

Using Storybooks to Teach Children and Adults about Alzheimer's Dementia



Choosing a Storybook about Alzheimer's Dementia

Deciding Appropriateness	Question to Ask
Interest level	Is my child likely to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand the ideas and themes in the book? 2. Understand most of the words in the book? 3. Be interested in the book? 4. Relate the book and its characters to their own life experiences?
Presentation of Characters	Are the characters: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Believable and realistic? 2. Dynamic and changing throughout the story? 3. Portrayed positively? 4. Developed without discriminatory language and negative stereotypes?
Context	Is the child's current situation similar enough to the stories? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Setting 2. Age group 3. Presentation of the problem
Illustrations	Do the illustrations: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Help my child gain understanding of the story? 2. Portray child characters in ways my child can relate? 3. Represent individuals and groups respectively and free of stereotypes/ discrimination? 4. Engage my child and maintain their attention? 5. Provide clear and colorful images?
Author's Message	Does the author's message: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage my child to reflect and engage in discussion? 2. Empathize with the feelings and actions of the characters? 3. Provide hope to the child? 4. Offer strategies to help my child cope with or problem-solve difficult life situations rather than providing simple or unrealistic solutions? 5. Advocate for the acceptance and well-being of all children?

Books depicting dementia must have expressed intentions to help children understand and cope with the changes Alzheimer's brings to family life and to support the maintenance of relationships between family members.

Does the storybook you are considering:

- Provide straightforward and comprehensive Alzheimer's information for the parent?
- Use diverse characters children can relate to?
- Include images and words that capture children's experiences with a relative who has Alzheimer's (social, cultural, emotional effects)?
- Show the child seeking support from a parent/caregiver?
- Depict healthy coping skills and positive communication through their characters?
- Show common Alzheimer's behaviors that may cause anxiety and fear in children?
- Support the ongoing Grandparent child relationship?
- Provide children with answers to frequent questions about Alzheimer's?
- Offer ways for children to interact and engage positively with a relative with Alzheimer's?
- Provide basic knowledge about how the brain is affected and what changes will take place as the disease progresses?
- Show the progression of the disease and give examples of what type of care the relative may require?
- Depict child characters in a way that models a willingness to be kind, compassionate, and empathetic?
- Includes examples of how a child can be involved in the care provided to the relative.