



Secondary breast cancer – resources for families (updated June 2022)

This is a list of some of the resources available for parents with a diagnosis of secondary breast cancer, to help them talk with their children about their illness and future.

Books for parents or carers

Most of the books listed below are available through bookshops and online.

It's also worth speaking to your local librarian or visiting your local cancer information centre, as many will stock and loan a variety of similar books.

Talking to Children and Teenagers When an Adult Has Cancer (Macmillan Cancer Support, 2019)

How to Talk so Kids Will Listen and Listen so Kids Will Talk, Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish (Piccadilly Press, 2012)

As Big as it Gets: Supporting a Child When a Parent is Seriously Ill (2nd edition, Winston's Wish, 2007)

What Happens When Someone Dies? Jennie Armstrong (available from [See Saw](#), 2014)

Preparing Your Children for Goodbye, Lori Hedderman (Growth House, 2011)

Books for children

The Secret C: Straight Talking About Cancer, Julie Stokes (Winston's Wish/Macmillan Cancer Support, 2009)

When Your Mum or Dad Has Cancer, Ann Couldrick (Sobell Publications, 1991)

A Monster Calls, Patrick Ness (Walker Books, 2015)

The Rainbow Feelings of Cancer: A Book for Children Who Have a Loved One with Cancer, Carrie Martin and Chia Martin (Hohm Press, 2015)

A Dragon in Your Heart, Sophie Le Blanc (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1999)

Water Bugs and Dragonflies: Explaining Death to Young Children, Doris Stickney (Bloomsbury Continuum, 2019)

The Sad Book, Michael Rosen and Quentin Blake (Walker Books, 2011)

The Huge Bag of Worries, Virginia Ironside (Hodder Wayland, 2011)

No Matter What, Debi Gliori (Bloomsbury, 2014)

Wherever You Are, My Love Will Find You, Nancy Tillman (Feiwel and Friends, 2013)

The Invisible String, Patrice Karst (Little, Brown and Company, 2018)

The Cancer That Wouldn't Go Away, Hadassa Field (Lulu.com, 2013)

Badger's Parting Gifts, Susan Varley (Andersen Press, 1987)

Mum's Jumper, Jayde Parkin (Book Island, 2019) available on [Book Island website](#)

I call her Mummy, she calls me brave written by Nicola Owen – a mum living with secondary breast cancer (Lightening Source 2021)

Animations and videos

Cancer Hair Care

[Talking to children about hair loss](#)

Using Free Hair Loss Dollies for [explaining hair loss to children](#)

Afro Hair Loss Guide [Talking to a child using a Hair Loss Dolly](#)

The Fruit Fly Collective

[Telling your children you have cancer](#)

The Little C Club

[The Little C Club](#) have designed a set of flash cards to help explain a cancer diagnosis to children in an age appropriate and friendly way.

Medikidz

[Understanding breast cancer](#)

[Understanding Metastatic Breast Cancer](#)

Useful organisations and websites

Care for the Family

[Care for the Family](#) provides support for families facing difficulties.

Child Bereavement UK

[Child Bereavement UK](#) wants all families to have support to rebuild their lives when a child grieves or when a child dies.

Their mission is to ensure high-quality child bereavement support and information is accessible to all families.

Cruse Bereavement Support

[Cruse Bereavement Support](#) offers support, advice and information to children, young people and adults when someone dies.

Fruit Fly Collective

[Fruit Fly Collective](#) produces Cancer Clouds Kits for children or young people whose parent has been diagnosed with cancer.

Each kit contains an age-appropriate set of tools to explain what cancer is, the treatments given and the side effects they may cause.

There are also tools to improve communication within the family, manage changes in the family's routine, and explore the emotional impact a cancer diagnosis brings.

The Hedgehog Cloud Kit (3-5 yrs)

Pip's Kit (specifically supports children aged 5 -10 years who have a parent or carer with incurable cancer or is in end of life care).

The Tiger Cloud Kit (6-11 yrs)

The Cancer Cloud Kit 12-14 yrs)

Alternatively, you can browse all available tools and assemble your purpose-built kit.

Kids Konnected

This US organisation provides friendship, understanding, education and support for children and teens who have a parent with cancer or have lost a parent with cancer.

Their [Bereavement toolkit](#) and [Coping toolkit](#) can help families communicate, break feelings of isolation and help children be heard.

Little Parachutes

[Little Parachutes](#) Collection of picture books that help children cope with worries, health issues and new experiences (big and small).

Maggies Kids' and Teen Days

Children and young people whose parents have cancer can take part in Kids' Days (for ages 7–13) and Teen Days (14–18). Contact [Maggies](#) for further information.

Marie Curie

[Marie Curie](#) offers care and support through terminal illness, and has information on its website about [Supporting children and young people when someone has a terminal illness](#) and [Supporting children and young people when someone dies](#).

The Osborne Trust

[The Osborne Trust](#) offers emotional and practical support for children of a parent with a cancer diagnosis and undergoing cancer treatment.

SeeSaw

Grief support for children, young people and their families in Oxfordshire, but website has lots of useful [resources](#).

The Ruth Strauss Foundation

[The Ruth Strauss Foundation](#) believes that all parents receiving a terminal diagnosis, should have access to support and guidance to prepare for the future. Their Family Support Service and resources help families prepare for grief, death and dying.

Winston's Wish

[Winston's Wish](#) is a charity that supports children when a parent has died. They give advice and support through their helpline and residential weekends.

Teenagers

Help to make sense

[Help 2 Make Sense](#) is an online tool by Winston's Wish, a charity supporting bereaved children and young people. It aims to help young people who have experienced the death of a loved one come to terms with their loss. Features the ASK email service and live chat, as well as podcasts, videos, stories.

Hope Support Services

[Hope Support](#) is for anybody aged 11–25 when a close family member is diagnosed with a life-threatening illness, such as cancer.

The Good Grief Trust

[The Good Grief Trust](#) provide bereavement support for young people so they know they're not alone.

riprap

[riprap](#) is a website where children can talk with others whose parent has been affected by cancer.

As well as the services mentioned above, it's also worth checking with your local hospice/palliative and supportive care services who usually provide support for children and young people.

Special Days and Treats

Kicking off against cancer

[Kicking off against cancer](#) help create once in a lifetime memories for a variety of people.

Something to Look Forward To

[Something to Look Forward To](#) is a website where people with cancer and their families can access a variety of free 'gifts' donated by companies and individuals.

Willow Foundation

[Willow Foundation](#) provides special days for seriously ill young adults (16–40). Its website includes information on eligibility criteria and how to apply.

Making memories

Counselling Directory: [Memory boxes and childhood bereavement](#)

Macmillan Cancer Support: [Making a memory box](#)

Winston's Wish: [How to use a memory box with bereaved children and young people](#)

RecordMeNow

The [RecordMeNow app](#) lets you make a lasting video legacy for yourself, your family and loved ones. The app provides question prompts around topics like your home and childhood, heroes and hobbies. You can then record the answers on video. It's private and completely free. It has been produced so everyone can leave messages and a supportive legacy for their loved ones and in particular young children.

Tailored Yarn

[Tailored Yarn](#) create specially designed fictional stories which preserve memories. These are like the popular idea of memory boxes but in the unique form of a unique literature legacy.