

# Death of a Child

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1. During resuscitation the RN will:
  - a. The parents should be given the option to be present during the resuscitation if they wish. If the parents are present, a designated RN or SW must remain with the family AT ALL TIMES during the resuscitation.
  - b. If requested by family the Social worker/RN/designee will notify the family Chaplain and document in the EMR.
  - c. Designate one person to notify immediate family who are not present and keep family informed during their stay in the Emergency Department. The Designee who provides this care will document this in patient's record.
  - d. Always refer to the child by name.
2. After Pronouncement of death
  - a. The physician responsible for the resuscitation should inform the parents and the Primary care physician of the death.
  - b. If the mother is breast-feeding provide lactation information and referral number.
3. If SUID is the suspected cause of death:
  - a. Report infant deaths that are sudden and unexpected in children one year of age or younger to the coroner
4. Deaths related to known congenital anomalies are excluded unless there are findings or concerns of possible abuse (i.e. bruises, etc..) or neglect (i.e. malnutrition unrelated to underlying disorder) or if inconsistent histories are obtained
5. Once a patient falls under the jurisdiction of the Medical Examiner/Coroner the following becomes applicable:
  - a. Prior to the coroner arriving, it is permissible for the family to be at the bedside accompanied by the social worker or designee. In cases of suspected abuse or neglect, the best effort will be made to preserve any evidence. Contact the coroner's office for guidance for each case.
  - b. Photographs and/ or fingerprints may be taken with the permission of the coroner's office. Potential evidence shall be removed or collected by hospital staff. Medical apparatus shall remain in place.
  - c. The clothing and personal property, regardless of whether it is on the body or removed from the body shall be given to the Coroner. Evidence or personal property may not be released to a law enforcement agency or next of kin without the knowledge and consent of the Coroner.
  - d. After the coroner's office gives approval, the parents may be given mementoes of their child. If parents desire, footprints, handprints and a lock of hair (cut in a non-obtrusive manner by the RN or designee) can be provided.
  - e. If necessary, it is permissible for the RN to clean the child's face. RN will document presence of any fluid/blood/foam that is cleaned from the face. If soiled diapers are removed, they

must be placed in a plastic bag and given to the coroner. If there is fluid collected in a suction canister, this will be given to the coroner.

- f. If there is a delay in the arrival of the Coroner's representative, the body should be sent to the morgue and the RN will document the time of departure
- g. Sensitivity to various cultural practices for the deceased by the family is Important.
- h. Review any cultural practice to see whether it may interfere with the coroner's investigation.
- i. Provide the family with referral number to the SUID Resource and Support Groups (800) 221-7437. Provide grief packet.