

Helping Children Understand

Do you have children or grandchildren who often wonder what is happening to their relative living with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia? Are you asked questions such as, "Why doesn't Grandpa remember me?" or "Why does Grandma ask me the same questions?" Do you need help explaining the basics of the disease process and teaching children to cope with what they are feeling? Several resources can help.

The Alzheimer's Association website, www.alz.org/living_with_alzheimers_just_for_kids_and_teens.asp, explains, in a child-centered way, how our brain works and how Alzheimer's disease affects our brain by referencing the Harry Potter series. To help children learn how to visit with their relative with Alzheimer's disease or dementia, the Association's website also offers a list of 101 activities to do together.

Numerous books can also provide answers to the many questions children often have regarding Alzheimer's disease and dementia. For a list, please

go to the Alzheimer's Association website or the Alzheimer's Disease and Education Referral Center website at www.nia.nih.gov/Alzheimers/Resources/Lists/children.htm

One might also peruse websites with their children to gather a better understanding of the disease process. Please use caution, as some websites are for older children or discuss difficult topics and include pictures. One website that is a good resource for young children is: <http://www.kidshealth.org/>. A feature from the "Health Problems of Grown-Ups" section of KidsHealth.org explains what Alzheimer's disease is, how people know they have it, what the doctor will do to help, and what life is like for a person who has Alzheimer's disease. Hosted by the Nemours Foundation, medical experts review all content.

Our campus can also provide a list of resources we recommend for children or anyone else who wishes to have a better understanding of Alzheimer's disease or related dementia.