

# Supporting Young People Through Loss, Change, and Letting Go

## A guide for carers reading Milly's Moving Day.

Milly's Moving Day explores the emotions many children experience when life changes suddenly.

Milly is moving to a new home after the loss of her parents. As she packs her things, she remembers moments that mattered — especially saying goodnight to the little frog statue that lived by the front door.

When the little frog gets lost during the move, Milly is forced to confront her feelings of loss and the idea that losing something means it's lost forever.

Many children who experience change, loss, or sudden transitions carry similar feelings. They may feel sadness, guilt, or unfinished emotions about people, places, or routines they have left behind. What may seem like a small moment becomes something much bigger for Milly.

This story helps children understand that missing something is normal, that loss can happen to just all, and that memories and connections do not disappear just because life changes.

This guide offers ideas to help carers support those conversations.

### Why This Story Matters

Children in care often experience multiple transitions — moving homes, schools, communities, and relationships. Even when a move is necessary or positive, it can still create feelings of grief or loss.

Young people may feel:

- Sad about leaving familiar places
- Worried about forgetting something that holds meaning.
- Guilty about things they didn't get to say or do
- Angry that change happened beyond their control
- Confused about how to hold memories from the past

Stories like Milly's Moving Day help children recognise that it is possible to move forward while still caring deeply about what came before. For children moving into foster care, it's ok to be angry about losing what they had even when it's considered unsafe.

### Reading the Book Together

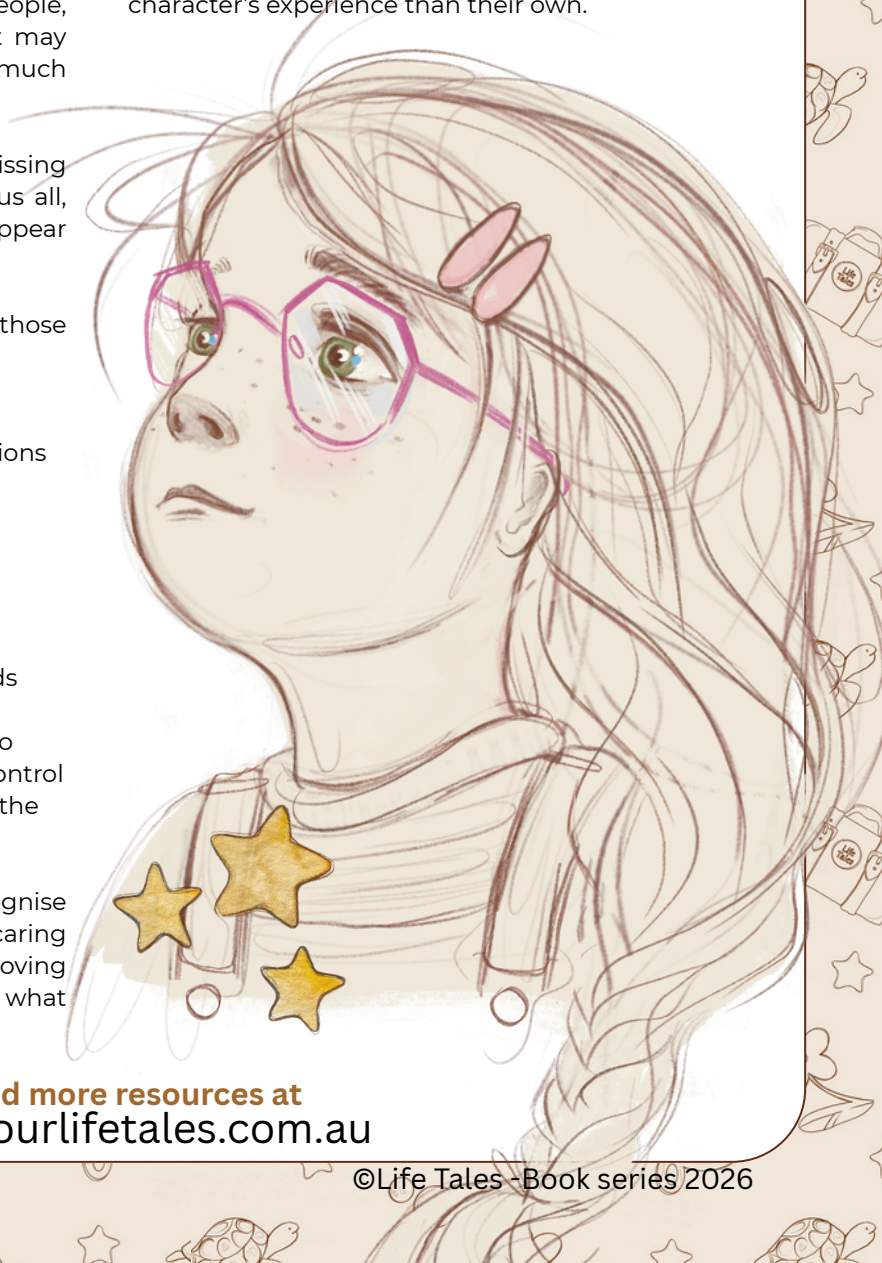
Reading this story together can help children talk about change in a gentle and safe way.

