

The Mid-Coast Maine Trauma Informed Community



Painting by Anna Caroline Jennings (1960 – 1992) www.TheAnnaInstitute.org

Recommended Books on Preventing or Helping Young Children with Difficult or Traumatic Experiences

- Sexual Abuse
- Good Touch, Bad Touch
- Physical Abuse
- Strangers
- Domestic Violence
- Separation or Divorce
- Witnessing Violence
- Other Traumas

All books have been reviewed and recommended for children ages 3 to 9 by members of the Mid-Coast Maine Trauma Informed Community Group

Sources:

- C.S. Mott Children's Hospital
- www.jimhopper.com
- Internet School Library Media Center
- Sidran Institute: www.Sidran.org
- Members of SPSCOT (State Public Systems Coalition On Trauma)
- www.Parentbooks.ca
- National Sexual Violence Resource Center: www.nsvrc.org
- Paperbacks for Educators: www.any-book-in-print.com

The Mid-Coast Maine Trauma-Informed Community believes there is no trust more sacred than the one it holds with its children. It believes there is no duty more important than ensuring that the rights of its children are respected, their welfare protected, that their lives are free from fear, abuse and want, and that they grow up in peace.

Adopted from Kofi A. Annan
Former United Nations Secretary General



Our mission is to develop a trauma-informed community that empowers all members of the community, especially parents, caregivers, and children, with the knowledge they need to:

- 1) Prevent child abuse and trauma
- 2) Understand how trauma impacts on a child and how it's wounds may affect individuals throughout their lifespan and be passed on intergenerationally,
- 3) Reach out to children and to each other in ways that are healing.

For further information about the Mid-Coast Maine Trauma-Informed Community and to download electronic copies of this and other documents go to:

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The following books are for parents or children to choose from, parents to read with their children, and older children to read by themselves.

Books About Sexual Abuse and Good Touch Bad Touch

- ✚ ***Annie: a Book Designed to Encourage Children to Explore their Feelings about Confusing Touches.*** Red Flag, Green Flag. Annie is a 19-page storybook about a child who is afraid to tell anyone that she was touched by someone in an inappropriate and confusing way. This book provides a way to introduce the subject of “secret touches” to children, and to help children learn they don't have to keep secrets that hurt. A storybook designed to help girls who have been touched in a way that is scary or confusing. The story and discussion questions that follow encourage children to open up and explore their feelings. Pre-school – grade 3.
- ✚ ***Andy: a Book Designed to Encourage Children to Explore their Feelings about Confusing Touches.*** Red Flag, Green Flag. This is the boys' version of Annie, dealing with abusive touch and encouraging children to tell a trusted adult if anything happens to them. The story is attractively presented and written in the language of a child. Pre-school – grade 3.
- ✚ ***Because It's My Body!*** By Joanne Sherman. Offers a new and unique approach to making children less vulnerable to molestation and sexual abuse by empowering them without causing undue anxiety. Without any reference to anatomy or ill intentions on the part of others, this book effectively begins the self-protective process for the youngest of children. Its "Note to Parents" arms parents with positive and useful information about their role in educating their children on the always timely topic. A series of vignettes teaches children how to assertively communicate that they do not want to be touched. Ages 4-8.
- ✚ ***I Told My Secret: A Book For Kids Who Were Abused.*** By Eliana Gil. Dr. Gil has provided us with the child-friendly language and specific information that children need to heal the trauma of abuse. The format and the simple text simplify this painfully difficult subject, both for the child and for the adults who care for them. Ages 5-9.
- ✚ ***It's My Body: A Book to Teach Young Children How to Resist Uncomfortable Touch.*** By Lory Freeman, Parenting Press, Seattle. (Available in Spanish.) *It's MY Body* is a book that was written to help adults and preschool age children talk about sexual abuse together in a way which minimizes embarrassment and fear, but emphasizes self-reliance and open communication. There are no specific references and stories about sexual abuse in this book. This book helps children learn how their feelings can help them make decisions about sharing their bodies, and practices with the child how to communicate those decisions to others, including how to say “no”, even to someone you love. The book also covers when someone asks the child to touch them. *It's MY Body* introduces two “touching codes” which children can use to protect themselves when they are uncomfortable. It includes a useful “Notes to Parents” section. Ages 3 – 6.

