

Teacher Companion

A resource guide for the classroom



monkey
IN MY CHAIR
A PROGRAM OF THE LOVE, CHLOE FOUNDATION

 love, chloe foundation
A CHILDHOOD CANCER ORGANIZATION



Teacher Companion

A resource guide for the classroom

We strongly encourage that before the Monkey In My Chair program is implemented, a meeting is set up to discuss how it will be used in the classroom. This meeting may include the following: parents, classroom teacher, principal, school nurse, school counselor, school social worker and siblings' teachers if applicable. The program focuses on the patient and classmates and their relationships. With that, there may be sensitive patient information that should be discussed.



There's a Monkey In My Chair™
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Fifth Edition

There's a Monkey In My Chair: Teacher Companion

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Written by Nedra Elbl, Michelle Boos, Heidi Feyerherm-Smith

Illustrations by Ben Ashmore and Krista Bowker

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111 S. 5th St.
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U.S.A

www.lovechloe.org
www.monkeyinmychair.org

What is Monkey In My Chair?

Monkey in My Chair is a childhood cancer awareness program designed to help children understand and cope with the absence of a friend who is undergoing cancer treatment. The program uses a big stuffed monkey to fill the child's seat in the classroom, encouraging classmates to engage in activities that promote friendship and support. It aims to foster empathy, reduce feelings of isolation for the child with cancer, and educate peers about the challenges faced by their friend.

What is in the kit?

- **Big Monkey** This big soft monkey will fit right into the child's seat at school.
- **Large Backpack** This bag can hold the monkey and all the other items when transporting to and from school. It can also be used by the child when going to and from treatment.
- **Drawstring Backpack** This bag can be used to send items (notes, pictures, homework) back and forth between the child and their classroom.
- **Book** The book is a great way to explain to the child's classmates about the monkey. It offers an easy way to talk about changes that may occur or what to expect during the child's treatment.
- **Journal** The journal may stay in the classroom for the classmates to write notes in or stay with the child to write about their experiences.
- **Drawing Journal** This can be used in the classroom or by the child to draw fun pictures.
- **Mini monkey** This miniature version of the big monkey will stay with the child so that they are not without a monkey.
- **Teacher Companion** The teacher can use this book in the classroom. It has lots of resources as well as ideas about how to use the monkey in the classroom.
- **Other Fun Items** We also include many other fun items like pens, pencils and more!



Monkey Message

This is an online component to the program. The family and teacher each have an account and can use that to send notes, photos and messages back and forth. The account must be set up by the Monkey In My Chair staff and is typically done about a week after the kit is sent or registered. Please note that if the family does not provide an email for the teacher, we cannot set up the account. If you don't receive an email with your account info within 2 weeks, please reach out to us.

Missing Components?

Families may choose to keep some of the components in the kit at home so you may not receive all the items in the kit. We are happy to send additional components to the school for use in the classroom.

If you receive the kit from another classroom and are missing any of the components, please reach out for replacement items.

Contact: monkey@lovechloe.org or 785-515-2211

A Note to Educators

This Teacher Companion has been created to help you, your class, and your school deal with a student's serious illness.

This guide was inspired by a group that experienced having a child with cancer in school as a teacher, student teacher and school counselor. Their first-hand experience provided the ground work of this book.

A few key ideas that we would like to mention; it is so important that the teacher work closely with the school counselor, principal, social worker, psychologist, school nurse, and other grade-level teachers. These key people will be of great support to all involved including the child and parents, as well as the other classmates and their parents. The family of the child should feel part of what is happening in the classroom. They are undoubtedly overwhelmed with what they are dealing with, but they need to feel free to let you know what they feel comfortable with and what specifics you can and will be sharing with the other classmates and parents.

Make sure that you are aware of any district policies in dealing with a critically ill child in your class. Visit with your principal and /or public relations person at the district office.

Keep in mind that all the information presented in this handbook is what worked for us along with some supplemental activities and information that you may find helpful. Feel free to use what you wish and make it work for you.

We hope that you find this Teacher Companion helpful. Please know that you may contact us should you have any questions and/or feedback on how we can make this Companion even better.

What you are about to experience will be difficult, but many rewards will come from this experience for you and for all involved.

We want to thank Chloe for teaching us what real courage is. She is forever in our hearts!

Sincerely,

The Monkey In My Chair Team

monkey@lovechloe.org



Why Monkeys?



When Chloe was diagnosed with DIPG at the age of 6, her two favorite things were school and monkeys. She loved monkeys so much that her collection grew to nearly 100 stuffed monkeys! Her monkeys accompanied her to her treatments and gave her comfort during difficult times. We felt that the best way to honor Chloe was to create this awesome program keeping kids connected with their school using a monkey!



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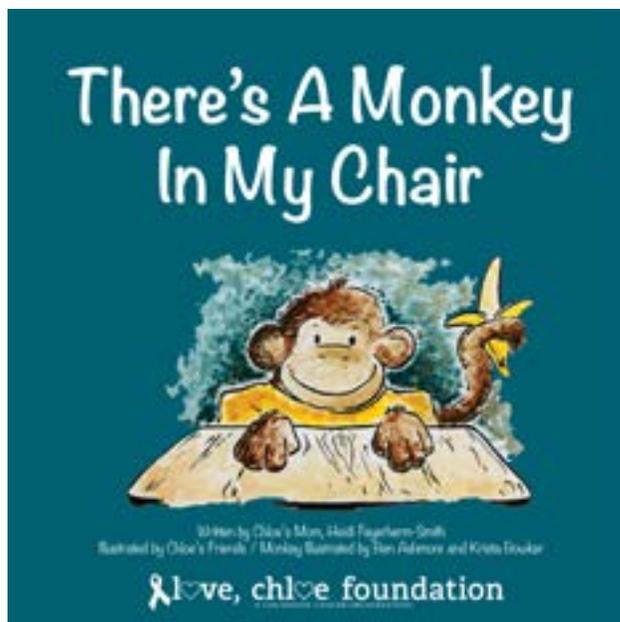
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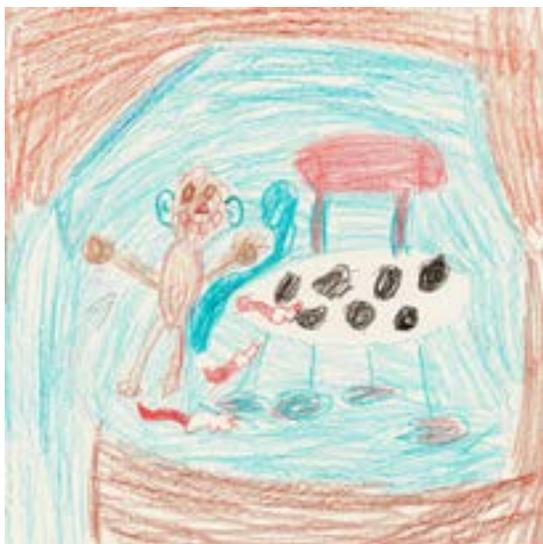
MONKEY IN MY CHAIR CHILDREN'S BOOK