You do not need to push the conversation. Instead, focus on creating a calm moment where the child can reflect on Milly's experience.

Helpful approaches include:

- Reading slowly and noticing emotional moments
- Allowing pauses for the child to absorb the story
- Being open to whatever feelings come up
- Avoiding the urge to correct or "fix" emotions

Sometimes children talk more easily about a character's experience than their own.



Find more resources at  
[www.ourlifetales.com.au](http://www.ourlifetales.com.au)

### Gentle Questions to Ask While Reading

You might ask a few simple questions if the child seems comfortable.

Examples include:

- What do you think Milly is feeling right now?
- Why do you think forgetting the frog felt so big for her?
- Have you ever misplaced something important before?
- Why do you think Milly wanted to leave the frog at Grandpa's door?
- What do you think helped Milly feel better in the end?

These questions help children reflect on emotions connected to loss and change.

### Conversation Starters After Reading

If the child seems open to talking, these prompts may help deepen the discussion.

You might ask:

- What part of the story stood out to you the most?
- Have you ever had to leave something behind?
- What are some things you remember from places you used to live?
- What helps you feel better when you miss something?
- What do you think Milly learned by the end of the story?

Children may share small memories or feelings that seem unrelated. These moments are often important ways of processing change.

### Helpful Things Carers Can Say

When children talk about loss or regret, reassurance helps them feel safe enough to process those feelings.

Helpful responses include:

- "It makes sense that you miss that."
- "Sometimes we don't get to say goodbye the way we want to."
- "It's okay to feel sad about things we leave behind."
- "Memories stay with us even when places change."
- "It might not have been perfect but it was your ...home, school or family."
- "You're allowed to care about both the past and the future."

Avoid trying to minimise the feeling by saying things like "It's just a frog" or "It doesn't matter."

**What matters is the meaning the child attached to the experience.**

### Signs a Child May Be Processing Loss or Change

Every child is different but some signs include:

- The return of natural play
- Reconnecting with peers or family
- Finding joy in old interests e.g sports
- Behaviours such as regression decrease
- Talk more freely about their grief
- Remain more regulated when talking about their grief

These responses are normal ways children process transitions. Providing space for these feelings helps them gradually integrate their experiences.

### A Gentle Reminder for Carers

Change can feel complicated for children.

Even positive moves can bring grief, uncertainty, and unfinished feelings.

Children do not need to forget the past in order to move forward.

They need permission to carry their memories while building new connections and experiences.

When children feel supported through change, they slowly learn that life can continue even after difficult transitions.

Sometimes the most reassuring message a carer can offer is:

- "You can miss what came before and still be okay where you are now."
- "We will work through this together."

**Find more resources at**  
**[www.ourlifetales.com.au](http://www.ourlifetales.com.au)**



## Hints & Tips

### 1. Acknowledge the Loss

Even small things can carry deep meaning for a child. Recognising that loss helps children feel understood.

You might say:

- “It sounds like that was really important to you.”
- “Leaving that behind must feel hard.”

### 2. Allow Space for Mixed Feelings

Children may feel relief, sadness, excitement, and worry all at once when life changes.

Let them know these feelings can exist together.

Examples include:

- “It’s okay to feel happy and sad at the same time.”
- “Lots of feelings can happen during big changes.”

### 3. Create Opportunities for Goodbye Rituals

Rituals can help children process transitions.

These might include:

- Writing a goodbye letter
- Drawing a picture of a place they miss
- Taking photos of meaningful places
- Keeping a small memory object

These small actions help provide emotional closure.

### 4. Keep Important Memories Alive

Children sometimes worry that moving on means forgetting the past. Reassure them that memories can stay with them.

Helpful ideas include:

- Making a memory box
- Creating a photo album
- Telling stories about past experiences
- Drawing favourite memories

### 5. Avoid Rushing Children to “Move On”

Children process loss at different speeds. Encouraging them to forget quickly can make feelings stronger. So instead, allow emotions to surface gradually.

Giving time for each emotion to take its space.

### 6. Provide Stability During Change

Predictable routines help children feel safe when life feels uncertain.

Maintaining consistent mealtimes, bedtime routines, and family activities can provide emotional grounding.

### 7. Your Support Helps Children Adjust

The most important factor in helping children manage change is having a safe and supportive adult.

When children know someone understands their feelings, they are better able to adapt and grow through difficult transitions.

Sometimes the most powerful message is simply: “You’re not alone while things are changing.”

### 8. Reassure the Child that they are not alone.

That you are available whenever they need and nothing is too bad they can’t talk about it.

#### Some amazing resources to check out!

- Grief Australia  
<https://www.grief.org.au/>
- Wombats Wish  
<https://wombatswish.org.au/>
- National Centre for Childhood Grief  
<https://childhoodgrief.org.au/>
- Feel the Magic  
<https://www.feelthemagic.org.au/>
- Kids Grief Support  
<https://www.kidsgriefsupport.com/>
- 13 YARN  
<https://www.13yarn.org.au/>

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