

# Pathfinder Series: Talking to Children

This pathfinder provides information about resources available in the JCC Patient & Family Resource Centre and on the internet.

## Books

*Cancer in Our Family: Helping Children Cope with a Parent's Illness* / Sue P. Heiney and Joan F. Hermann

Call number: 6.5.2 2013

This book was written for families with young children or adolescents, to help them cope with the changes, disruption, and challenges cancer can bring to family life. Activity pages are included for children as well as a very good resource list and references.

*How to Help Children Through a Parent's Serious Illness* / Kathleen McCue, Ron Bonn

Call number: 6.5.3 2011

This book offers supportive, practical advice, including: what to tell children about their parent's illness, how to recognize early-warning signs in a child's drawings, sleep patterns, schoolwork and eating habits, and when and where to get professional help. It also includes new insights into how family trauma and mental illness may affect children.

*Nana, What's Cancer?* / Beverly Hyman Fead and Tessa Mae Hamermesh

Call number: 6.5.28 2010

Tessa is a 10-year-old girl who wants to understand the confusing world of cancer and then to be able to explain it to other children. She embarks on her quest by asking questions of her Nana, whose answers are designed to both ease children's fears and provide them with factual information.

*What Do I Tell the Kids?* / Cancer Support Community

Call number: 6.5.25 2014

If you are concerned about children and teens who are a part of a family living with cancer this book provides information and useful tips on how to support them.

*You are Not Alone: Families Touched by Cancer* / Eva Grayzel

Call number: 6.5.23 2010

This book was written by a cancer survivor in hopes of inspiring other parents and children who have a family member with cancer. Cancer changes family dynamics; everyone in the family is affected. The children in this book are learning how change in their parent's health alters their daily interactions. The author provides ideas and suggestions on what can be done to soothe sadness, ease tension and find strength.

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## Websites

### American Cancer Society – Helping Children When a Family Member Has Cancer

<https://www.cancer.org/treatment/children-and-cancer/when-a-family-member-has-cancer.html>

This site, from the American Cancer Society has detailed information on talking to children. The section “Dealing with Diagnosis” offers advice on explaining the initial diagnosis, recurrence, treatment, terminal illness and much more.

### Canadian Cancer Society

<http://www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-journey/talking-about-cancer/telling-children/?region=on>

The Canadian Cancer Society provides information on how to talk to children about cancer. It gives valuable tips on how to tell children about a family member or friend who has cancer, and what or how much to say.

### Cancer Research UK – Support for Children Whose Parents Have Cancer

<http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/coping/emotionally/support-for-children-whose-parents-have-cancer>

A brief guide to help assist adults in talking with children of all ages about cancer. Topics include common misunderstandings children might have, the most useful ways to explain cancer, school and friend issues and much more.

### Canadian Virtual Hospice - Talking with Children and Youth About Serious Illness

[http://virtualhospice.ca/en\\_US/Main+Site+Navigation/Home/Topics/Topics/Communication/Talking+with+Children+and+Youth.aspx](http://virtualhospice.ca/en_US/Main+Site+Navigation/Home/Topics/Topics/Communication/Talking+with+Children+and+Youth.aspx)

This is an excellent article with tips on starting the conversation about illness with your child, and ways to communicate depending on the ages of the children.

### MacMillan Cancer Support – Explaining Cancer to Children and Teenagers

<https://www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/coping/talking-about-cancer/talking-to-children/explaining-cancer.html>

This section of the website helps to understand how to explain serious illness and cancer to children and teens. It has tips on what to say, important points to discuss and information on explaining cancer to children who have learning disabilities and links to other useful resources.

### riprap: when a parent has cancer <http://www.riprap.org.uk/>

This site was developed especially for teenagers who have a parent with cancer. In riprap, you can learn more about cancer and its treatment and through individual stories you can see how this might affect you and your family.

### University Health Network – When a Parent has Cancer

[http://www.uhn.ca/PatientsFamilies/Health\\_Information/Health\\_Topics/Documents/When\\_a\\_Parent\\_Has\\_Cancer.pdf](http://www.uhn.ca/PatientsFamilies/Health_Information/Health_Topics/Documents/When_a_Parent_Has_Cancer.pdf)

This online publication put together by the Princess Margaret Hospital gives parents and family member's advice and information on how to approach the subject of cancer with children of various ages from infants to teenagers. It discusses how to talk to your child about a cancer diagnosis, how you can expect children to react and resources that may be helpful to both you and your children.