Monkey in My Chair book discussion





The book, **There's a Monkey In My Chair**, was written specifically for this program and can be used as a tool to introduce the child's illness to their classmates. We have developed discussion questions and other ideas that you may want to use.



I want you to know that
when you come to school
and don't see me there,
don't be surprised if you see
a monkey in my chair.



3

- Who does the monkey represent?
- Why do you think there's a monkey in their chair?

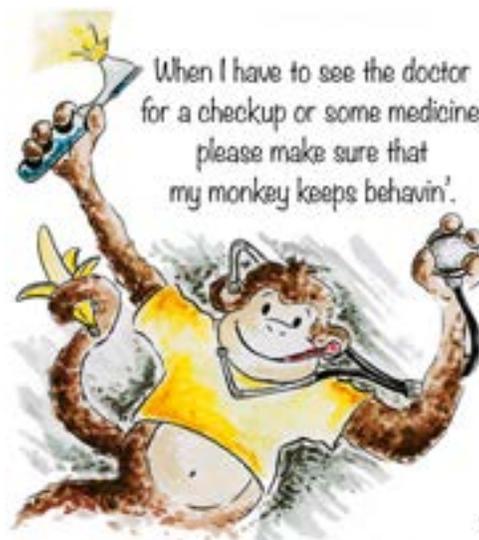


Some days I may not
feel well enough to be at school,
so I will send my monkey.
I hope that's cool.



5

- If you could choose any animal to sit in your chair, what would it be? Why?
- What causes the child to be tired and how does it differ from everyone else's tiredness?
- Explain to the children the difference between them feeling tired or sick and the missing child.



When I have to see the doctor
for a checkup or some medicine,
please make sure that
my monkey keeps behavin'.

7

- Where do you think your classmate is when they are not here?
- How can we make sure that the monkey keeps behaving?
- Discuss appropriate behavior with the monkey.
- Discuss that the monkey has a stethoscope, thermometer and otoscope and how they might be used by a doctor.
- Talk about what happens when you go to the doctor and how it might be different from the missing child.



Sometimes I may take medicine
that makes me look a little different,
just remember that no matter what you see,
I'm still ME.



9

- How might our classmate look different when we see him/her?
- Talk about changes that might happen.
(Hair loss, ability to talk and walk, color of their skin, weight)
- Discuss how the child hasn't changed inside even though they may look different on the outside.



When you go to
music, art or PE,
since I can't be with you
please take my monkey,
just like it's ME!

11

- Talk about all the places that the monkey might go with the classroom and how that will be managed. (Maybe one child will be assigned to take the monkey each day.)



Whenever you want to draw me a picture
or write me a letter,
please put it in my monkey's bag
and you'll help me feel better.



- What sort of things can we write to the classmate to add a sparkle to their day?
(See Classroom Activities, pg 39)
- Activity suggestion: Have students take turns being the monkey buddy and writing about the monkey's experience for the day.
(See Classroom Activities, pg 41)



When I draw you pictures
or write you a note,
I'll send it right back
in my monkey's tote.



Talk about the use of the bag and, depending on the family, how it will go back and forth. This may be a great way to include a sibling. Communication may differ depending on the missing student. They may not be able to send handwritten notes. They may receive communication via a website or emails from the parent to update the classmates.



My monkey loves to be in school especially for the math and reading, but my monkey might be the very best at watching and listening.



17

Suggestion: The monkey is here representing the student so it should be treated appropriately. Discuss appropriate and inappropriate use of the monkey in the classroom.



I will be thinking of you even though we are apart. Our friendship will continue on, you will still be in my heart.



19

How do you think our classmate feels when they are away?
 How do you feel when they are away?
 Talk about other friends or relatives that they may not see all the time, but they are still important.



I'm not sure how long I'll be out,
a week, a month, maybe just a day or two.
Just remember, I'd rather
be here in school with you
So...



21

Even though they are gone physically, we can still have them with us in our minds and hearts. If you do know how long the child will be gone, let the children know.



when you come into the class
and don't see me there,
just look for that soft, furry, smiling
monkey in my chair.



23

Reiterate why the monkey is there and its place in the classroom. Talk about how it will be used and respected in the classroom.

MONKEY IN MY CHAIR RESOURCES

Useful websites and classroom resources





For over 20 years, Hopecam has been on a mission to create a better quality of life for children with cancer by virtually connecting them with their classmates and peers. To make these connections, we provide tablets, laptops, WIFI access, and Hopecam resources at no cost to families.

Every time a child is diagnosed with cancer and isolated from friends, their mental health is at risk. Hopecam can change that trajectory by virtually connecting kids with their world. Hopecam helps kids feel more supported and less depressed through the power of connection.

With modern technology and coordination through families, teachers and healthcare providers, Hopecam links children with cancer to the lives they had before their diagnosis, acting as a bridge toward recovery.

