



## Children's Books for Special Needs

# Family Life



**Barnardos**

EVERY CHILDHOOD LASTS A LIFETIME

# Children's Books for Special Needs

## Introduction

As children grow up, they may encounter situations that can pose problems for them. Fingal County Libraries, in association with Barnardos, have compiled a series of eight booklists which can help explain some of these situations. They include:

- Adoption & Fostering
- Bullying
- Death & Bereavement
- Disability
- Family Life
- First Experiences
- Growing Up (emotional and physical) and
- Health

Books can be very valuable in helping children begin to understand problems and fears. Furthermore, books can enable them to express themselves and provide the comfort of knowing that they're not alone, as well as supplying suggestions for ways of resolving the problem. The book should however, be followed up with the child to ensure s/he gets the most from it.

These lists are not intended to be comprehensive, but rather are selective guides to the best of children's books published on these topics in recent years. All of the titles listed are currently in print and should be available in public libraries and bookshops. The age ranges indicated are approximate. We hope you find them useful.

**Aideen Griffin**

*Librarian*

Fingal County Libraries

When breakdown within a family occurs it is not always easy for the children of these families to accept or understand the implications of such a break-up.

Feelings of anger, guilt, confusion and loss may be present as the child tries to come to terms with their perceived stable environment tumbling around them. A sense of isolation can sometimes occur and information is needed to try and make sense of the situation. Adults need time to take stock of their lives after a separation, divorce, etc. before they can decide what to do next. Children's perception of time is considerably different from an adult's and they want to know sooner rather than later what changes to expect.

The following list of books on topics such as divorce, separation, new relationships within families, etc. allow children to explore their feelings at their own leisure and in a safe way. These books help children to understand that they are not alone with their feelings and that other families have gone through similar situations.

The books offer children different solutions to what can happen when a family breaks up and shows them the different paths that their life may take. Children are helped name the feelings that they experience. This takes away the fear of the unknown.

Most importantly, this list of books allows children to see that although their life may change as a result of the family relationship changing, their parents' love for them never changes.

**Catherine Bond**

*Regional Manager*

Barnardos, Dublin North

## Caught in the Middle

**Alys Swan-Jackson**

*Piccadilly 1853403849 h/b, 185340389X p/b 1997 Ages 13+*

A book to help teenagers cope with their parents' separation, divorce and new relationships.

## Divorce

**Janine Amos**

*Cherrytree 'Separations' Series 0745152708 h/b 1997 Ages 7-11*

A combination of letters, stories and discussions of feelings to help children whose parents are splitting up or about to divorce.

## Divorce and Separation

**Matthew Whyman**

*Hodder 'Wise Guides' Series 0340752971 p/b 1999 Ages 10-14*

An accessible book which gives reassuring advice on how to get through separation and divorce.

## The Father Who Had Ten Children

**Benedicte Guettier**

*Pavilion 1862052514 h/b 1998 Ages 1-5*

A light-hearted story about single-parenthood from a father's perspective.

## Forever Amber Brown

**Paula Danziger**

*Mammoth 0749732407 p/b 1998 Ages 7-9*

Nine-year-old Amber likes her mother's new boyfriend, but isn't sure if she wants them to get married...neither is her mother.

## Free Fall

**Martina Murphy**

*Poolbeg 1853719706 p/b 1999 Ages 13-16*

Hannah's parents are constantly fighting. Even so, she is devastated when her father leaves home. But then she finds out why he left and her world begins to fall apart.

## Grace and Family

**Mary Hoffman**

*Frances Lincoln 0711208689 h/b, 0711208697 p/b 1995 Ages 5-8*

Grace lives with her mother, Nana and cat; she loves reading stories about families, but none of them are like hers. Then, when she goes to visit her father and his new family, she learns that 'family, like stories, are what you make them'.

## Granny the Pag

**Nina Bawden**

*Hamish Hamilton 0241135494 h/b 1995, Puffin 0140380612 p/b 1997 Ages 11-14*

Catriona has lived with her eccentric gran for years. When her mother announces that she wants her back, Catriona doesn't want to go.

## Magic Dad

**Alison Prince**

*Piccadilly 1853404411 h/b, 1853404365 p/b 1997 Ages 7-9*

Cosmo lives with his mum and dreams that his absent father is magic. When his mum meets a nice new boyfriend, Cosmo knows he can still have his magic dad in the background.

## Meteorite Spoon

**Philip Ridley**

*Viking 0670854182 h/b 1994, Puffin 0140368906 p/b 1995 Ages 9-12*

Filly and Fergal escape from their parents' constant arguing to a fantasy island where their parents are young, in love and don't fight. A poignant story about the effects of marital conflict on children.

## My Family's Changing: A First Look at Family Break-up

**Pat Thomas**

*MacDonald 0750025719 h/b, 0750025727 p/b 1998 Ages 4-8*

A picture book for sharing with a child involved in a divorce which deals with the feelings of both parents and children.

## My Family and Other Natural Disasters

**Josephine Feeney**

*Viking 0670850462 h/b 1994, Puffin 0140365117 p/b 1995 Ages 12-14*

Thirteen-year-old Patrick has to write his life story for school but his parents have just separated and refuse to answer any of his questions about the past. A moving story about family break-up.

## My Stepfamily

**Julie Johnson**

*Watts 'How Do I Feel About' Series 0749626690 h/b 1997, 0749636297 p/b 2000  
Ages 6-9*

Four boys and girls share their feelings about being part of a stepfamily.

## My Two Families

**Althea**

*A & C Black 0713645423 h/b 1996 Ages 7-10*

A photo-story in which stepbrothers and sisters discuss their thoughts and feelings about being part of a stepfamily.