- ✚ ***My Body Is Private.*** By Linda Walvoord Girard. Pictures by Rodney Pate. A. Whitman, 1984. A mother-child conversation introduces the topic of sexual abuse and ways to keep one's body private. It's really good, uses strong wording for kids (vagina, breasts, penis). 2nd, 3rd and 4th graders would get a lot from this, maybe even children a little younger. Discusses feelings and strengths in a child. It doesn't deal with what to do if the person won't stop. Children need to know it's O.K. to tell, and it's not their fault. Grades K-4.

- ✚ ***My Own Thoughts on Stopping the Hurt: A Child's Workbook about Exploring Hurt and Abuse.*** By Wendy Deaton. Hunter House, 1993. A reproducible workbook to use with children who have been traumatized by physical or sexual abuse over a period of time. It encourages written, as well as drawing responses. Grades 1-4.

- ✚ ***Please Tell: A Child's Story About Sexual Abuse.*** By Jessie. Hazelden, 1993. The nine-year-old author and illustrator was abused by her uncle. Here, children will learn that it's OK to talk about their feelings, and that the abuse isn't their fault. This book gives children courage and helps them begin to heal. Grades K-3.

- ✚ ***The Right Touch: A Read-Aloud Book to Help Prevent Child Sexual Abuse.*** By Sandy Kleven, Judy Bergsma (Illustrator). Illumination Arts Publishing Company, Incorporated, 1998. This book begins with a note to parents and teachers explaining that 80% of sexually abused children know their abuser. This makes it important for children to understand what is good and what is bad touch. Giving caregivers a gentle, thoughtful tool to help prevent child sexual abuse, "The Right Touch" revolves around Jimmy, whose mother gently explains how to protect himself from improper touching. She teaches Jimmie about good touch and bad touch. Benjamin Franklin Award for best parenting book of 1999. Ages 4 – 10.

- ✚ ***Those are MY Private Parts.*** By Diane Hansen. Delightful reading for small children, with rhyming and simple artwork children can identify with. Teaches children about protecting their bodies, having self-respect, and assertively saying "no" to anyone who touches them inappropriately. Ages 3 – 6.

- ✚ ***A Very Touching Book.*** By Jan Hindman, illustrated by Tom Novak. Other Languages: Korean, Japanese, French. *A Very Touching Book* uses humor and sensitivity to open communication with children about touch and sexual abuse, and it encourages adults and children to laugh, giggle, cuddle, and share. Designed for use by parents, treatment specialists, and investigators, it can be read to children to help facilitate discussion about touch and sexual abuse. Preschool age children.

- ✚ ***Your Body Belongs to You.*** By Cornelia Spelman. Illustrated by Teri Weidner. A. Whitman, 1997. In simple, reassuring language, therapist Cornelia Spelman explains that children can say no to a friendly hug, kiss or touch – even from someone they love – and still be friends. This is a useful introduction to the topic of "good touch/bad touch" and a reminder to children that their feelings count. The book includes a useful "Notes to Parents" section. Ages 3 – 6.

Books about Strangers

- ✚ ***The Berenstain Bears Learn About Strangers.*** By Stan and Jan Berenstain, Random House, 1985. When Papa Bear tells the cubs why they should never talk to strangers, Sister begins to view all strangers as evil until Mama brings some common sense to the problem. "The Bears' rules for safe conduct among strangers are listed on the last pages, including a rule about the privacy of a bear's body. A good book to start awareness in young children."--School Library Journal.
- ✚ ***Who Is a Stranger and What Should I Do?*** By Linda Walvoord Girard. Kids who reviewed this book said: "This is a book for kids about who a stranger is, what to do if you are uncomfortable and what is not appropriate for a stranger to do. This book is very important to read and can help you in situations that might be dangerous. On a scale of 1-4, with 4 being the best, we would rate this book a 4 because it is great for all ages. The book is pretty short and it has illustrations, so it is a fast read. After you read this book, you should also talk with your parents about how to protect yourself. Ages 5 to 10."