**Contact
Information**

hopecam.org

HopeCam
12100 Sunset Hills Road, Suite C10
Reston, VA 20190

Phone: (703) 364-5609
Fax: (571) 375-7157

info@hopecam.org

L I V E S T R O N G™

LiveStrong at School

When a loved one is diagnosed with cancer, school-aged children need support. Livestrong at School offers age-appropriate lessons for grades K-12 to help children understand the cancer journey. Use our ready-to-go resources to generate meaningful discussions about cancer, treatment, and how to support those living with cancer. Lessons can be downloaded from the website.

**Contact
Information**

livestrong.org/school

623 W. 38th St. Suite 300
Austin, TX 78705

(877) 236-8820



Cancer in the classroom A webinar series

The goal of these webinars is to provide practical information from clinical experts on how to support a students and family during treatment, as well as strategies for reintegrating a student with cancer into the classroom. We invite school social workers, nurses, teachers and families to join us in learning how to provide compassionate and constructive classroom support when a child has cancer. This webinar series is made possible by a grant from Ronald McDonald House Charities and help from the Child Life Council.

**Contact
Information**

**[curesearch.org/school-
personnel-webinars](http://curesearch.org/school-personnel-webinars)**

P.O. Box 45781
Baltimore, MD 21297-5781

1-800-458-6223

info@curesearch.org



The American Childhood Cancer Organization (ACCO) was founded in 1970 by parents of children diagnosed with cancer. Formerly known as Candlelighters, ACCO is the nation's oldest and largest grassroots organization dedicated to childhood cancer.

RESOURCE ORDER FORM: www.tfaforms.com/4714141

**Contact
Information**

ACCO.ORG

ACCO
P.O. Box 498
Kensington, MD 20895-
0498

staff@acco.org



Childhood Cancer Foundation

After treatment, both children and teens can experience late side effects of treatment, including physical, cognitive, and emotional challenges. Some late effects may come up right away, but it's also common for children and youth to experience new challenges as they get older and school gets harder.

This toolkit contains information for school personnel that they can use to support patients and survivors in the school setting.

**Contact
Information**

**[www.askccf.org/
education-toolkit](http://www.askccf.org/education-toolkit)**

5211 W. Broad St Suite 100
Richmond, VA 23230

(804) 658-5910

info@askccf.org



The American Cancer Society offers information about navigating through a child's cancer diagnosis and treatment. They have articles specifically talking about school during and after their treatment that may offer some helpful information.

Helping Your Child Manage School During Cancer Treatment

www.cancer.org/cancer/survivorship/children-with-cancer/during-treatment/keeping-up-with-schoolwork.html

Returning to School After Cancer Treatment

www.cancer.org/cancer/survivorship/children-with-cancer/after-treatment/returning-to-school.html

**Contact
Information**

www.cancer.org

800.227.2345



LEUKEMIA & LYMPHOMA SOCIETY®

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society offers a lot of resources about children battling cancer and school. They provide free booklets and videos as well as continuing education courses.

The Trish Greene Back to School Program

The Trish Greene Back to School Program offers free information and materials to parents and educators that can help ease your child back to school after an absence. The program was developed to encourage communication among parents, young patients, healthcare professionals and school personnel to assure children a smooth transition from active treatment to back to school.

- **Staying Connected®: Facilitating the Learning Experience During and After Cancer Treatment**
Staying Connected® is a FREE, online professional development program for teachers, school nurses, social workers, school counselors, and other school and college personnel focused on the needs of children, adolescents and young adults (AYAs) who have survived or are being treated for any type of cancer. This interactive educational program offers 6.5 continuing education credits.

www.lls.org/children-and-young-adults/childhood-blood-cancer/school

Contact
Information

www.lls.org
800.955.4572



School Support During Serious Illness

This includes several resources for educators. Topics covered include Bullying, Classroom Accommodations, Homebound Services, Parents as Advocates, and School Support During Chronic Illness.

together.stjude.org/en-us/emotional-support-daily-life/school.html

Contact
Information

www.together.stjude.org
together@stjude.org

MONKEY IN MY CHAIR BIBLIOTHERAPY

Children's books that can be utilized in the classroom



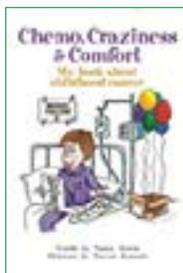
Bibliotherapy

Books about cancer and serious illnesses

Chemo, Crazyness & Comfort: My Book About Childhood Cancer

Nancy Keene and Trevor Romain

A diagnosis of cancer in a child is scary and confusing for every member of the family. "Chemo, Crazyness, and Comfort" provides clear explanations and practical advice for children ages 6-12. Warm and funny illustrations help the child (and parents) make sense of cancer and it's treatment.

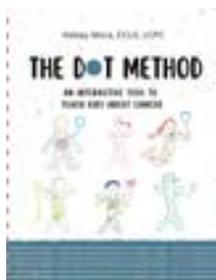


The Dot Method: An Interactive Tool to Teach Kids About Cancer

Kelsey Mora LCPC

"The Dot Method" is an interactive children's workbook that guides adults in helping to teach kids about cancer. Using simple visuals, honest language, and a workbook format, "The Dot Method" helps untangle medical jargon and unfamiliar scenarios and present them in a way that makes sense to children and young adults. The workbook allows for different types of cancers, treatments, and outcomes to be expressed.

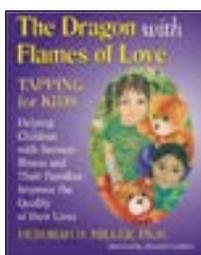
The workbook written by a dual-certified child life specialist and licensed clinical professional counselor includes: a how to guide for caregivers and a glossary of child-friendly definitions of cancer terms. It teaches about cancer cells, treatment, side effects, as well as helps children identify feelings, their support system, and coping strategies.



