farm with a variety of animals and their cat, William. William is loved by James, but not by Jessie. She tries to like William because of James. When James dies suddenly from a heart attack Jessie is distraught. She becomes quiet and forgetful; over time she becomes reclusive.

William is left uncared for and becomes mean, lean and aggressive. He has to fight for his own survival. When Jessie realises how unkempt he has become she is moved to begin to care once again. She has to work hard to regain his trust.

This is a touching story of how a woman finds bereavement difficult and how eventually she is moved to show care and kindness. It might be useful as a support for discussing how different people deal with grief.

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War and Peas
By Michael Foreman
Published by Hamish Hamilton, Harmondsworth
1974
ISBN 9780241890134

The Lion King is sad. There is no food left in his country, there has been no rain and the ground is hard and dry. He decides to head to the neighbouring country to ask for help. Travelling through its landscape he sees the wealth and bounty of that nation. However, on arrival at the royal court he is accused of being a robber and threatened with imprisonment. As he flees the country, he is chased by the army.
The story ends positively with the coming of rain and crops beginning to grow once more.

This story provides a stimulus for discussing the distribution of wealth and resources in the world. The contrast between the animal kingdom and the human kingdom might help to distance the issues from real life situations. The abstract illustrations add some humour to the book, providing a welcome addition to what could be a very difficult and challenging storyline. The resolution to the story might suggest that the world’s problems can be solved easily and will need to be addressed with care.

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**We Were Gonna Have a Baby, But We Had an Angel Instead**

By Pat Schwiebert

Illustrated by Taylor Bills

Published by Grief Watch, Portland Oregon

2003

ISBN 9780972424110

In this book, a child plans what to do with his baby sibling once it arrives.

Half way through the book, the baby dies. The book shows the sadness felt by both parents and child. From this point, an angel begins to appear in the illustrations. There is the affirmation that the baby will live on in the hearts of the family members. Towards the close of the book there is an application of the issues, considering “if this has happened to you...”

On the last page the text asserts that it would have been more fun to have a baby, which brings the book to a close without resolution. This might make it difficult to use with some children, but the realistic consideration of emotions may well be appropriate in some circumstances depending on the maturity of the reader. There are tips to support parents and other books are available in the same series.

The illustrations are simple with plenty of plain space on each page. Sentences are short and accessible. There is some use of American spelling (e.g. *gonna* and *mommy*).

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**Welcome Precious**  
By Nikki Grimes  
Illustrated by Bryan Collier  
Published by Orchard Books, New York NY  
2006  
ISBN 9780439557023

This book shows the wealth of new experiences encountered by a new baby. There is a whole array of senses to explore, the beauty of nature to encounter and a variety of caring family relationships to enjoy.

The book is a celebration of the birth of a child – and portrays the wonderful sense of optimism and delight that this can bring.

The illustrations were prepared using both watercolour and collage. They show positive and joyful images of two parents with their child.

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**Welcome to the World Baby**  
By Na’ima bint Robert  
Illustrated by Derek Brazell  
Published by Mantra Lingua, London  
2005 (French and English trans. Annie Arnold)  
ISBN 1844442756

This book is available in 28 dual language editions. Tariq comes to school and announces that his new baby brother was born at the weekend. He is delighted. The children in his class are asked to think about how they welcome new babies into their families, and to bring something to do with the five senses to support a discussion.

The variety of ideas shared in the subsequent pages provides some good opportunities for discussion, and exemplifies a range of cultural approaches to celebrating a birth. The book is well illustrated and appealing showing a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds and some traditional dress. The text is appropriate to read with younger children, or for older children to share or to read alone. The teacher may need some prior knowledge, or to do some research, to identify which cultures/traditions are represented throughout the book and the meanings behind some of the objects and rituals.

The book concludes with a five senses party – where all the children come together to celebrate the birth of Tariq’s brother. Overall, it provides an effective way of using questions to help children to learn about different cultures and traditions. The reviewers felt that one particularly positive aspect was that it indicated that the baby was expected – it did not suddenly arrive in the story. This book is also included in the Family Diversities Reading Resource.

