



*Early Childhood Trauma Toolkit*  
by the Early Childhood Programs and Services  
Committee

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Welcome to the ALSC Early Childhood Programs & Services Committee Toolkit on Trauma.

This toolkit aims to inform librarians and library workers who work with youth about various traumas experienced by young children, identify their impact on communities with young children, and support families, caregivers, and educators working with young children who may have experienced trauma. In this toolkit, “young children” refers to the early childhood years of birth through age 8. “Trauma” is a vast subject, encompassing things such as trauma in the home, in public, in natural events, in public shootings, in the library, etc. Every situation is different, just as every individual is different. These resources are to help you get started understanding trauma’s many impacts on people and being prepared for these situations. They will also help us understand how the young child’s physical, social, emotional, and mental development is impacted and how we can assist them and their caregivers through this experience. The toolkit provides Books & Booklists, Podcasts, Videos, and Websites & Articles. Each topic then divides the resources into “for use with children,” “for caregivers and/or families, and “for librarians and library workers.”

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## Section 1: Books and Booklists

*Below are booklists of picture books for caregivers to share with children. Librarians and library workers may want to consult these booklists when preparing for reader's advisory on these topics. Compiled by the ALSC Quicklists Consulting Committee in December 2023.*

### For Use With Children

- [\*\*\*Addy's Cup of Sugar\*\*\*. By Jon J. Muth. \(Scholastic, 2020\)](#) When Addy's cat Trumpet is hit by a car, she turns to her friend Stillwater for help dealing with the loss. Based on a Buddhist story of healing.
- [\*\*\*Balloons for Papa: A Story of Hope and Empathy\*\*\*. By Elizabeth Gilbert Bedia. Illus. by Erika Meza. \(HarperCollins, 2021\)](#) Arthur, sensing his father's sadness, hatches a plan to bring joy into their lives, even for a brief moment of time.
- [\*\*\*The Big Bad Wolf in My House\*\*\*. By Valérie Fontaine. Illus. by Nathalie Dion. Trans. by Shelley Tanaka. \(Groundwood Books/House of Anansi, 2021\)](#) A girl and her mother must escape the increasingly violent big bad wolf who moves into their home. This book focuses on domestic violence from the perspective of a child. *Also available in French.*
- [\*\*\*Cape\*\*\*. By Kevin Johnson. Illus. by Kitt Thomas. \(Roaring Book, 2023\)](#) A young boy wears a cape to help him remember a loved one who has passed away. The cape provides comfort and helps him encourage others to embrace the sadness of loss and the joy in sharing memories.

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- [\*\*Cry, Heart, But Never Break.\*\* By Glenn Ringtved. Illus. by Charlotte Pardi. Trans. by Robert Moulthrop \(Enchanted Lion, 2016\)](#) In order to protect their ill grandmother, four siblings try to distract Death from doing his work. Death, being patient with the children, shares a story and teaches them the importance of life and how to say goodbye.
- [\*\*Finding Papa.\*\* By Angela Pham Krans. Illus. by Thi Bui. \(Harper, 2023\)](#) Mai has no idea where her father went or when she will see him again. Maybe she never will. Then, she and her mother leave their home and country in search of him, navigating daunting terrain and not knowing whom to trust.
- [\*\*Goodbye: A First Conversation about Grief.\*\* By Megan Madison and Jessica Ralli. Illus. by Isabel Roxas. \(Rise x Penguin Workshop, 2023\)](#) By exploring open-ended questions about grief and death, this book helps caregivers facilitate important conversations with young people.
- [\*\*In Every Life.\*\* By Marla Frazee. \(Beach Lane, 2023\)](#) Everyone’s life is full of love and loss, hope and joy, mystery and wonder. This book captures and honors the wide range of emotions and the common feelings that we experience over our lifetimes.
- [\*\*The Longest Letsgoboy.\*\* By Derick Wilder. Illus. by Cátia Chien. \(Chronicle, 2021\)](#) Told by the dog himself, this story follows a little girl and her dog as they take a final journey together. Readers see and hear the dog’s happiness and unique “descriptions” of all that he has experienced during his lifetime. *Also available in Korean.*
- [\*\*Love, Max and Teddy.\*\* By Deborah November. \(Paw Prints, 2022\)](#) Max has fun with his teddy bear and his grandad, who he lives with, but he misses his mom. At Grandad’s urging, Max writes her letters. Backmatter includes tips from a clinical psychologist on helping children deal with absent parents. *Also available in Spanish.*
- [\*\*Milo Imagines the World.\*\* By Matt de la Peña. Illus. by Christian Robinson. \(Putnam, 2021\)](#) A boy named Milo travels the subway with his older sister to visit their mom in prison. During their train ride, Milo draws pictures, observing the people around him and imagining their stories, creating a special surprise for his mom. *Also available in Chinese, Japanese, and Spanish.*
- [\*\*My Brother Is Away.\*\* By Sara Greenwood. Illus. by Luisa Uribe. \(Random House Studio, 2022\)](#) A young girl encounters tough emotions, dealing with a complicated relationship with her older brother, who is away in jail. When kids at school gossip and the family makes the long trip to the prison, she questions if other kids have the same issues and feelings. Inspired by the author’s real-life experience.