Books About Domestic Violence

- ✚ ***A Place For Starr: A Story of Hope for Children Experiencing Family Violence.*** By Howard Schor, illustrated by Mary Kilpatrick. KidsRights, 2002. This is a fictional story, told in rhyme, about a gutsy African-American girl who lives in a home of violence, and her mother who finds the courage to leave her abuser. People of all ages will appreciate the beautiful art, the memorable story, and its enduring message of hope. Pre-school, elementary school.
- ✚ ***Changing Places: a Kid's View of Shelter Living.*** Margie Chalofsky, et al. This is a book containing the stories of 8 children who were homeless and lived in shelters. In their own words they describe how they felt and what they experienced once they came to the shelter. It can be read by children who are entering a shelter and used for coloring, for writing in their own stories, or otherwise making it "theirs" in anyway they choose. The wide range of emotions they *might* be feeling are validated without defining what they *should* be feeling. The book "draws a touching picture of children's incredible strength and clarity under very difficult circumstances", said Marian Wright Edelman. Ages 6-12.
- ✚ ***Something Is Wrong at My House: A Book About Parents Fighting.*** By Diane Davis. Parenting Press, 1984. The book is based on a true story about a boy living in a violent household. He experiences the universal feelings of fear, anger, and hopelessness common to victims of domestic violence. He then learns about his feelings and finds ways to cope. Grades 2-5.

Books about Child Physical Abuse

- ✚ ***Hands Are Not for Hitting.*** By Martine Agassi, Ph.D. This is a gentle encouraging book to help young children know that violence is never okay, and that they are capable of constructive, loving actions – of making good choices. It is meant to be read aloud to children. Children learn and practice fun and constructive things their hands can

do. They learn alternatives to hitting, from drawing pictures to jumping up and down, talking about feelings, and walking away. It includes a section for parents and other adults on various ways to teaching alternatives to hitting, and suggestions for what to do if there is violence in the home.

- ✚ ***I Don't Want to Go to Justin's House Anymore.*** Heather Klassen. Justin is Colin's best friend. He visits his house regularly. But he doesn't want to go to Justin's house anymore because Justin's dad yells at him and hits him. Colin tells his mother and is reassured that something can be done to help Justin. A collage storybook. Ages 5-8 years.
- ✚ ***I Told My Secret: A Book For Kids Who Were Abused.*** Eliana Gil. Dr. Gil has provided us with the child-friendly language and specific information that children need to heal the trauma of abuse. The format and the simple text simplify this painfully difficult subject, both for the child and for the adults who care for them. Ages 5-9.
- ✚ ***My Own Thoughts on Stopping the Hurt: A Child's Workbook about Exploring Hurt and Abuse.*** By Wendy Deaton. Hunter House, 1993. A reproducible workbook to use with children who have been traumatized by physical or sexual abuse over a period of time. It encourages written, as well as drawing responses. Grades 1-4.
- ✚ ***One of the Problems of Everett Anderson.*** By Lucille Clifton and Ann Grifalconi. Henry Holt, 2001. A sensitive exploration of a difficult problem by an award winning author/illustrator team. Everett Anderson doesn't know what to do when his friend Greg comes to school with bruises, or when Greg cries and can't explain what's wrong. Should Everett tell the teacher, or would that only make things worse for Greg? When Everett tells his mother, he opens a window of possibility. This tender story – told in rhyme – perfectly evokes the confusion, concern—and eventual hope—one little boy feels in the face of a very difficult problem.

Books about Feelings

- ✚ ***Everybody has Feelings: Todos Tenemos Sentimientos: The Moods of Children.*** By Charles Avery. Open Hand Publishing. The moods of children, as photographed by Charles Avery. Wonderful and full of expression; teaches words for various emotions in Spanish and English. It's very visual, simple and to the point. This book could be a good starting point for a discussion with a child about anger, i.e. 'it's okay to be angry', 'what makes you angry', etc. Recommended for preschool or younger.

