

Common Reactions

- **Understanding, Patient, and Kind:** Children may need to rely on parents to explain what is happening to their loved ones who are diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Children can help a person with Alzheimer's by being understanding, patient, and kind.
- **Develop Connection:** Children may want to help take care of someone they love who has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's. As a parent help them find their own way to still connect with the person with Alzheimer's.

Other Storybooks and Reading Guides

Other Storybooks and Reading Guides can be found at:

<https://www.montana.edu/extension/alzheimers/booksandreadingguides.html>

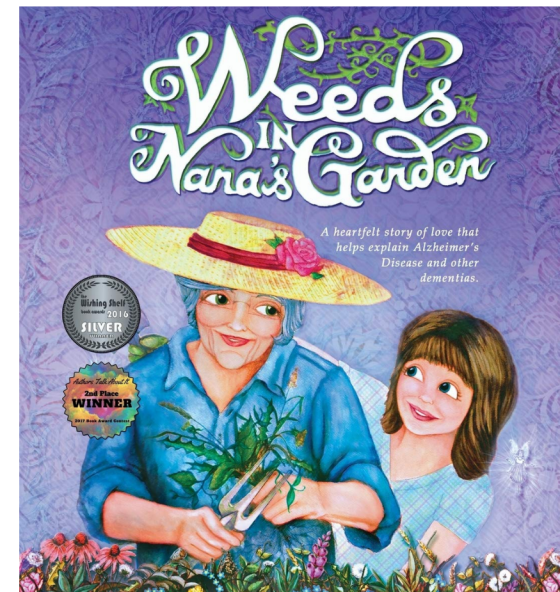


Funding for purchase of the storybooks in this program have been made possible by a grant from the Montana Geriatric Education Center at the University of Montana, AARP Montana, and by the Endowment fund from National Extension Association of Family & Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS).



National Extension Association
of Family & Consumer Sciences
Endowment Fund

Reading Guide for Weeds in Nana's Garden



By Kathryn Harrison

Alzheimer's Awareness for Children

Montana State University Extension is an ADA/EO/AA/Veteran's Preference Employer and Provider of Educational Outreach.

About this Program

The MSU Extension ***Alzheimer's Awareness for Children Storybook*** program is designed to teach children about a form of dementia.

The goals of the program are 1) increase awareness and knowledge about Alzheimer's (a form of dementia) and 2) provide supportive resources to children and families when they have a loved one diagnosed with Alzheimer's.

The authors of the reading guides are:

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- **Marsha Goetting**, MSU Extension Family Economics Specialist
- **Keri Hayes**, MSU Extension Program Assistant

Brief Summary

A young girl and her Nana hold a special bond that blooms in the surroundings of Nana's magical garden.

One day, the girl finds many weeds in the garden. She soon discovers her beloved Nana has Alzheimer's. This illness affects an adult brain with tangles that get in the way of thoughts, kind of like weeds getting in the way of flowers.

As time passes, the weeds grow thicker and Nana's brain starts to decline, but the girl accepts the difficult changes with love. She learns to take-over as the garden's (Nana's) caregiver.

Questions to Ask

- The young girl loves to spend time with her Grandma in the summer and fall. *What activities do they do together?*
- One summer, the young girl notices tall towers of weeds in Nana's garden. She asks Nana if they should pull out the weeds, to make more space for flowers. *How does Nana react?*
- The young girl asks her Mom why Nana has let weeds grow in the garden. *How does Mom explain to her daughter about Nana being diagnosed with Alzheimer's?*
- Nana eventually has to be placed into a special place where everybody knows about Alzheimer's. *What feelings does the young girl have after her Mom explains Nana is going to a special place? What does she whisper to her Nana?*

NOTE: At the end of the book there is a Question and Answer section about Alzheimer's for children.

Activity Enrichment

- **Create Weeds Out of Paper:** Provide your child with green paper, or something equivalent, that would represent weeds. Ask your child to cut or tear the paper into strips, representing weeds in a garden. Then draw a flower on a piece of white paper, tape or glue the paper weeds to the top of the flower. Explain Alzheimer's is like weeds in a garden, they grow so thick thoughts, memories, and feelings are hard to discover. Also, like the beautiful blooms beneath the weeds, the person with Alzheimer's is still the same on the inside.