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What Friends Do Best
By Jonathan Emmett
Illustrated by Nathan Reed
Published by Harper Collins Children’s Books, London
2004
ISBN 9780007141203

Winston is a builder. He loves to build things – a car for himself, a motorbike for Ralph, a boat for Alice. He takes great pride in his achievements. But when he comes to build something really big he discovers just what friends do best. He finds that some parts are too large to carry on his own, that some things are so small he can’t find them. With the strength and attention to detail of his friends he is saved from failure, and they all blast off into space in the rocket they built... together.

This story emphasises how each person can bring a different skill or talent to a friendship. It highlights how stubborn independence can lead to frustration, and shows how friends care the most in times of need. The illustrations and presentation suggest that this book would be particularly appropriate for younger children.

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What is Peace?
By Emma Damon
Published by Mantra Lingua, London
2004 (Japanese and English)
ISBN 1844447359

What is Peace? is a beautiful book suitable for young children. It is colourful and each page includes a lift-up flap, under which is a statement contrasting the definition of peace. It presents positive messages about peace being about listening, sharing, caring, giving and creating and concludes with the affirmations that peace is about friendship, liking and loving.

The illustrations are inclusive showing children from different ethnic backgrounds and those with disabilities. At the back of the book are instructions to make a Peace Crane and a poster about peace.

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What Newt Could Do For Turtle
By Jonathan London
Illustrated by Louise Voce
Published by Walker Books, London
1996
ISBN 9780744532715

This book is illustrated with strong, vibrant colours depicting scenes of the characters in their natural environment. There is plenty of visual material to consider with children across each double page spread, in addition to considering the text.
The story is about Newt, who relies a great deal on help from Turtle. Newt wonders whether he will ever be able to do anything for Turtle; they are good friends, but it would be lovely to do something helpful or kind for him. When Turtle ends up inverted and cannot right himself... Newt has his chance.

This is a warm story of friendship, of unconditional care which does not require a payback and of wanting to be there to support those we care about. There is a happy ending, with both creatures slipping sleepily into the safety of the mud for the winter hibernation!

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What Will I Be?
By Dawne Allette
Illustrated by Paul Cemmick
Published by Tamarind, London
2006
ISBN 9781870516815

This rhyming book takes the reader through a wide range of career aspirations and ambitions. The illustrations challenge gender stereotypes relating to job roles and are also inclusive in terms of presenting a variety of people from different ethnic backgrounds. A range of roles is presented, from rat-catcher to fire fighter, teacher to celebrity.

The illustrations are bold and eye catching. The moral of the story is that all of the jobs are appealing, but it is important first to gain an education to make the choice possible. This book provides a positive and highly engaging way of discussing future hopes with children, and of considering the range of older people who support and help them in daily life.

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What’s Up With Matt?
By Kim Chilman-Blair and John Taddeo
Illustrated by Liquid Comics
Published by Medikidz Limited, London
2009
ISBN 9781906935030

This lively and highly engaging comic book explores HIV through the story of Matt, a keen footballer. When Matt becomes exhausted during a match, the team from Medikidz Headquarters transport him to Mediland to learn about HIV. Their giant planet, shaped like a human body, provides the resource needed to explain about his health. They travel together through the bloodstream to explore the battle that is taking place within him. They explain about viruses and infections and about how HIV affects key cells. It also explains about anti-HIV medications. The story ends with Matt back on the football pitch – better informed and ready to score a penalty.
This is a well paced and attractive book which covers a wide range of information in an upbeat and affirming way. It will be useful in giving older children information about HIV in settings where this is felt to be appropriate.

When an Elephant Comes to School
By Jan Ormerod
Published by Frances Lincoln Children’s Books, London
2004
ISBN 9781845070656

An elephant starting school may be shy at first. He will need to make friends and might enjoy art and craft activities. He might love music, including playing the tambourine, and cry during sad stories. At the end of the day he will be delighted when his mum comes to collect him from school.

This book suggests many ways of making an elephant feel welcome on starting school. It provides a useful resource to help any child in a similar situation, or those considering how to welcome a new classmate. The focus on an elephant provides the opportunity to discuss issues without focussing on a specific child. The illustrations are simple and colourful, and the addition of post-it note style comments provides further prompts for consideration.

When I Grow Up
By Colin McNaughton
Published by Walker Books, London
2005
ISBN 9780744583724

This book considers what we want to be when we grow up: a famous poet, an angel, a rock star, a pirate or married with a family. It challenges traditional gender stereotypes. It also includes a child who does not want to grow up. The message is about ambition, imagination and enjoying childhood whilst it lasts.