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- [\*\*Powwow Day.\*\* By Traci Sorell. Illus. by Madelyn Goodnight. \(Charlesbridge, 2022\)](#) River is recovering from an illness, which makes her unable to dance in her powwow. By joining together with her community, she finds connection, support, and healing.
- [\*\*Rain before Rainbows.\*\* By Smriti Prasadam-Hallis. Illus. by David Litchfield. \(Candlewick, 2020\)](#) A young child encounters obstacles big and small, yet accompanied by her animal friend, overcomes the sadness and fear she sees and feels. *Also available in Chinese and Dutch.*
- [\*\*The Remember Balloons.\*\* By Jessie Oliveros. Illus. by Dana Wulfekotte. \(Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2018\)](#) Using balloons as memories, this tender book about Alzheimer's tells the story of a young boy and his grandfather. When Grandpa's balloons start to slip away, James learns to share his memories with his grandfather.
- [\*\*Remembering.\*\* By Xelena González. Illus. by Adriana M. Garcia. \(Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2023\)](#) Through the traditions of Día de los Muertos, a family celebrates and grieves the loss of their pet dog. *Also available in Spanish.*
- [\*\*See You Soon.\*\* By Mariame Kaba. Illus. by Bianca Diaz. \(Haymarket, 2022\)](#) A six-year-old girl asks questions and finds ways to stay connected and comforted during her mother's incarceration for substance dependence.
- [\*\*Some Days He Growled: A Picture Book Introduction to the Cycle of Domestic Violence, Bullying, Abuse, and Unhealthy Relationships.\*\* By Nicole Kimball Ostrowski. \(Independently published, 2022\).](#) Ghost and Wolf have a great friendship to start, but Ghost starts to see a hurtful cycle and has to decide if he should stay in the friendship.
- [\*\*Something Good.\*\* By Marcy Campbell. Illus. by Corinna Luyken. \(Little, Brown, 2021\)](#) A classroom of children encounters 'something bad' written on a bathroom wall that creates feelings of fear and confusion. Their art teacher decides to try to help heal these feelings by having the students create an art mural over the 'bad' and restore the children's confidence.
- [\*\*Vanishing Colors.\*\* By Constance Ørbeck-Nilssen. Illus. by Akin Duzakin. Trans. by Kari Dickson. \(Eerdmans, 2019\)](#) In a war-ravaged city, a child refugee is comforted, encouraged, and protected from danger by her mother and an enormous mythical bird.
- [\*\*What Does Grief Feel Like?\*\* By Korie Leigh. Illus. by Mike Malbrough. \(Free Spirit, 2023\)](#) A validating book for children about grief and death, with guiding questions for caregivers that will assist the child in processing their feelings.
- [\*\*What to Bring.\*\* By Lorna Schultz Nicholson. Illus. by Ellen Rooney. \(Owlkids 2023\)](#) In this story told from a young girl's perspective, a family must evacuate wildfires approaching their area and decide what to bring with them.
- [\*\*Why? A Story for Kids who Have Lost a Parent to Suicide.\*\* By Melissa Allen Heath. Illus. by Frances Ives. \(Magination, 2023\)](#) This book, about a young boy coping with his