Books about Divorce

- ✚ ***I Don't Want To Talk About It: A Story about Divorce for Young Children.*** By Jeanie Franz Ransom, illustrated by Kathryn Kunz Finney. American Psychological Association/Magination Press, 2000. This story is well written and the drawings are exquisite. Told from the perspective of a young girl whose parents are divorcing but help her to realize that although they may not agree about much, one thing they do agree on is that they both love her and will always be her mom and dad. Includes an afterward for parents describing

children's common reactions to divorce and suggestions for helping their children adjust and thrive. Ages 4-8.

- ✚ ***Was It the Chocolate Pudding?: A Story for Little Kids About Divorce.*** By Sandra Levins, illustrated by Bryan Langdo. With this gentle story, young children can begin to understand that divorce is about grown-up problems, while getting comforting answers to their most pressing questions. Includes a helpful Notes to Parents section. Ages 2 – 6.

Books about Secrets

- ✚ ***Do You Have a Secret?*** By Jennifer Moore-Mallinos and Marta Fabrega. This book helps kids distinguish between good and bad secrets. Parents are advised to read these books aloud while their preschooler listens and looks at illustrations. Many children in early grades will be able to read the stories for themselves. Ages 4 – 8.
- ✚ ***The Trouble With Secrets.*** By Karen Johnsen. Secrets can be a confusing issue for children. Which secrets should be told and which secrets should be kept? This book helps children distinguish between hurtful secrets and good surprises. It is very repetitive and to the point. It could make a good starting talking point for discussing secrets with children. In the front is a note to parents giving them an idea of how to use the book. Pre-school/Grade school.

Books about Witnessing Terrible Things

- ✚ ***A Terrible Thing Happened: A story for children who have witnessed violence or trauma.*** By Margaret Holmes, www.sidran.org. This book is written for children who have witnessed any kind of violence or trauma. It is a gently told and tenderly illustrated story. It does not reveal what the main character witnessed, but goes through various ways the event impacted his life and how he got help. Ever since Sherman, a little raccoon, saw “a terrible thing” he has been sad and anxious. He finds himself feeling better when he can talk about “the terrible thing.” An afterward for parents offers good suggestions for helping traumatized children, as well as a list of resources that focus on specific traumatic events. Told in a gentle manner that could help ease a child's fears, this is a valuable resource for abused and traumatized children. Ages 4 – 8.

The following workbooks are for parents or professionals to use with children

- ✚ ***Finding Your Way: What Happens When You Tell About Abuse.*** By Linda M. Pucci and Lynn M. Copen. This book is written for adolescents who think they might have been abused – physically, sexually, or emotionally. It is also recommended for parents or other caregivers of younger children who have discovered that a child has been abused. Although all kinds of abuse are addressed, the focus is primarily on sexual abuse, since that is often very hard for children and adults to talk about. The book helps adolescents and their parents, friends and support network understand what may happen when abuse is reported and how others may respond to the victim. It provides a map of all the steps that may be taken by the community and the resources that may be available, and gives guidelines for telling about the abuse and

describes the feelings that may accompany abuse and peoples' responses. This book also includes suggestions and resources for healing. Ages 9-18.

