



## New guide recommends good books for tough times

A second Good Books for Tough Times has just been published, to help parents and teachers find the right story books for their children. It reviews and recommends 59 titles which can help children aged 9-12 to cope with difficult feelings or situations, such as bereavement, bullying or family break-up.

The guide, which is being sent to every primary school and public library in England and Wales, follows the success of the first Good Books for Tough Times, which recommends books for five to eight year olds.

Programme Director Caroline Egar, who edited both guides, said: 'Parents can find it difficult to discuss some issues with their children – anything from the death of a grandparent or a much-loved pet, to dad's alcoholism or mum's depression. Reading a story about someone else who has gone through a similar experience can be very helpful, and can encourage children to talk about their worries and find ways to cope.'

That's a view shared by former Children's Laureate Michael Morpurgo. In his Foreword to the new guide, he writes: 'Sometimes a good story can help you to feel something or understand a truth in a way that a simple factual account cannot. Reading is probably the



best therapy there is, other than talking to mum or dad.'

The recommended titles have been independently chosen by Partnership for Children, with assistance from Booktrust.

'I'm particularly pleased with the diversity of the books in the second guide,' said Caroline. 'For

*The Boy in the Dress* are so funny that they will make both children and adults laugh aloud.'

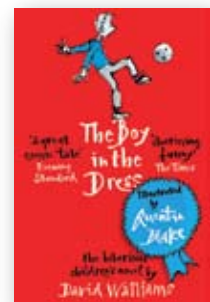
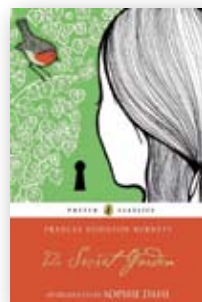
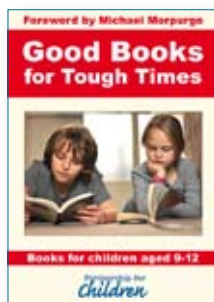
Good Books for Tough Times can be viewed online, and printed copies can be ordered from Partnership for Children. The recommended books can be ordered via our website.

**'Books can help children to deal with anxiety and give them a sense of perspective.' – Michael Morpurgo**

instance, *The Secret Garden* is a classic which was first published 100 years ago, whereas Michael Morpurgo's *Shadow* is bang up-to-date, dealing with the war in Afghanistan. We have three factual books about bodily changes, because that's a real concern for children at this age, and books such as *Matilda* and

Good Books for Tough Times is also being sent to our partners around the world, so that they can produce similar guides to children's literature in their own languages and cultures.

Funding for the new edition was provided by two charitable foundations and the family and friends of the late Howard Mak.





## Top expert joins Board of Trustees

One of the world's most respected experts on mental health promotion, Prof Margaret Barry, has joined our Board of Trustees.

Margaret is Professor of Health Promotion and Public Health at the National University of Ireland, Galway, where she is also head of the WHO Collaborating Centre for

Health Promotion Research. She has published widely on mental health promotion and is in great demand as a speaker worldwide. She is also a Board Member of the International Union for Health Promotion and Education.

Last year Margaret and her colleague Aleisha Clarke published the most comprehensive evaluation

of Zippy's Friends, looking at the programme's implementation and impact in schools in the West of Ireland.

Speaking about her appointment, Margaret said: 'I am very pleased and honoured. The availability of high quality sustainable programmes, such as Zippy's Friends, that can be implemented in collaboration with families, schools and communities, is an important objective in promoting the mental health of children globally. I look forward to contributing to the work of Partnership for Children and engaging with international partners on its future development.'

## Expansion of Zippy's Friends

Zippy's Friends is helping more children around the world.

- **Denmark** was the first country to pilot the programme back in 1998. This year, 36 more teachers have been trained, and for the first time classes have started in Eastern Jutland.
- **Lithuania** was the second country to pilot Zippy's Friends, and the programme is now running in every county. The number of children enrolled this year is up by 42 per cent.
- In the **UK**, Zippy's Friends has just been launched in schools in Nottinghamshire, and classes will start in the autumn in Ashford, Kent.
- Los Amigos de Zippy is about to start its second year in **Argentina**, where the number of schools running the programme has more than doubled.



Children with Zippy in Santa Catarina, Brazil



## Helping children with special needs

Work has finally started on making Zippy's Friends more accessible for children with special educational needs.

Most such children study in mainstream schools but can need extra help to understand or take part in the programme. Children with more severe and complex learning difficulties may study in special schools and require more fundamental assistance.

Research has shown that children with special needs are much more likely than other children to develop mental health problems later in life, and there is an urgent need for resources which can help them to develop coping skills.

Caroline Lifford, a psychology

graduate who has supported children with special needs in various schools, is now gathering evidence from around the world of adaptations that teachers have already made to Zippy's Friends.

Sunfield School in the UK, for instance, comprehensively adapted the programme and has run it very successfully with children with autistic spectrum disorders. Our aim is to develop new resources which can be offered to all our partners worldwide.

This work is being funded jointly by the Network for Social Change and the National Association of Independent Schools and Non-Maintained Special Schools (NASS).



This

is

the

story

about

three

friends.

Leela

and

Tig

are



sister

and



brother.



Their

best



friend

is



Sandy.

Please contact us if you would like more information

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