The illustrations are detailed and colourful, they add humour to the book and support the text effectively. This is a lovely book to share with a whole class and would prompt discussion about the value of childhood as well as future hopes.

When I’m Big
By Debi Gliori
Published by Walker Books, London
1992
ISBN 9780744531251

Being little does not always appear to be much fun, particularly when it is bed time and you are not sleepy. A young boy considers what he plans to do when he is
older. He has a range of adventures in mind. However, after some reflection, he
decides that being little might not be too bad, as it means when scary times come it
is still possible to snuggle in bed with mum and dad.

This humorous book includes a great deal to consider, both within the text and the
detailed illustrations. It provides an opportunity to discuss ambitions and aspirations
with children as well as to consider how precious childhood is.

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When the Teddy Bears Came
By Martin Waddell
Illustrated by Penny Dale
Published by Walker Books, London
1996
ISBN 9780744547634

This is an engaging story about caring for a new baby and all the teddy bears that
come with it. One by one new bears arrive as gifts. Tom even gives one of his own
bears to his new sibling. But after a while he begins to feel left out and wonders
where he fits in – the bears are crowding him out!

This book could certainly be used with young children in particular when teaching
how we can be helpful when a new baby arrives. It also provides affirmation to help
children to understand that although the family may have grown and changed, all its
members are still special and loved.

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When We Lived in Uncle’s Hat
By Peter Stamm
Illustrated by Jutta Bauer
Published by Winged Chariot Press, Basel
2008
ISBN 9781905341047

A family embark on an imaginative, and
surreal, adventure – moving from one
dwelling to another. The live in a house,
an apartment, an hotel, under a bridge, in
Aunty’s violin and Uncle’s hat and finally
settle in a house of their own. Each page
of text follows a similar format, providing
an introduction to the new place in which
the family is living and a counting pattern
which brings a pleasant sense of
familiarity in among the unusual
surroundings.

This book would be suitable to use with
older children who are considering what is
important about home or who might benefit from an unusual (and possibly amusing) way of speaking about moving house.

Cover used with permission © Winged Chariot Press (2008).

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Where Willy Went
By Nicholas Allan
Published by Hutchinson, London
2004
ISBN 9780091892951

Willy is a sperm living, with his three million friends, inside Mr Browne. He practises every day in preparation for the great swimming race. Whilst he is not very good at sums, he is incredibly good at swimming. He has two maps: one to navigate in Mr Browne and the second showing inside Mrs Browne. Then, one night, the race begins. Having won the race he burrows all the way into Mrs Browne’s egg and something amazing begins to happen. Eventually, baby Edna is born. Whilst she turns out to not be very good at sums... she is very good at swimming!

This book provides an amusing and highly engaging explanation of human reproduction for younger children. It will also be enjoyed by older children who will appreciate the humour. The illustrations provide sensitive and age-appropriate information for children.

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Where’s Jamela
By Niki Daly
Published by Frances Lincoln, London
2004
ISBN 9781845070311

When Jamela has to move home with Mama and Gogo she decides that she would rather stay where she is. Mama, however, is excited to have a new job and the prospect of a new place to live. At first, Jamela struggles to help with the packing. When she becomes weary she climbs into a cardboard box and falls asleep, only to end up being packed on the back of the truck along with all the household contents! Needless to say, the adults engage in a frantic search for her and end up calling the police. The story ends with Jamela safe and happy in her new home.

This is an endearing story, set in a South African township, which affirms the notion that home is where the heart is. The illustrations show in detail the varied emotions of the characters.

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Whisperer, The
By Nick Butterworth
Published by Harper Collins Children’s Books, London
2004
ISBN 9780007120178

Two gangs of cats, one ginger and one black and white have been fighting for as long as anyone can remember. The narrator, a rat, is surprised one night to discover two cats from opposing gangs who are in love. The rat decides that action is required, not public, loud action, but a whisper. The whisper spreads, but the whisperer remains unnoticed. The two gangs come together to confront the pair and give an ultimatum: either they leave each other, or they leave their families.

The pair of cats departs, only to return with their own family in tow. The gangs decide to split the kittens, but there is a problem: one of the offspring is neither ginger nor black and white. The families call a truce whilst they work out what to do: the rat worries that they may get use to living in harmony... and turn their aggression on him!