The Dragon With Flames of Love: Tapping for Kids

Deborah D. Miller

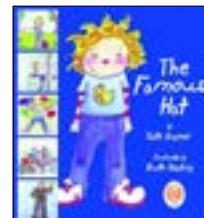
In this book, Deborah D Miller, PhD, shares how to use gentle tapping as a powerful technique to help a chronically ill child manage their anxiety, emotions, fears, traumas, and even alleviate physical pain in a way that is fun, empowering, positive, powerful and non-threatening.



The Famous Hat

Kate Gaynor

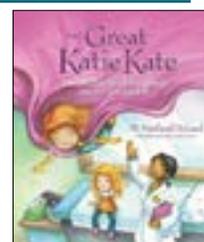
This book has been designed to help children with leukemia (or other forms of cancer) to prepare for treatment, namely chemotherapy, and a stay in hospital.



The Great Katie Kate Tackles Questions about Cancer

M. Maitland DeLand

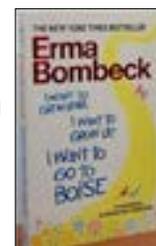
The great Katie Kate takes on the Worry Wombat as she teaches a young girl about treating cancer.



I Want to Grow Hair, I Want to Grow Up, I Want to Go to Boise

Erma Bombeck

The story of children fighting and surviving cancer is a tale of innocent courage and remarkable strength of character in the face of a seemingly implacable foe.



Just Like You: For Children with Cancer and their Friends

Kaitlyn Mamay

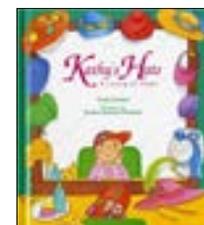
A heartfelt children's book that sheds light on the experience of childhood cancer while emphasizing that kids facing illness are just like any other kids.



Kathy's Hats: A Story of Hope

Trudy Krisher and Nadine Bernard Westcott

Kathy has always enjoyed wearing hats. But when she turns nine, she learns that she has cancer. Kathy is scared, and she is especially angry when her chemotherapy treatments make her hair fall out. Suddenly hats aren't so much fun anymore.

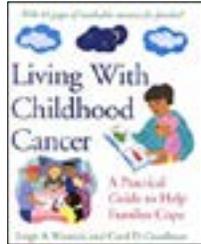


Books about cancer and serious illnesses

Living with Childhood Cancer: A Practical Guide to Help Families Cope

Leigh A Woznick and Carol Goodheart

This manual was written by two individuals who survived the stress of family cancer by mobilizing their resources and rebuilding their lives. Mother-daughter team Leigh Woznick and Carol Goodheart draw on their own family's experience with cancer, as well as their professional expertise — one as a hospital counsellor and the other as a psychologist.



What Happens When a Kid Has Cancer: A Book About Childhood Cancer for Kids

Sara Olsher

“What Happens When a Kid Has Cancer” is a book written with the purpose of relieving the anxiety and confusion that comes from a child’s cancer diagnosis and treatment.

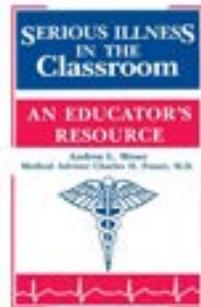
Aimed at ages 4-10, “What Happens When a Kid Has Cancer” covers the main points of pediatric cancer — what it is and what the experience of treatment is like — and shows how it can change a kid’s day-to-day life.



Serious Illness in the Classroom: An Educator’s Resource

Andrea L. Mesec

Here is a wealth of information to help you support children in your classroom who have serious illnesses or chronic conditions. Mesec describes each condition, discusses common treatments, explains the process of diagnosis, and lists symptoms and warning signs. Activity ideas, discussion questions, and lesson plans show you how to teach students about the illnesses and conditions. First Aid instructions and general activities that further health and safety in the classroom appear in separate sections. Grades PreK-8.



When a Kid Like Me Fights Cancer

Catherine Stier and Angel Chang

When a young boy finds out he has cancer, he learns a lot right away. He learns that cancer is something you fight, and that cancer isn’t anyone’s fault — especially not his. He discovers that many things change with cancer, but some of the most important things stay the same. He also learns that having cancer is easier when everyone around him wants to help him fight.



When Someone Has a Very Serious Illness: Children Can Learn to Cope with Loss and Change

Marge Heegaard

An excellent resource for helping children learn the basic concepts of illness and various age-appropriate ways of coping with it.



This Is Hard But You Can Do It!

Mac & Brittny Rogers

This is the story of a boy named Mac facing a big, hard day. Throughout the book, Mac learns what he can do to face this day with courage, confidence, and hope. He learns that peace and happiness are possible during hard times!

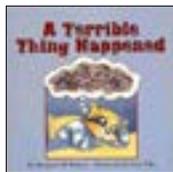


Books about difficult situations and death

A Terrible Thing Happened

Margaret M. Holmes

After Sherman sees something terrible happen, he becomes anxious and then angry, but when a counselor helps him talk about these emotions he feels better.



Everywhere, Still: A Book about Loss, Grief, and the Way Love Continues

M.H. Clark

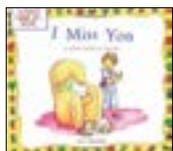
When someone you care about isn't here anymore, your love for them continues...What do you do with that love when that someone isn't here to give it to? "Everywhere, Still" is a book about missing someone. It's a book about loss and grief — whether that loss is permanent or temporary. And it's a reminder that there is always a way to stay close with the people who are biggest in our hearts, no matter how far across space and time they may be.



I Miss You

Pat Thomas

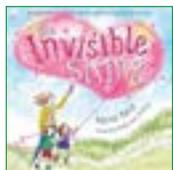
When a close friend or family member dies, it can be difficult for children to express their feelings. This book helps boys and girls understand that death is a natural complement to life, and that grief and a sense of loss are normal feelings for them to have following a loved one's death.



The Invisible String

Patrice Karst

In this relatable and reassuring contemporary classic, a mother tells her two children that they're all connected by an invisible string.



