

# Harry Potter good 'tool' to teach death

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A U.S. expert on childhood grief and mourning says the Harry Potter books provide a great educational opportunity to teach children about death.

"In general, I think it's important to expose children to the idea of death early," said Heather Servaty-Seib, a counseling psychologist and an assistant professor of educational studies at Purdue University.

"Children are curious about death at a very young age," she said. "It's like birth, growth, aging and other aspects of human development. It's something children need to know about."

Author J.K Rowling has explored Harry's feelings after the death of his parents, as well as the deaths of other characters, in the five previous books in her series. A character dies in Rowling's newest book, "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince."

"I am concerned that all the deaths in the books are violent homicides, and all have to do with magic," she says. "The risk is that children may view death as something caused only by magical forces."

Servaty-Seib advises parents be involved with their children when the kids are reading the Potter books.

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