

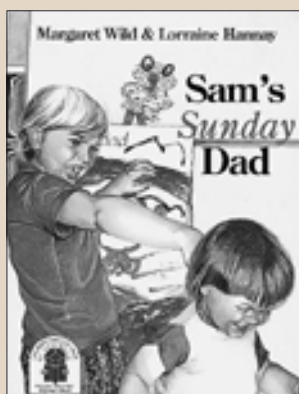
BOOK NOTES

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The Institute's Library receives frequent requests from adults – often parents, but also professionals such as therapists and counsellors – for books suitable for children who are experiencing the separation/divorce of their parents. While this issue of Book Notes is not intended to be a comprehensive reading list, it is hoped that it will provide at least a starting point for those endeavouring to find books on the subject of families and divorce that may help and interest children.

A further two books, intended for an adult readership, look at ways of communicating with children about important issues that may confront them – including the separation of their parents.

All books listed are available through Libraries, through the Family Information Centre via the Inter Library Loan system, or for purchase from good book shops. Prices are given as and when supplied.



***Sam's Sunday Dad*, by Margaret Wild and Lorraine Hannay, Margaret Hamilton Books, Hunters Hill, 1999.**

This Australian picture book looks at a week in the life of Sam, a young boy whose parents have separated. The book recounts the days in the week before Sam and his little sister Penny go to stay for the day with their father. The book details the excitement, frustration and anticipation of the lead-up to the Sunday visit. It recounts the ordinary, everyday type of events that occur in a child's life, interwoven with the fact that Sam and Penny only visit their father for one day per week.



***My family's changing: a first look at family break-up*, by Pat Thomas, Macdonald Young Books, Hove, 1998.**

This book is intended to be read with a child. It explains in a simple way what happens when parents divorce, both in a practical and a legal sense. It reassures children that the divorce is not their fault, and explains the types of changes that may be occurring in their

family, both to their parents and to themselves. The book also discusses the emotional difficulties that children may face after their parents split up, and it suggests simple strategies for dealing with these. Boxed questions which give suggestions for further discussion between the adult and the child are placed within the text.



***Two of everything*, by Babette Cole, Red Fox, London, 1997.**

Using humour to explain divorce/separation to children, this book is written from the point of view of two children who have 'problem parents'. Their parents disagree on everything, and spend their days playing nasty practical jokes on each other. The children decide that their parents need to be 'unmarried', as it is the only thing they will probably ever agree on. The 'un-wedding' proves to be a success, with the parents living happily ever after... apart.



***I live with Daddy*, by Judith Vigna, Albert Whitman and Company, Morton Grove, 1997.**

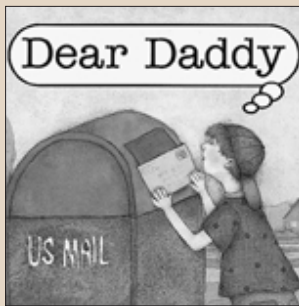
This book tells the story of Olivia, who lives with her father after her parents divorce. Her mother is a television reporter

who works long hours, consequently Olivia doesn't see as much of her as she would wish. Her father reassures her, that her mother does indeed love her, it's just that her job stops her from seeing Olivia as often as she would like. The book relates one particular incident when Olivia is upset because her mother arrives late for a special event at school. However, the book shows that the child can love both her parents equally, even though she cannot spend equal amounts of time with them.



***It's just different now*, written by Linda Espie, illustrated by Gabrielle Greig, Spectrum Publications, Richmond, 1999.**

This Australian picture book is aimed at children aged 3–7 years. In the note to adult readers at the beginning of the book, the author discusses grief, and how parents need to acknowledge that children may feel grief and loss after parental separation or divorce. The book aims to facilitate listening, discussion and sharing between a child and a trusted adult. Each statement in the book is accompanied by an illustration which is intended to be a symbolic representation enabling children to form their own images of what is happening to them. The book reassures children that both of their parents still love them, and that even though their parents do not live together, they still have a family.



Dear Daddy, by John Schindel with illustrations by Dorothy Donohue, Albert Whitman and Company, Morton Grove, 1995.

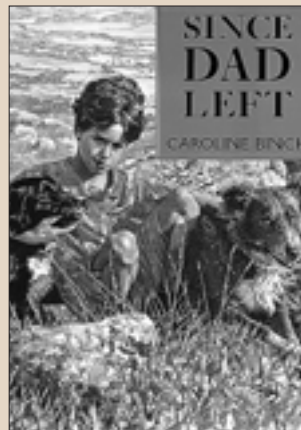
This story book tells the story of Jesse, a young boy whose father lives separate from the rest of the family. It shows how young children can keep in contact with an absent parent, through telephone calls and writing letters, and the importance of these forms of contact to the child. The story gives positive reinforcement to children, that even though their parents may live apart (and far away from each other which makes visiting difficult), both of their parents still love and care for them.



Mama and Daddy bear's divorce, by Cornelia Maude Spelman with illustrations by Kathy Parkinson, Albert Whitman and Company, Morton Grove, 1998.

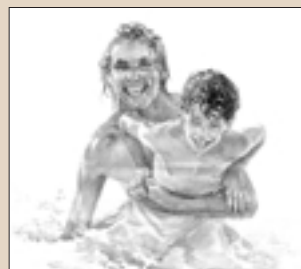
This picture book explains divorce to very young children by using a bear family as an example. The book emphasises to children that although their parents have divorced, they will

not 'lose' the parent who no longer lives with them. The book conveys the message that no matter where their parents live they will always love their child and be a part of his or her life.



Since Dad left, by Caroline Binch, The Millbrook Press, Brookfield, 1998.

Set in rural England, this picture book tells the story of Sid, a young boy whose parents have split up. The book shows Sid's initial anger, confusion and resentment towards his father, not only because of the break-up, but also because of the different lifestyle his father now leads. However, Sid eventually comes to terms with his parents separation, and his father's new life. He realises that both of his parents love him, and that he can continue to have a relationship with both of them.



Carole Jean is the Reference Librarian in the Family Information Centre of the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Adult readership

Talking with children about things that matter, by Sheila Kitzinger and Celia Kitzinger, Pandora, London, 2000. \$16.95.

This book discusses how parents can communicate and discuss values with their children on important matters. Young children from the age of about two and a half years can ask searching questions on a range of topics, and this book presents ways in which parents can deal with tough questions, and gives insights into how parents and children can understand each other better. Chapters include: Learning



to be 'good'; Food; Obedience and autonomy; Lies and secrets; Sex and birth; Friends (including divorce and step-parents); Aggression and violence; Death; Religion; and Politics and prejudice.

Lost and found: a kid's book for living through loss, Rabbi Marc Gellmand and Mon-signor Thomas Hartman, Morrow Junior Books, New York, 1999, \$28.95.

This book is designed for young people from approximately the ages of eight to twelve. It can either be read by the young person themselves, or be read in conjunction with adults. It looks at the many things that a young person may lose in his or her life. The authors hope that the book might become a way to begin or continue family discussions about loss and about the way people must learn to move through this. The book sends the message that no matter what hardships children (and adults) face, and no matter how deeply they are felt, they are not the end of us. It also stresses that loss presents a chance for us to learn compassion. The authors use humour, anecdotes and descriptions of how people respond to the



various forms of loss which occur in their lives. Part One of the book starts out by discussing various experiences of loss that may occur in a child's life – from losing a game, losing your brothers and sisters when they leave home, to losing a parent due to divorce, and losing confidence and trust. Part Two looks at loss and death. The authors stress that they cannot provide all of the answers to children. Instead, they hope to help children live with the questions, rather than to provide answers to all of the questions.