## The Nubbler

**Pam Ayres**

*Orion 1858814359 h/b 1997, Dolphin 1858816122 p/b 1998 Ages 8-10*

Rufus is miserable because his parents are constantly arguing. The Nubbler is a dragon-like creature who helps him cope with the rows and their eventual separation.

## The Runner

**Keith Gray**

*Mammoth 0749732261 p/b 1998 Ages 8-10*

Jason is fed up with his parents' arguing so he runs away to stay with his brother. He comes to realise that it's OK to want to escape now and again.

## A Secret Place

**Joan Lingard**

*Hodder 0340716614 h/b, 0340716622 p/b 1998 Ages 11-13*

Maria and Charlie haven't seen their father in two years when he whisks them away to Spain. Charlie is soon homesick and Maria worries that she'll never see her mother again. A sympathetic novel about family conflict and torn loyalties.

## Since Dad Left

**Caroline Binch**

*Frances Lincoln 0711211787 h/b 1998, 0711213550 p/b 2000 Ages 5-8*

Sid feels cross and confused because his parents have separated. But on a reluctant visit to his father's new home, he gradually realises that he still loves his dad.

## Sisters...No Way!

**Siobhán Parkinson**

*O'Brien 0862784956 p/b 1996 Ages 13-15*

Cindy is shocked when her recently widowed father announces that he's to remarry and that she's to gain two sisters in the bargain. Ashling, one of her 'new' sisters, also tells her version of events.

## Step By Wicked Step

**Anne Fine**

*Hamish Hamilton 0241001617 h/b 1995, Puffin 0140366474 1996 Ages 12-14*

A group of teenagers on a school trip share stories about their experiences of living in stepfamilies.

## The Suitcase Kid

**Jacqueline Wilson**

*Doubleday 0385401752 h/b 1992, Corgi Yearling 0440863112 p/b 1993 Ages 9-12*

When her parents divorce and remarry, only child Andy has to adjust to moving between two homes and two new families. But all she really wants is to go back to her first home.



## **A Survivor's Guide to Families**

**Jeanette Baker**

*Wayland 0750226218 h/b 1999, 0750224754 p/b 1999 Ages 12-15*

A light-hearted guide to coping with family life for teenagers.

## **What Do We Think About Family Break-up?**

**Jillian Powell**

*Wayland 0750222123 h/b 1998 Ages 6-9*

A book for young children which explores family break-up and the changes and emotions involved.

## **You Will Always Be My Dad**

**Ann De Bode and Rien Broere**

*Evans 'Helping Hands' Series 0237517566 h/b, 1997 0237520451 p/b 1999 Ages 5-8*

Laura really misses her dad since her parents separated. When her mother invites a new male friend to dinner, Laura decides to do her best to get rid of him because no one will replace her dad.

### **Cherish**

2 Lower Pembroke Street, Dublin 2

**Tel:** (01) 6629212

**Fax:** (01) 6629096

**E-mail:** [cherish@tinet.ie](mailto:cherish@tinet.ie)

### **Family Mediation Service**

Block 1, Floor 5

Irish Life Centre

Lower Abbey Street,

Dublin 1

**Tel:** (01) 8728277, (01) 8728708,

(01) 8728475

**Fax:** (01) 8787497

### **Gingerbread Ireland**

29/30 Dame Street,

Dublin 2

**Tel:** (01) 6710291

**Fax:** (01) 6710352

### **Marriage and Relationship Counselling Service (MRCS)**

24 Grafton Street,

Dublin 2

**Tel:** (01) 6799341

**Fax:** (01) 6716730

### **National Children's Resource Centre**

Barnardos

Christchurch Square,

Dublin 8

**Tel:** (01) 4530355

**Fax:** (01) 4530300

**E-mail:** [info@barnardos.ie](mailto:info@barnardos.ie)

**Website:** [www.barnardos.ie](http://www.barnardos.ie)

10 Sarsfield St

Limerick

**Tel:** (061) 208680

**Fax:** (061) 440214

**E-mail:** [ncrc@midwest.barnardos.ie](mailto:ncrc@midwest.barnardos.ie)

18 St Patricks Hill

Cork

**Tel:** (021) 552100

**Fax:** (021) 552120

**E-mail:** [ncrc@cork.barnardos.ie](mailto:ncrc@cork.barnardos.ie)

### **Parental Equality (PE)**

*The Shared Parenting and Joint Custody Support Group*

1 Muirhevna, Dublin Road,

Dundalk

Co. Louth

**Tel:** (042) 33163/088510372

**Fax:** (042) 31163

## Useful Addresses Continued

### **Parentline** *(for parents under stress)*

Carmichael Centre

North Brunswick Street,

Dublin 7

**Tel:** (01) 8733500

*(Helpline 10am–9.30pm Monday to Friday)*

**Tel/Fax:** (01) 8787230 *(office)*

**E-mail:** parentline@tinet.ie

### **Teen Between**

MRCS

24 Grafton Street,

Dublin 2

**Tel:** (01) 6799341

**Fax:** (01) 6716730

### **Parents Alone Resource Centre**

Bunratty Drive

Coolock,

Dublin 17

**Tel:** (01) 8481872

**Fax:** (01) 8481116

**E-mail:** parc@indigo.ie

**TREOIR** (Federation of Services for  
Unmarried Parents and their Children)

36 Upper Rathmines Road, Dublin 6

**Tel:** (01) 4964155/4910850

**Fax:** (01) 4964155

### **Separated Persons Association**

Carmichael House

North Brunswick Street,

Dublin 7

**Tel:** (01) 8735702

**Fax:** (01) 8735737

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