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father's suicide, explains how depression might lead to suicide, but it isn't a child's fault and their parent loved them. There is additional information about helping a child address grief, accept the reality of death, face the pain, adjust to change, remember, and memorialize.

- [Wishes](#). By [Muon Thi Van](#). Illus. by [Victo Ngai](#). (Scholastic/Orchard, 2021) A look at things refugees wish were different during their difficult journeys and their emotional responses once the traumatic event is over, based on the author's experience leaving Vietnam. *Also available in French and Korean.*

## For Librarians and Library Workers

- [Helping Them Heal: How teachers can support young children who experience stress & trauma](#). By [Karen Peterson](#). (Gryphon House, Inc., 2014)
- [What do you say? How to talk to kids to build motivation, stress tolerance, and a happy home](#). By [William Stixrud](#). (Viking Press, an imprint of Penguin Random House, LLC., 2021)

## Section 2: Podcasts

*This section includes two podcasts that focus on social-emotional skills and meditations for children told via stories, best enjoyed by children and their caregivers. Additional podcast series and episodes help parents, caregivers, and librarians and library workers learn how to help kids deal with their changing emotions.*

## For Use With Children

- [Be Calm on Ahway Island](#). *Be Calm on Ahway Island*® Podcast features relaxing, original short stories for kids. Each episode begins with a guided meditation and contains a positive message — perfect for bedtime, nap time, or when it's time to relax. New episodes are released on Mondays.
  - Ahway Island. *Be Calm on Ahway Island*. Sheep Jam Productions, [www.ahwayisland.com/episodes](http://www.ahwayisland.com/episodes).
- [The Imagine Neighborhood](#). This podcast teaches social-emotional skills via stories; some topics have included grief, Covid, expressing feelings, vaccinations, fears, and more.
  - Iseri, Scotty and Committee for Children. *The Imagine Neighborhood*. Directed by Mia Doces, [www.imagineneighborhood.org/listen](http://www.imagineneighborhood.org/listen).

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## For Caregivers and/or Families

- [Childproof](#). A podcast that “brings us conversations and stories with fellow parents and experts on how to navigate this whole parenting thing — especially the shifts that happen within ourselves.” Episode topics include grief, resiliency, honesty, ranges of emotions, and more.
  - Khan, Yasmeen. *Childproof*. Ten Percent Happier, <https://www.tenpercent.com/childproof>
- [Detoxifying Stress: Resiliency, Relationships, and Reading Together](#). The episode description states: “‘Toxic stress defines the problem. Relational health defines the solution.’ This is the core of the recent revision to the American Academy’s policy statement on toxic stress, and co-author Dr. Andrew Garner joins us to explain how we need to move beyond adverse childhood experiences to discuss and support positive childhood experiences. The number one element? The presence of safe, stable, and nurturing relationships, which proactively build the resilience needed to cope with future adversity.”
  - Navsaria, Dr. Dipesh. “Detoxifying Stress: Resiliency, Relationships, and Reading Together.” *Reach Out and Read Podcast*, 2 Sept. 2021, <https://reachoutandread.libsyn.com/detoxifying-stress-resiliency-relationships-and-reading-together>
- [Helping Kids Face Challenging Emotions](#). The episode description states: “Parents love seeing their children experience feelings of joy, happiness, and success. Conversely, they often feel a desire to protect their children against feeling sadness, anxiety or a sense of loss. But is that best? And is it even possible? Newbery award-winning author Erin Entrada Kelly and Behavioral Pediatrician Dr. Nerissa Bauer join us to discuss how to parent kids when they’re faced with challenging emotions.”
  - Navsaria, Dr. Dipesh. “Helping Kids Face Challenging Emotions.” *Reach Out and Read Podcast*, 6 Jan. 2022, <https://reachoutandread.libsyn.com/helping-kids-face-challenging-emotions>

## For Librarians and Library Workers

- [The Brain Architects Podcast - Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University](#). A podcast that focuses on the “specific, practical questions that often arise for parents and caregivers during the critically important period of early childhood” and uses the science of child development to improve the lives of kids.