The Jester Has Lost His Jingle

David Saltzman

The Jester awakes one morning to find laughter missing in his kingdom and he and his helpmate, Pharley, set off on a quest to find it. They ultimately discover that not only can laughter redeem a weary world, it also can provide the best tonic for anyone facing seemingly insurmountable obstacles.



Lifetimes: The Beautiful Way to Explain Death to Children

Bryan Mellonie and Robert Ingpen

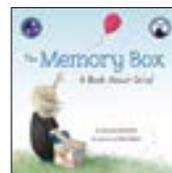
A moving book for children of all ages, even parents too. It lets us explain life and death in a sensitive, caring, beautiful way.



The Memory Box: A Book About Grief

Joanna Rowland

From the perspective of a young child, Joanna Rowland artfully describes what it is like to remember and grieve a loved one who has died. The child in the story creates a memory box to keep mementos and written memories of the loved one, to help in the grieving process.



Once Upon a Hopeful Night

Risa Sacks Yaffe

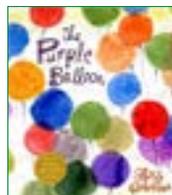
This book helps patients talk to children about their disease and explain what is happening in a caring, sensitive manner that children can understand.



The Purple Balloon

Chris Raschlea

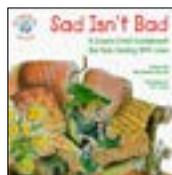
The message of the book is clear: talking about dying is hard, dying is harder, but there are many people in your life who can help.



Sad Isn't Bad

Michaelene Murdy

A comforting, realistic look at loss — loaded with positive, life-affirming helps for coping with loss as a child. It's a book that promotes honest and healthy grief and growth.



The Saddest Time

Norma Simon

Three stories to help children talk about death — an uncle with a terminal illness, a classmate killed in an accident, and a grandparent.



Books about difficult situations and death

Saying Goodbye

Jim Boulden

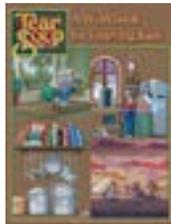
It is a gentle, non-threatening presentation of death with a healing discussion of emotional issues.



Tear Soup: A Workbook for Grieving Kids

Chuck DeKlyen

A workbook created for children who have experienced a source of deep grief in their life. It is important to allow children to learn healthy ways to grieve when they are young. This book provides some base knowledge about grief mixed in with activities aimed at engaging children. It can be used for multiple losses, completed in any order, and is appropriate for all types of losses including the death of someone close to the child, divorce, serious illness, and moving away from friends or family members.



The End Is Just the Beginning

Mike Bender

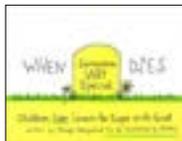
Starting a book at the end may seem confusing. But the end of one thing is just the beginning of something new in this innovative and heartfelt book from #1 New York Times bestselling author Mike Bender. Accompanied by beautiful and inspiring illustrations by Diana Mayo, this story is ideal for helping kids understand how to meet life's challenges with optimism and hope. A wonderful gift for all ages.



When Someone Very Special Dies

Marge Heegaard

A practical format for allowing children to understand the concept of death and develop coping skills for life.



MONKEY IN MY CHAIR CANCER CHALLENGES

**Physical, cognitive, social & emotional
challenges cancer kids experience**



There are many challenges a child may have as a result of their diagnosis and treatment. This may affect their school day and participation in activities. The following charts are from the *Childhood Cancer Education Toolkit for Educators* published by the ASK Childhood Cancer Foundation. You can download the entire toolkit online at www.askccf.org/education-toolkit

Physical Challenges

Challenge	What it means	Possible accommodations
Altered physical appearance (changes in how they look)	Children and teens are often sensitive to visible changes such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinning hair/hair loss • Weight loss or gain • Scarring from surgery and other medical procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permission to wear a hat or scarf • Desk suitable for body size • Private shower stall to change clothes for PE class
Unsteady gait (trouble walking or balancing)	Recovering from brain tumors can make it hard to walk and stay balanced on their feet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wheelchair, walker, or cane • Personal aide or assistance from an adult while moving around • Permission to leave class early to avoid crowded hallways
Hearing and vision loss	Hearing and vision loss can occur during or after treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation by school division coordinators for visual and hearing challenges • Seat or desk close to the instructor



Physical Challenges

Challenge	What it means	Possible accommodations
Fatigue	Fatigue is a side effect of chemotherapy and radiation that can last for an indefinite period of time following treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend school for a "partial day" (morning or afternoon classes) • Rest period during the school day
Muscle weakness and low stamina	Students may not have the strength or energy they typically have. It can come and go depending on the amount of activity they can handle during the school day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in physical activities as tolerated • Alternative activities for PE class and recess • Extra time to walk to their next class
Neuropathy (pain or numbness in hands or feet)	<p>Neuropathy is weakness, pain, or numbness in the hands or feet that impact walking, climbing stairs, completing fine motor skills tasks, or writing for a long time.</p> <p>Pain and discomfort can interfere with attention, concentration, and stamina.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modified or shortened assignments • Assistive technology when writing long assignments • Elevator pass
Mood swings	<p>Taking steroids as part of treatment can affect sleep, appetite, and the ability to regulate emotions. Children may be extremely tearful, irritable, and sad. They may have "temper tantrums" or emotional outbursts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional snacks at school when taking steroids • Rest period during the school day



