

Talking about cancer with your kids is hard. **We get it.**

Bright Reads books are one way to start this difficult conversation.

This guide is intended to be used by parents and guardians, grandparents and loved ones, or any loving member of your community. You'll notice the questions are posed from the perspective of a parent with cancer—please change the language to fit your needs.

We've listed suggested ages for the discussion questions and activity ideas, but you know your child the best. These questions may not work for every child depending on language development, understanding of a parent's cancer, and all of the things that make our kids unique.

Here are some helpful questions and sentence starters to use with your child when you are reading together, when a moment of connection opens up, or anytime you need them.

- What did you think of this story? How did it make you feel?
- What is similar (or different) between this story and our family's story?
- What did you learn from this story?



It is helpful to keep sentences short and to the point when telling young children about your cancer diagnosis. Here are some sentences to consider and edit to your specific situation:

I have cancer.

Cancer is a (sickness, illness or disease depending on your family's preference).

You can't catch it. I didn't catch it or get it from you or anyone else.

I am going to the doctor to get better.

I am getting a medicine called chemotherapy / radiation.

The medicine may make me feel sick and tired.

You can hug and snuggle me all you want and you will never catch cancer.

Nothing you did or said caused me to get cancer.

You can always ask me questions about cancer or how I feel.

Please keep in mind that some children will not want to talk about their feelings. Some children will have a million questions. Other children might have huge emotions and big behaviors. It is ALL o.k. Let your children know that you love them no matter what and that they can come to you when they are ready (and over-and-over again).

A big thank-you to the following professionals who contributed to and reviewed these guides:

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I Have a Question About Cancer: Clear Answers for All Kids, Including Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder or other Special Needs

by Arlen Grad Gaines & Meredith Englander

**Check out the great discussion and activities in the back of the book. Here are a few more, if you are interested:*

Discussion Questions:

Suggested Age: Preschool–School Age

Tailor each question in the book to your unique situation—where is your cancer located? What type of medicine do you take? What are your side effects? How do you manage these side effects?

Activity Ideas:

Suggested Age: Preschool–School Age

This book includes a lot of questions! Write out/talk about any additional questions you have.

Create a game out of the information learned from the book! Maybe a simple trivia game to play as a family, or use card-board/tagboard to create a board game.