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- Pfitzer, Sally. *The Brain Architects*. Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/collective-change/communicating-the-science/the-brain-architects-podcast/>.
- [A Trauma-Informed Framework for Supporting Library Patrons](#). The episode description states: “In this episode we talk with Debra Keane and Margaret Ann Paauw (members of the PLA Social Work Task Force) about the emerging field of public library social work; the SWTF’s new book, (available April 2022 from ALA), *A Trauma-Informed Framework for Supporting Library Patrons — A PLA Workbook of Best Practices*; and more.”
  - Author. "A Trauma-Informed Framework for Supporting Library Patrons." *FYI: The Public Libraries Podcast*, Public Libraries Online, 3 March 2022, <https://publiclibrariesonline.org/2022/03/new-podcast-a-trauma-informed-framework-for-supporting-library-patrons/>.

## Section 3: Videos

*This section includes a selection of mindful meditation videos for caregivers to share with children, as well as videos to specifically assist those caregivers in understanding and contextualizing various aspects of trauma so that they may better serve those children. Two webinars and a video are also included, which will specifically assist librarians and library workers in developing library services and programs through the use of a patron-centered trauma-informed approach.*

### For Use With Children

- [Sesame Street Monster Meditations](#). A compilation of 3-4 minute meditations created by Sesame Street in partnership with Headspace. Sesame Street characters lead children through mindfulness techniques.
  - "Sesame Street Monster Meditations Compilation | All Episodes." YouTube, uploaded by Sesame Street, 23 April 2021. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=3EKPfQYi7GQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3EKPfQYi7GQ).

### For Caregivers and/or Families

- [Traumatic Experiences | Sesame Street in Communities - Sesame Street in Communities](#). Videos, talking points, activities and printables for adults to help kids cope with trauma.

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Organized by topic, the resources take between 4-10 minutes to complete together with most videos 1-3 minutes long.

- “Traumatic Experiences.” *Sesame Street in Communities*, Sesame Workshop, et al., 10 Feb. 2020, <https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/traumatic-experiences/>.
- [Basic Information about Trauma | Center for Parent Information and Resources \(parentcenterhub.org\)](#). A compilation of resources (articles, research, and videos) on trauma, ACEs, resiliency, and supporting young children in need. Resources are also available in Spanish and other languages.
  - “Basic Information About Trauma.” *Center for Parent Information and Resources*, Sept. 2018, <https://www.parentcenterhub.org/trauma-basics/>.

## For Librarians and Library Workers

- [Trauma Informed Approach in Libraries](#). An hour-long webinar on how librarians and library workers can better understand how trauma impacts patrons and what they can do to serve everyone better. Tiffany Russell, a licensed clinical social worker, shares the trauma-informed approach and how it can “assist libraries in being proactive in creating safe spaces for everyone.”
  - “Trauma-Informed Approach in Libraries.” YouTube, uploaded by Network of the National Library of Medicine (NNLM), 3 February, 2021. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=4OZWEKjAuOU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4OZWEKjAuOU).
- [Adverse Childhood Experiences & a trauma informed approach](#). A webinar on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and a Trauma-Informed approach hosted by the Mesa Community College Library. The guest speaker was the project director of the Arizona ACEs Consortium, Angie Burleson. Aimed at library staff, the webinar defines ACEs, identifies community support efforts and instructs on how to apply a trauma-informed approach.
  - Leta, Marjorie. *Trauma Informed Approach*. Mesa Community College Library, 19 September, 2022. <https://mesacc.libguides.com/Trauma>. 18 October 2022
- [Anna Freud National Center for Children & Families: Childhood Trauma and the Brain](#). This video covers more of childhood than just the earliest years, but gives an overview of how trauma stemming from neglect and abuse in the home during a child’s earliest years can impact brain development over their whole life.
  - “Childhood Trauma and the Brain.” YouTube, uploaded by Anna Freud NCCF, 16 September, 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYBUY1kZpf8>.