This book is ideal to use with children of a variety of ages to consider the tensions between different groups of people. The focus on cats distances the issues from human situations and provides an opportunity to consider why different groups may dislike or avoid one another.

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Why?
By Nicolai Popov
Published by North-South Books, London
1998
ISBN 9781558589964

A mouse burrows out of the ground, attacks a frog and steals its flower. Other frogs leap to its defence and celebrate regaining the flowers. The mouse returns, this time armed, and drives the frogs into hiding. They access amphibious craft and fight back... and so the battle escalates. Carnage ensues, and at the end of the book one mouse and one frog are left surveying the battlefield.

This is a fascinating book, presented with intricate drawings and without any text. It encourages children to discuss how a small disagreement or jealousy can build into more extensive conflict and to consider the consequences of war and violence. The illustrations provide an excellent resource to stimulate storytelling and to provide opportunities to use the skills of inference and deduction.

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Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge
By Mem Fox
Illustrated by Julie Vivas
Published by Puffin Books, London
1984
ISBN 9780140505863

Wilfred is a young boy who lives in a house next door to a home for elderly people. He plays with his older neighbours, runs errands for them and listens to their stories. He comes to understand what memories are and how special they can be. When he finds that Miss Nancy has trouble remembering her past, he gathers a range of objects to prompt her.

This is a lovely book about how different generations relate. It shows that memories are precious and that sometimes they fade over time. Although the illustrations make the book appear dated (and it is over twenty years old) the focus on age, positive and warm relationships and supporting one another more than make up for this.

Will There Be a Lap for Me?
By Dorothy Corey
Published by Albert Whitman and Company, Morton Grove, Illinois
1992
ISBN 0807591106

Kyle is a young child, from an African-American family, who misses his special place on mum’s lap as her pregnancy advances and the new baby is born. He finds that no other laps are as good.

Kyle is sad because the baby needs to feed so often and this means that he has less time enjoying his mother’s undivided attention. A full page illustration shows mother nursing the new baby with Kyle beside her on the sofa. In the end mum makes room for him on her lap and creates special time for him in her day.

This is a colourful and attractive book that is suitable for young children and those in Key Stage 1. It would be particularly useful when supporting a child who is preparing for, or who has recently had, a new baby in the family. The child’s experience would be a good support for discussion and the positive ending will bring reassurance. This book is also included in the Family Diversities Reading Resource.
Willy the Champ
By Anthony Browne
Published by Walker Books, London
1985
ISBN 9780744543568

Willy isn't very good at sport. He gets emotional at the cinema. At times people laugh at him. One day he is threatened by Buster, the local bully. His friends run away, but Willy ducks to avoid a punch. When he stands up he accidentally knocks Buster out! Suddenly he is everyone’s champion!

This is a strange story about becoming an accidental hero. Willy does not really deal with the bully, he tackles him accidentally. This book might provide an opportunity to talk with children about how we each have different interests and strengths.

Willy’s inadvertent hero status contrasts with his more purposeful approach in Willy the Wimp.

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Willy the Wimp
By Anthony Browne
Published by Walker Books, London
1984
ISBN 9781406318746

When Willy answers the body-building advertisement in his comic, he thought he had found the solution to being pushed around. No longer would he be called a wimp by his fellow gorillas when he failed to hurt a fly! He did his exercises, went jogging, ate wisely, went to dance classes, learned how to box and eventually got bigger and bigger. Now he could stand up for others.

This is a positive story of how Willy took action in order to change how others saw him. It mainly avoids gender stereotyping, with some humour, and manages to ensure that a humorous end keeps Willy humble! Anthony Browne presents this story with his characteristically amusing and high quality illustrations. It was one of the early books in which his now famous gorilla theme began to emerge.

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Window
By Jennie Baker
Published by Julia MacRae Books, London
1991
ISBN 9781856810104

Window is a wordless picture book showing the development of a landscape through first the eyes of a parent and baby, then a growing boy, a young adult and then a married man with a family of his own. Through the window it is possible to see how an area develops from a cleared patch of forest to a single house, a small village and
eventually a city. When the man later moves to the country, the cycle appears to begin once again.

This beautifully illustrated, detailed and highly engaging book provides an opportunity to consider not only the lifecycle of the growing child, but also how land use and communities change over time. The stylised and detailed illustrations say far more than words could conjure and provide a wealth of opportunities for discussion.