Physical Challenges

Challenge	What it means	Possible accommodations
<p>Gross and fine motor skills deficits</p>	<p>"Gross motor skills" involve the large muscles of the body. Children with gross motor skill challenges can have difficulty with running, hopping, skipping, riding a bicycle, carrying a heavy backpack, and everyday skills needed for dressing.</p> <p>"Fine motor skills" involve the small muscles in the hands. Children with fine motor skill challenges may have difficulty with everyday actions like buttoning their clothes, tying their shoes, opening food items, and even feeding themselves.</p> <p>Academic skills are affected by fine motor skill deficits due to difficulty with handwriting, coloring, cutting, and construction (lego bricks, puzzles, etc.).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra support to complete physical and academic tasks • Evaluations by an occupational therapist or physical therapist assigned to the school • Assistive technology evaluation
<p>Nausea and vomiting</p>	<p>An upset stomach is a common side effect of medications and treatment, especially chemotherapy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late arrival to school to accommodate morning sickness • Visit the school nurse • Easy access to snacks and water during the school day
<p>Pain</p>	<p>Pain can make it hard for students to focus, participate in activities, and keep up with their studies.</p> <p>Chronic pain is associated with many types of childhood cancer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular visits to the nurse for medication • Use of a heating pad • Special seat or desk chair • Rest period



Cognitive Challenges

Challenge	What it means	Possible accommodations
Slow processing speed	<p>Students may need a few extra minutes to answer questions, share their thoughts, or complete their work.</p> <p>Students may feel anxious or nervous about how long it takes them to answer. They can be afraid of being called on in class and not having enough time to respond.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More time to respond in class • Questions provided in advance or in writing • Extended time to complete classwork, quizzes, and tests • Shortened assignments
Unable to focus or concentrate for long periods	<p>Students may experience attention and concentration issues because of their medications. Pain and discomfort can cause distraction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra breaks • Gentle reminders to help them focus
Poor organization	<p>“Executive functioning” is the ability to plan, organize, and complete tasks. Treatment can cause changes in a student’s executive functioning abilities, and make it hard for them to stay organized.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra help from parents, teachers, and case managers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write assignments in their agenda book • Prepare for tests and projects • Prepare for upcoming tests and projects • Monitor make up of missed assignments and due dates
Short-term memory loss	<p>After treatment, it can be hard for students to remember things that they read, heard, or saw recently. For example, students may know their spelling words or math the night before but fail the quiz the next day.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More time to complete assignments and take tests • Word bank



Cognitive Challenges

Challenge	What it means	Possible accommodations
Difficult to multi-task	It may be hard for students to process in-depth information or keep up with multi-step instructions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spoken and written instructions with one or two steps at a time • Teachers and parents to check that the student understands the tasks • Index cards to outline each step
Visual-spatial challenges	<p>Visual-spatial trouble affects reading, math, and physical activities.</p> <p>"Visual-spatial processing" is the ability to tell where objects are in space. It's how we know where to move our hands to catch a ball and how we read a math equation in the right order. It's also how we can tell the difference between a W and an M.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visuals, manipulatives (objects they can hold, move, and feel), and hands-on activities to help strengthen these skills
Difficulty with word retrieval	<p>Students may know what they want to say but have difficulty finding the words and speaking.</p> <p>It can get harder to find the right word when students are tired or under stress. It may seem like students don't know the answer, even though they do.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra time to put their thought together and share them out loud • Math formula bank or word bank



**Childhood Cancer Education
Toolkit for Educators**

Social and Emotional Challenges

Social and emotional challenges can come and go for children facing cancer diagnosis and treatment.

Here is a list of the most common:

- ▶ Missing out on play groups, sports, and other activities
- ▶ Loss of contact with friends and peers
- ▶ Variation in maturity levels
- ▶ Desire for independence
- ▶ Need for acceptance
- ▶ Finding a social group in which to belong
- ▶ Search for normalcy
- ▶ Feelings of being different
- ▶ Turmoil of emotions including sadness, fear, guilt, anger, worry, anxiety, loss and grief

Here are some ways your school can help with social challenges:

- ▶ **Create a safe space in the school building.**
Children and teens returning to school need a place to go when feeling anxious, sad, afraid, or angry.
- ▶ **Identify a go-to support person.**
This special teacher, coach, school nurse, or counselor can be the one person the child turns to when facing challenges during the school day.
- ▶ **Start a club or support group at the school.**
Invite the school counselor or other school professionals to lead a group for students with special health care needs or social-emotional issues. These groups can allow students to express their feelings and concerns and let them know they are not alone.
- ▶ **Help returning students feel wanted and accepted.**
Showcasing artwork, performing in the school play, making morning announcements, being an office aide, or serving as an assistant on a sports team can make a child returning to school feel extra special and help them shine.



**Childhood Cancer Education
Toolkit for Educators**



BULLYING AND CHILDHOOD CANCER

A QUICK GUIDE FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL

This resource has been created by St. Jude Children's Research Hospital staff in order to support childhood cancer patients and school personnel during or following treatment. Research suggests that students with a cancer diagnosis are often faced with many challenges upon returning to school including increased apprehension about school, absenteeism, and bullying. This handout specifically addresses the greater risk of bullying that students with cancer often encounter.

QUICK FACTS ABOUT STUDENTS WITH CANCER AND BULLYING:

- Students who are perceived as weak or different are at greater risk for bullying.
- Physical and cognitive changes resulting from a cancer diagnosis and treatment may increase the likelihood of peer victimization or bullying. These changes may include:
 - Hair loss
 - Weight gain or weight loss
 - Scars, amputation, or other physical disfigurements
 - Cognitive or learning problems
 - Growth problems
 - Vision or speech problems
 - Problems with gait, balance, and coordination or other fine or gross motor issues.
- Research suggests that students with cancer report the greatest degree of bullying in their first year returning to school following diagnosis and/or treatment and at a rate as much as three times their healthy peers.
- Students with cancer report fear of peer rejection as their biggest worry in returning to school.
- Loss of friends/social relationships and loss of ability to participate in extracurricular activities are common during cancer treatment and may impact normal social development.
- Effects of bullying can include:
 - Anxiety, depression, and lower self esteem
 - Health problems such as stomach aches, headaches, sleep difficulties, and bed wetting.