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## Section 4: Websites & Articles

*This section includes a nonprofit organization that offers emotional regulation tools for young children. The resources for caregivers encompass nonprofit websites that provide specific services caregivers can use for themselves or with children, informational articles on trauma, and toolkits for caregivers managing young children experiencing trauma. Similar resources can be found for library professionals and library staff, with the focus on working in a library setting or as an educator of young children.*

### For Use with Children

- [MindUp](#) from the Goldie Hawn Foundation. A nonprofit organization from The Goldie Hawn Foundation focused on helping children develop the tools they need to manage stress and regulate emotions. Their program offers a free membership option that includes virtual events, classes, learning experiences, as well as membership options for access to specific curricula and a resource library.

### For Caregivers and/or Families

- [1-2-3 Care: A Trauma Sensitive Toolkit for Caregivers of Children](#) from Spokane Regional Health District
- [National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#) in general has excellent resources for caregivers and early childhood professionals
- [Early Childhood Resources](#) from National Child Traumatic Stress Network
- [Fast Facts: Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences](#) from The Center for Disease Control (CDC)
- [Fred Rogers Institute](#)
- [Get Help Now](#) List of Contact Information from National Child Traumatic Stress Network
- [PACEs Science 101](#) from ACES too High
- [Peaceful Households Workshops and Events](#)
- [People Are Developing Trauma-Like Symptoms as the Pandemic Wears On](#) from National Public Radio (NPR)

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- [Resources for Parents](#) from American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
- [Resources on Trauma for Caregivers and Families](#) from Child Welfare Information Agency
- [Trauma & PTSD: Articles for Caregivers](#) from Child Trauma Academy

## For Librarians and Library Workers

- [Attachment Vitamins: Interactive Course on Early Childhood Attachment, Stress, and Trauma](#) from The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN)
- [Do What We Do Best: Advice from a Child Welfare Expert](#) from the blog of the Association of Library Services to Children (ALSC)
- [Early childhood educators learn new ways to spot trauma triggers, build resiliency in preschoolers](#) from ACES Too High
- [Holmes, C., Levy, M., Smith, A., Pinne, S., & Neese, P. \(2015\). A Model for Creating a Supportive Trauma-Informed Culture for Children in Preschool Settings. Journal of Child & Family Studies, 24\(6\), 1650–1659.](#) Retrieved from EBSCOhost database.
- [Institute for Learning and Brain Science \(I-LABS\)](#)
- [Moving Towards Healing: A Trauma-Informed Librarianship Primer](#) from ARCLog: a blog of the Association of College and Research Librarians (ACRL)
- [PACEs Science 101](#) from ACES too High
- [Trauma Informed Libraries Libguide](#) from Capital District Library Council
- [The Trauma Informed Library](#) from the blog of the Association of Library Services to Children (ALSC)

## Further Points to Ponder

There may be other organizations within your community that may have additional localized resources on trauma. Here are suggestions for types of organizations you may want to look into, listed in alphabetical order.

- 211 services
- Behavioral health centers
- Early intervention services
- Family Centers
- Health Equity Zones / State Department of Health
- Organizations that offer parenting classes
- Pediatricians or pediatric care facilities

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➤ School resource centers

*The Early Childhood Programs and Services Committee will be responsible for reviewing this toolkit annually to ensure the updated versions of these resources and operable links are provided. Please share additional suggestions, updates, or thoughts to [ecpsalsc@gmail.com](mailto:ecpsalsc@gmail.com).*