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**Wonderful Journey, The**

*By Paul Geraghty*

*Published by Hutchinson Children’s Books, London*

*1999*

*ISBN 0091766281*

Sam’s grandmother is planning to “go away”. She explains to him how he will always remember her stories and how he can travel to be with her in his imagination. They talk together and imagine being in different places around the world. When the grandmother does go, Sam searches for her before coming to realise that they are still connected through imagination.

The book does not make clear whether Grandma dies or travels “back home” to live in a place where she can be happy. The story may use travelling as a metaphor for death. The illustrations suggest that grandma is coming to the sunset of her life. This might provide opportunity for discussion with children. It might be confusing for some children.

The illustrations are eye-catching scenes with a three-dimensional effect. The reviewers would recommend it particularly for older readers because of its use of metaphor.

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**Wonderful Life**

*By Helen Ward*

*Published by Templar Publishing, Dorking*

*2007*

*ISBN 9781840115673*

Snutt is an Ift, an explorer and a dreamer who discovers a wonderful planet. Having explored the marvels it contains, Snutt begins to feel lonely, for there is no one with whom to share the wonderful sights. He meets a Waft, a creature in a similar position to himself and they listen and watch and marvel together. They find a special friendship together and wonder at their amazing universe.

This book makes unusual use of language, creating names for both the creatures and sights. A small amount of text presents the simple story, whilst the accompanying detailed and stylised illustrations present a beautiful world. This book provides an imaginative way to consider friendship and how a companion can make
an enjoyable experience all the more worthwhile. It might be particularly useful for children moving to a new place.

**Year in the City, The**
By Kathy Henderson
Illustrated by Paul Howard
Published by Walker, London
1996
ISBN 978140630965290100

As the title suggests, this book follows life in the city through a year. Starting with the turning of a new year, dark mornings, falling snow, the Chinese New Year, the coming of spring, summer holidays, traffic jams, sporting events and the onset of coughs and colds as winter approaches, this book provides a useful starting point for discussions about the passing of time, changing seasons and significant events in the life of a community.

Paul Howard’s detailed illustrations provide a great deal to discuss and communicate some of the excitement and frustration that people may feel during a year. They might provide an opportunity to discuss how the experience of this city contrasts with the experiences of children in a class.

**Yes We Can!**
By Sam McBratney
Illustrated by Charles Fuge
Published by Puffin Books, London
2006
ISBN 9780140569926

Duck, Roo and Mouse are good friends. They play together and rest together. One day they challenge each other to try different tasks – jumping, swimming and chasing their own tail. Of course, each has their own skill and they laugh at the others who cannot perform it. This leads to tension and they are unhappy because they had each made fun of someone else and someone had made fun of them.

Thankfully, Roo’s mother comes to the rescue and by focussing on what they are good at, rather than what they cannot do, they laugh together and decide to become friends again.

This is a simple story of close friends who disagree and who make fun of one another. It would provide a very helpful focus to support children in Circle Time or at other points when friendships are strained. The colourful stylised pictures add humour to a book addressing an issue that children sometimes find difficult.
Titch is in need of new trousers (pants). His brother, Pete, offers his old ones which are now too small for him. However, they are too big for Titch. Gradually family members provide a range of ‘cast off’ clothing and Titch ends up fully kitted out in garments that are too big for him at the moment. Eventually Dad takes Titch to the shop to buy a whole new outfit.

When mum returns home with a new baby, Titch presents it with all his old clothes. Whilst they may be too big at the moment, one day they will fit well.

This is an amusing story with a circular plot. It shows different ages of children relating to one another and some children will find familiarity in the passing on of clothing from one child to the next as they grow. Throughout the story the detailed illustrations reflect and develop this theme of growth.

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Related Websites and Organisations

Bereavement

For a comprehensive list of support organizations covering all aspects of bereavement go to this link from the Child Bereavement Charity web page:

http://www.childbereavement.org.uk/information_support/other_support_organisations

Child Bereavement Charity
www.childbereavement.org.uk/

The Child Bereavement Charity (CBC) provides specialized support, information and training to all those affected when a baby or child dies, or when a child is bereaved. This is a comprehensive and informative website with a separate section for schools. This includes advice on breaking sad news, setting up a bereavement support group, lesson plans and how to write a school policy. It also provides links to over 400 other support organizations covering all aspects of bereavement and child illness.

