**ISA ISPID  
  
Abstract Submission  
  
Nº: 261**

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| Topics: **SIDS/SUID** |
| Type: **Poster** |
| **Books for siblings affected by sudden unexpected death infancy (SUDI) – filling gaps in bereavement support resources.** |
| **Allan, LC**1 *1 - Scottish Cot Death Trust.* |
| **Introduction** **Background:** What do parents say to their children when their sibling has died suddenly and unexpectedly? Following feedback from families, we planned to produce specific resources for our families to improve sibling bereavement support.  **Objectives:** To produce bereavement support resources for children affected by SUDI; one which aims to help grief-stricken parents and relatives explain a situation that is still a mystery to most, and one to support subsequent siblings born into a family grieving for the sibling they never met.  **Methods:** Families were sent questionnaires to ask them what they felt was needed to improve sibling support**.** Focus groups were held for both parents and siblings affected by SUDI to gather information on experiences and to learn what they felt would have  **Results:** The first book, “Rory’s Star”, tells the story of a young girl who has begun to get used to having a little brother when he dies. It deals with witnessing grief and attending the funeral. It reassures young children that it is okay to cry about the loss of their sibling. The second, “Andrew’s Rainbow”, features a little girl ,Daisy, celebrating her birthday. One of her friends notices a baby photograph and asks who it is. It is of Daisy’s older brother, Andrew who died before she was born. Daisy is a rainbow child – one born into a family after the death of a child. Rainbow children live their lives as younger siblings to a brother or sister they have never met. They may wonder what they would be like, would they look similar, and have shared interests. They might at times also wonder if they would be here if their brother or sister had not died. It may be difficult seeing family photos where their sibling is with their parents or other siblings but they are not. They are not acknowledged on a headstone or commemorative plaque where it says the child that died was the youngest of the family. Both books have been welcomed by families, bereavement charities and were the focus of a Scottish Parliamentary debate during children’s grief awareness week, 2015. Following this, Cabinet Secretary for education and lifelong learning, Angela Constance, MSP, has arranged meetings with Scotland’s senior education officer for health and wellbeing. We will discuss getting them into every primary school and nursery in Scotland so that children who require support can access these resources.  **Conclusions:** For grieving parents, struggling to come to terms with the death of their child whilst supporting siblings that remain, Rory’s Star is an invaluable resource. For children who have many questions about their “older” sibling who never survived past being a baby, the second resource Andrew’s Rainbow provides children, relatives and teachers with a guide to support children through different ages and stages of grief.  **Funding source:** These books were funded through money raised by Wilma Carragher, mum to Andrew, who died from cot death in 1990 aged sixteen weeks. |
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