"I THINK OUR KIDS STRUGGLE WHEN THEY GET TO SCHOOL... DON'T EXPECT THE SAME KID WHO LEFT THE CLASSROOM TO BE THE ONE THAT RETURNS. THEY'VE HAD A LIFE ALTERING EXPERIENCE AND WILL NEED TIME TO GET BACK TO BEING NORMAL."

- ST. JUDE TEACHER, NICOLE

WHAT CAN TEACHERS DO TO MINIMIZE BULLYING?

- Positive school experiences help students with cancer distance themselves from the role of patient thereby gaining a new sense of control, rediscovering self-esteem, providing more normal daily routines, and reestablishing relationships with peers.
- If a student's diagnosis and treatment are explained to the class, bullying is less likely to occur due to an increase in classmates' understanding and empathy. However, school personnel should always assess the student's desire to have a class/school presentation.
- It is a big adjustment to return to school after a long absence. Consider checking in with the student weekly to see how they are adjusting back at school.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHECK OUT WWW.TOGETHER.STJUDE.ORG

MONKEY IN MY CHAIR CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

**Activities and ideas that may be helpful
in the classroom.**



Monkey Buddy Activity

Assign 1 or 2 students to be the “monkey buddy” for the day.

They can be responsible for taking the monkey to all the different activities and places that the class goes for that day.

At the end of the day the student(s) can write a few sentences on the template below about the monkey’s day. This can be put into the monkey’s bag so that the child can read about the day-to-day activities of the monkey.

This is a great way to make sure that the bag always has something in it and that all the students are involved.

Monkey Buddy



Name:

Date:



A Sparkle to: _____

From: _____

Message: _____



A Sparkle to: _____

From: _____

Message: _____



A Sparkle to: _____

From: _____

Message: _____



A Sparkle to: _____

From: _____

Message: _____

Advice to Educators of Children with Cancer

A Wish with Wings, Inc., conducted a survey of 61 parents of children who had cancer or other chronic illnesses. Among the questions posed were, “How can teachers be most helpful when a sick child re-enters school?” and “What have teachers done that is least helpful?” Highlights of answers appear below.

The Best Teachers (A Parent’s view)...

1. Call or visit my child during times of absence.
2. Know that parents need a little TLC, too. Cards, phone calls, visits — all are appreciated.
3. Listen to my concerns and fears.
4. Take time to become familiar with treatment given my child and their effect on school performance.
5. Visit with my child before re-entry to talk about any fears she/he may have.
6. Adjust regular lesson plans to account for change in my child’s ability to complete lengthy tasks or assignments.
7. Gently encourage my child to reach his/her current potential.
8. Follow the parent’s or doctor’s instructions regarding bathroom visits, snacks, wearing a hat, etc.
9. Accept the sometimes hard-to-accept side effects of cancer or its treatment (slurring words, falling asleep in class, diminished temper control, or ability to accept discipline, etc.)
10. Are supportive of us during setbacks in the illness.
11. Encourage classmates to call or write my child during periods of extended absence.
12. Prepare the class for physical and emotional changes in my child as a consequence of treatment; suggest ways to be helpful.
13. Treat my child as normally as possible, given the restrictions imposed by disease and its treatment; don’t impose their own limits
14. Are supportive and encouraging, but not phony in their praise.
15. Know when a situation is over their heads and call the parents, doctor, or administration for help.
16. Include my child in as many class functions as possible. She/he may not have the stamina for a full day of school, but may be able to come to the holiday party or class outing.

Fun Friendship Activities

Provided by www.mindfulmazing.com

Create Friendship Bracelets

Crafting colorful friendship bracelets is a hands-on way for kids to explore the bonds of friendship. As they weave the threads together, discuss qualities that make friendships strong.



Make Friendship Flowers

Crafting paper or fabric flowers allows kids to express the qualities of good friends on each petal. Or, like our friendship flower craft below, kids can glue a special message onto their flowers and give it to someone special. This creative friendship craft reinforces kindness, trust, and more.

Design a Friendship Safe Friends Poster

Get artistic and design a poster showcasing what it means to be a good friend. This visual reminder helps kids recognize and practice friendship qualities.

Create a Friendship Collage

Building a collage from magazine clippings reinforces qualities like empathy, sharing, and cooperation. It's a fun way to explore what makes a great friend.

Friendship Bingo Game

Play a lively game of Bingo using qualities such as "kind," "helpful," and "trustworthy." It's an enjoyable way to reinforce positive friendship traits.

Friendship Charades or Role Play Friendship Scenarios

Act out scenes that exemplify friendship qualities and have fun guessing which traits are being demonstrated. This game enhances understanding of friendship traits.

Friendship Awards Ceremony

Host a special awards event where kids recognize each other's acts of friendship with certificates or ribbons. Celebrating kindness and generosity!

Friendship Storytime

Read captivating books about friendship and explore the actions of the characters that embody good friend qualities. It is great for circle time and great for sparking meaningful discussions.

Fun Friendship Activities

Provided by www.mindfulmazing.com

Keep a Friendship Journal

Inspire daily journaling about acts of kindness and friendship experiences. It fosters reflection and reinforces positive behaviors.

Friendship Theater

Let creativity shine as kids perform short plays or skits showcasing positive friendship behaviors. It's fun to act out what it means to be a good friend.

Compliment Circle

Gather in a circle and exchange genuine compliments, reinforcing positive interactions and nurturing self-esteem.

Decorate Friendship Rocks or Kindness Rocks

Decorate smooth stones with friendship qualities, then exchange them as tokens of friendship and reminders of what makes a good friend.

Compliment Collage (Group Friendship Activity)

Create compliment collages. Provide magazines, scissors, glue, and large sheets of paper. Encourage kids to find words or images that represent compliments or positive qualities and paste them on their collage. Share and discuss their collages as a group to reinforce the importance of kindness and appreciation in friendships.

Storytelling Circle

Create a storytelling circle where each child takes turns sharing a memorable friendship moment or a time when they were a good friend to someone. Encourage them to use their creativity and imagination to make the stories engaging. This activity not only strengthens their storytelling skills but also reinforces the value of positive interactions in friendships.