Child Bereavement Network, The
www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/

The Childhood Bereavement Network offers access to high-quality local and national information, guidance and support to enable all young people, their families and professional carers to manage the impact of death on their lives.

Childline
www.childline.org.uk

Although Childline deals with all aspects of life the site offers a search box for specific topics like death and bereavement and addresses them in a child friendly way.

Cruse Bereavement Care
www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk/

Cruse exists to promote the well-being of bereaved people and to enable anyone bereaved by death to understand their grief and cope with their loss. It has specific sections on information for schools, children and young people and the military family.

Grief Watch
www.griefwatch.com
An American site providing resources for grieving families and professional caregivers

RD4U (road for you)
www.rd4u.org.uk/

RD4U is developed by Cruse Bereavement Care's Youth Involvement Project which aims to support young people, after the death of someone close to them. This site
offers young people the opportunity to share their experiences, thoughts and feelings through reading about other young people in a similar situation.

**Winston’s Wish: the charity for bereaved children.**
www.winstonswish.org.uk

Winston’s Wish helps young people re-adjust to life after the death of a parent or sibling. The organization offers practical support and guidance to the young people and their families including a helpline to help them cope throughout the grieving process. The website includes advice, strategies for supporting children of all ages and ideas for school assemblies.

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**Bullying and Friendships**

For a comprehensive list of organizations dealing with bullying check out this link from the Anti-Bullying Network webpage:

[http://www.antibullying.net/resourceswwwlinks.htm](http://www.antibullying.net/resourceswwwlinks.htm)

**Anti-Bullying Network**
[http://www.antibullying.net/](http://www.antibullying.net/)

The Anti-Bullying Network provides services to support anti-bullying work in schools. Through its website it provides information and offers strategies to cope with all aspects of bullying. It also promotes research as well as providing training, publications and consultancy services.

**BeatBullying**
[http://www.beatbullying.org/index.html](http://www.beatbullying.org/index.html)

Beatbullying works with children and young people affected by bullying, especially those so profoundly affected that they can barely face going to school the next morning. They also work with young people who bully to enable them to take responsibility for their actions and to create opportunities for change for them as well as the people they have bullied.
BullyingUK
http://www.bullying.co.uk/

BullyingUK, formerly Bullying Online, provides practical information and advice to young people and their parents through the website and by email. It works with schools, youth organizations, police forces and health trusts.

Childline
www.ChildLine.org.uk/Bullying

Childline deals with a wide variety of issues affecting young people. This link will take you direct to the page that deals with bullying.

Teachernet
http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/
The Teachernet website has a section with advice and information about tackling bullying in schools.

Refugees, Asylum Seekers

For a comprehensive list of organizations providing advice and support to asylum seekers and refugees check out this link from the Refugee Action web page:

http://www.refugee-action.org.uk/information/Links.aspx

European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)
http://www.ecre.org/

ECRE is a network of 69 European organizations that promote the protection and integration of asylum-seekers and refugees based on values of human dignity, human rights and an ethic of solidarity.

Red Cross
http://www.redcross.org.uk/TLC.asp?id=89414

The Red Cross provides practical and emotional support to vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers in the UK, they respond quickly and effectively to crises – for example, by supporting large-scale arrivals or providing emergency provisions for those facing severe hardship.
Refugee Action  
http://www.refugee-action.org.uk/

Refugee Action is an independent national charity working with refugees to build new lives in the UK. They provide practical advice and assistance for newly arrived asylum seekers and long-term commitment to their settlement through community development work.

Refugee Council Online  
http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/

The Refugee Council is the largest organisation in the UK working with asylum seekers and refugees. They not only give direct help and support, but also work with asylum seekers and refugees to ensure their needs and concerns are addressed. As well as providing practical advice, the Refugee Council develops policies and carries out research. They provide regular newsletters outlining all their activities.

Celebrations and Festivals

Check out the fantastic website of Woodlands Junior School, Kent, where you will find a section called *Calendars of Special Days and Festivals* which includes: The Church Year, Multi Faith Days, The Moon Year, and National Awareness Days.

http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/customs/calendars/index.htm

Suggested Further Reading:

The following are all available to borrow from the Sibthorp Library at Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln:


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**‘Disability’ Reading Resource**
Picture books to support the social model of disability
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A resource pack to support the development of community cohesion
produced in partnership with Boston Borough Council
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ISBN 9781871346190