- ✚ ***My Feelings, A Little Bird Told Me About.....***(Also available in French). The *My Feelings* story and coloring book lets children know it is important to listen to and trust their instincts and feelings, to recognize the difference between OK and Not-OK touch feelings, to say "NO", and tell an adult. The story includes a boy and girl as the main characters, as well as able bodied and disabled kids. It teaches children "what" to avoid, not "whom" to avoid. There is a special section for adults on how to recognize abuse and what to do. An excellent resource for parents, teachers, law enforcement, and social workers. Ages 4 – 10.
- ✚ ***My Own Thoughts on Stopping The Hurt: A Child's Workbook about Exploring Hurt and Abuse.*** By Wendy Deaton, M.A. This is a creative, child-friendly program designed for use with elementary school children, filled with illustrations and original exercises to foster healing, self-understanding, and optimal growth. It is a tool for working with children who have been traumatized by physical or sexual abuse over a period of time. A therapist's guide is enclosed with this workbook and should be removed and consulted before use. For young children with the assistance of a trained adult.
- ✚ ***My Very Own Book About Me: A Personal Safety Book*** by Jo Stowell and Mary Dietzel. (Also available in Spanish). ACT for Kids, 2000. Reviewed by a legal advocate for kids, "This book is really the best I've seen. It's so well written and easy to use for any age and for several different applications. It is great for school prevention education. It can be used in the home for early childhood awareness and parent bonding. In a therapeutic setting, it helps to explain to young victims the dynamics of abuse and healing. It can also be used for parents and PTA-type groups to educate the general public in sexual abuse, and to use in the court setting to educate jurors and attorneys as to how this type of crime happens. The special appeal to parents who may have boy children who have been abused is also valuable."
- ✚ ***Real Life Heroes: A Life Storybook for Children.*** This workbook helps children overcome the difficulties they may face, including divorce, separation, placement in school, learning problems, serious illness, and hospitalization. The workbook highlights and preserves for children the moments in their lives when "important" people (family, friends, and community) showed kindness, caring, understanding, and courage, giving the child a sense of value that can inspire the transformation from victim to hero. The *Life Storybook* is especially useful for work with children in foster and adoptive families and group care programs, but is a wonderful resource for any child who has experienced difficult or traumatizing events. The workbook uses a creative arts approach that encourages children to work with caring adults to develop autobiographies through a wide range of activities, including drawings, music, movies, and narrative, the results of which foster positive values and a sense of pride in children as they form a stronger bond with caring and committed adults as protection against the adversity and stressors that exist in everyday life. This unique book is designed to be used together with *Rebuilding Attachments with Traumatized Children: Healing from Losses, Violence, Abuse, and Neglect* (Haworth), a guide to attachment and trauma therapy from the same author.
- ✚ ***When Adults Hurt Children: Helping Children Heal from Abuse.*** By Marge Heegaard. Fairview Press, 2005. This book helps victims express in pictures what they are unable to say in

words. Written by an art therapist and "...to be illustrated by children," these creative and interactive drawing activities can help children cope with the emotional aftermath of abuse. It is designed to be facilitated by a trained adult to help children cope with emotions related to abuse. Grades K-5.

The following books are for parents and professionals to read for their own knowledge: (This list is limited and will be expanded in the future)

- ✚ ***Rebuilding Attachments with Traumatized Children: Healing from Losses, Violence, Abuse, and Neglect.*** By Dr. Richard Kagan. This is a therapeutic guide to helping troubled children move beyond the traumatic experiences that haunt them. Dr. Kagan, Director of Psychological Services for Parsons Child and Family Center in Albany, presents comprehensive information on how to understand, and overcome, the impact of loss, neglect, separation, and violence on a child's development, how to discover and foster strengths in children and their families, and how to rebuild connections and hope for children who are at risk of harm to themselves and others. This book is designed to be used together with *Real Life Heroes: A Life Storybook for Children* (Haworth), an innovative workbook that helps children develop the self-esteem to overcome the worries and fears of their past through a creative arts approach that fosters positive values and a sense of pride.
- ✚ ***When Dad Hurts Mom: Helping Your Children Heal the Wounds of Witnessing Abuse.*** By Lundy Bancroft. Putnam, 2003. This is a book for women who have been abused by their partners and who are concerned about how their children have been affected by the abuse they have seen or heard. The author describes how children are emotionally hurt by living in the atmosphere that abusive behavior creates, and how mothers can help their children heal. Selfish or bullying behavior which may not be labeled "abuse" is also covered. The book helps women avoid self-blame, while empowering them to promote their children's well-being. The book is also useful for friends, relatives, or professionals who are interested in finding ways to help women and children cope with the aftermath of abuse.
- ✚ ***Helping Children with Sexual Behavior Problems (not yet reviewed)***
- ✚ ***Parent's Guide To Prevent Sexual Abuse (not yet reviewed)***
- ✚ ***Sexuality Curriculum for Abused Children, Young Adolescents, and Their Parents (not yet reviewed)***
- ✚ ***Understanding Children's Sexual Behaviors (not yet reviewed)***



This list of books and resources was reviewed and selected by members of the Mid-Coast Maine Trauma-Informed Community Group (MMTIC) in collaboration with the Thomaston Maine Public Library.