Random Acts of Kindness Challenge

Challenge kids to perform random acts of kindness for their peers. Provide a list of kind deeds they can choose from, such as writing an anonymous note of encouragement or helping a friend with a task. Afterward, discuss how these acts of kindness made them feel and their impact on their friendships.



Notes

MONKEY IN MY CHAIR MOVING FORWARD

**Monkey's exit from the classroom and
paying it forward**



When Monkey Exits the Classroom

We understand that every situation is unique. This is why this program is so flexible and allows the classroom teacher and school staff to adjust it to their needs. There are no right and wrong answers to how to use the monkey and the components. The following addresses some of the questions that we have had from teachers, school staff and hospitals over the years.

What do we do with the monkey at the end of the school year?

In most cases, the family will take the monkey home at the conclusion of the school year. This allows the family to make the decision to keep using the monkey during the next school year if the child is still in treatment.

If the program is moved on to the next grade, all the materials should be passed along to the new teacher. The new teacher will need to reach out to get a new Monkey Message account. monkey@lovechloe.org

What if the monkey moves to the new classroom without the components?

Teachers are always welcome to reach out for replacement or additional components. Please see page 3 for a listing of all the components that come with the original Monkey In My Chair kit. Contact us at monkey@lovechloe.org

What do we do with the monkey if the child passes away?

This is a very difficult time for everyone so it's good to have a plan in place if there is an indication that the child might not return. It is important to keep the family involved in the decision of what to do with the monkey.

- Some classrooms choose to keep the monkey at school for the other children to have a grieving tool. This may be for just a couple of weeks or months.
- If they child passes away toward the end of the year it may work best to keep it there until school ends and then make that transition.
- Some classrooms choose to send the monkey back home to the family.

We have seen some schools keep the monkey at the school for years after a child has passed. Typically it moves to the office or a central location where the other kids can see it.

What do we do with the monkey if the family does not want it back and the school decides not to keep it?

Sometimes the family may not want the monkey back. If the family does not want it and the school does not either, you may donate it to a local charity. We do not take monkeys back and reuse them as each child receives a brand new monkey with the program.

Graduation Ceremonies

When a child passes away one of the most difficult times for the family is the year their child would have been graduating. Whether it is an elementary, middle, or high school graduation, they will all be very difficult times for the family. If the school administration allows and the family agrees, it is nice to be able to have the monkey at those ceremonies in child's place. The family may find comfort in having their child represented in a special way and the monkey can be a way to do that.



Paying It Forward

Many classrooms who benefit from the Monkey In My Chair program like to do something to help sponsor a kit for another child and their classroom. This is a great way to teach children about the importance of helping others and paying it forward.

Benefits of organizing a fundraiser:

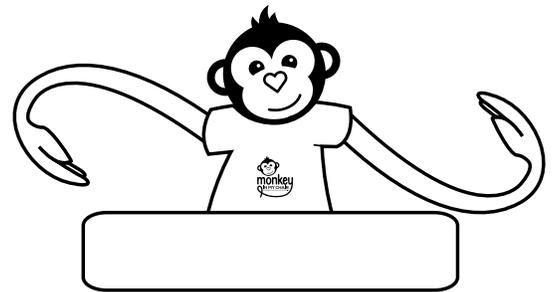
- Many skills can be implemented in the organization and execution of an event such as math, reading, spelling and art.
- Students feel good about helping others.
- The entire school can get involved.
- Students have fun.

Here are a few ideas you can implement:

MONKEY CHAIN

Monkey Chain is a fun and easy way to connect to a child battling cancer by connecting monkeys across your school. Children donate money and for every dollar they donate, they get to add a monkey to the monkey chain. Set a school wide goal to have the chain reach from one end of the school to another.

**We have a parent letter, teacher letter and poster that can be customized and sent to the school to help implement this event.



MONKEY MUNCHIES!

Host a bake sale at your school to help raise money. Bake sales are great to do after a school event like a game, concert or presentation. Ask families to bring in baked goods and sell the items for a donation. Having a themed bake sale is fun as well, such as having banana baked goods.

Paying It Forward

MONEY FOR MONKEYS!

This is a simple and fun way to help raise money to sponsor a kit for another classroom. Each class creates a coin collection jar that the students can fill with change. The students can decorate the jars so it is fun and creative! The event can last for a week to allow students time to bring in their change. The classroom that brings in the most change can celebrate with pizza or donuts as a reward. You can even do a “free” reward like a pajama day or hat day for the students.

PTO/PTA SPONSORSHIP

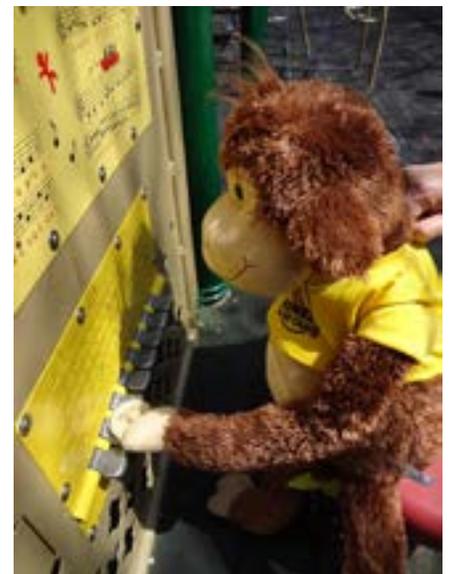
Ask your school PTO or PTA group if they would like to sponsor a kit. Some groups are looking for ways to support programs that benefit students and this is a great way for them to support the program for the next child.

To implement any of these ideas, just contact us for more information. We have materials ready for you to use for the event.

If you have a new idea, we would love to hear about it!

**Contact us at monkey@lovechloe.org
785-515-2211**

Monkeys in the classroom!



Monkey Smiles!



Notes

Notes



www.monkeyinmychair.org