



Children's National™

Chaplaincy Services

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Taking the Next Step.  
**What Do I do Now?**

Grief, Loss, and Remembrance, Bereavement Support Program

**Y**our child has died and nothing will ever be the same. You are likely in a state of numbness and shock. How will you manage to complete the tasks that need to be done? Try to do as little as possible in the next few days. Ask friends and family members for help. The following list will give you some guidance .

Contact your clergy person. Clergy can often help you make important decisions about funeral homes, service arrangements, etc.



## BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE HOSPITAL

Collect your child's things and ask for pictures to be taken if you would like.

If you have other children, our child life specialists can offer help in talking to them about their sibling's death. They also have many good resources that you may want to use at home.

Your doctor will ask you about an autopsy. The medical staff can answer any questions you may have about this procedure and help you make that decision. Some situations will require an autopsy (see below). If you choose to have an autopsy it may give you helpful information about your child's death. Compiling the autopsy report may take several weeks. You will be invited to the hospital when it is completed so that you may review the autopsy report with your child's doctor. An autopsy does not significantly delay funeral arrangements.

In the case of an unexplained death, the Medical Examiner's Office may be involved. If this is the case, your child's body will be transported to the Medical Examiner's Office in Washington DC and an autopsy will be performed there.

Telephone: (202) 698-9000

Address: 401 E Street, SE Washington, DC

A family member will need to go to the ME's office the following day to positively identify the child by photograph.

The ME's office also has counselors available for family support.

Be sure you have the telephone number of your child's social worker. He or she will be your contact person at the hospital.

**When you are home, make a list of people you need to notify. Ask someone to help in contacting those people.**

### **Names and Phone Numbers**

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## WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE THE NEXT DAY

Begin making funeral and burial arrangements. One of the first things you need to do is choose a funeral home. Your clergy person is a good resource here, as they usually have relationships with local funeral homes. When you have selected a funeral home, tell them that your child is at the morgue at Children's Hospital (Or at the medical examiner's office, if that is the case). The funeral home will contact the hospital and pick up your child's body. If an autopsy is performed, it should not delay the funeral arrangements.

Many families decide to have their child cremated. Most funeral homes offer cremation services at a rate that is more affordable than burial, and will arrange for you to receive the cremains (ashes). Discuss this option with your family and/or your clergy, Chaplain, or Social Worker.

If you are going to have a memorial or funeral service, decide on a time and place. The funeral home will assist you in placing an obituary in the local newspaper, if you choose.

The funeral home personnel will also assist you in obtaining copies of the death certificate.

If you need to do this on your own, call the information line at the Department of Vital Records in Washington, DC. 202-442-9303.

Designate someone to keep a record of all gifts (food, flowers, etc) received. This will be helpful later as you may want to send thank you notes. Ask this person to label any dishes or other items that will need to be returned.

Ask someone to notify family and friends about the funeral or memorial service.

### Notes:

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## CHOOSING A FUNERAL DIRECTOR

It may be that you or someone in your family has had an experience with a local funeral home in the past. If not, your clergy person will likely have relationships with funeral directors and can advise you about them.

These organizations may also be of assistance:

### **Maryland State Funeral Directors Association**

301-459-9693

### **District of Columbia Funeral Directors Association**

202-882-6600

### **Virginia Funeral Directors Association**

804-264-0505

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

### **District of Columbia: Department of Social Services (1st Floor)**

202-698-4293

### **Salvation Army**

202-332-5000, ext. 100

### **Maryland: Department of Social Services**

1-800-332-6347

### **Virginia: Department of Social Services**

1-800-230-6977

## AREA FUNERAL HOMES OFFERING DISCOUNTED SERVICES

These may be good organizations to begin your inquiries; Children's National does not specifically endorse any of the following resources.

### **Beau Funeral Home**

6512 NW Crain Hwy

Bowie, MD 20715

301-805-5544

### **McGuire Funeral Home**

7400 Georgia Avenue Northwest

Washington, DC 20012

202-882-6600

### **Rapp Funeral Home**

933 Gist Avenue

Silver Spring, MD 20910

301-565-4100

### **Fort Lincoln Funeral Home**

3401 Bladensburg Rd.

Brentwood, MD 20722

301-864-5090

### **Thibadeau Mortuary Service**

7 Park Avenue  
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877  
301-495-4950

### **Cole Funeral Services, PA**

4110 Aspen Hill Road, Suite 100  
Rockville, Maryland 20853  
240-372-4615

### **For information/aid in planning a Muslim funeral/burial:**

#### **Muslim Community Center**

15200 New Hampshire Ave.  
Silver Spring, MD 20905  
Primary Contact: Imam Mohamed Abdullahi  
| MCC: 301-384-3454 | Cell: 703.973.3096 |  
imam@mccmd.org

The MCC can also provide a list of Washington Metro Area Masjid Funeral Coordinators.

### **For information/aid in planning a Jewish funeral/burial:**

#### **Kavod v'Nichum Jewish Funerals Burial and Mourning web site**

### **Gamliel Institute**

#### **Chevra Kadisha and Jewish Cemetery Conference**

David Zinner, Executive Director  
8112 Sea Water Path  
Columbia, MD 21045  
410-733-3700  
info@jewish-funerals.org

### **For information/aid in planning a Hindu funeral/burial:**

#### **Hindu American Community Services Inc.**

10710, River Road,  
Potomac, MD 20854  
Phone: (301) 646-1232  
Fax: (301) 299-1120  
E-Mail: hacsi.org@gmail.com

### **For information on Buddhist resources for funeral/burial:**

The Washington D.C. Buddhist Vihara  
5017 16th Street, NW,  
Washington, D.C. 20011  
202-723-0773



## **Planning a Funeral or Memorial Service**

Planning a service for your child may seem like an impossible and overwhelming task. However, you may find making these preparations to be very meaningful. Your clergy person and the funeral director will be helpful resources for you. You might also ask other family members or friends to assist you in deciding what to include.

### **Funeral or Memorial Service- What is the difference?**

A funeral service is held before the body of the deceased person is buried or their ashes have been scattered or committed. The body is often prepared for viewing so that friends and family can see the person one more time and say a last good-bye. It is not necessary to have a viewing, although many find it helpful in facing the reality of death.

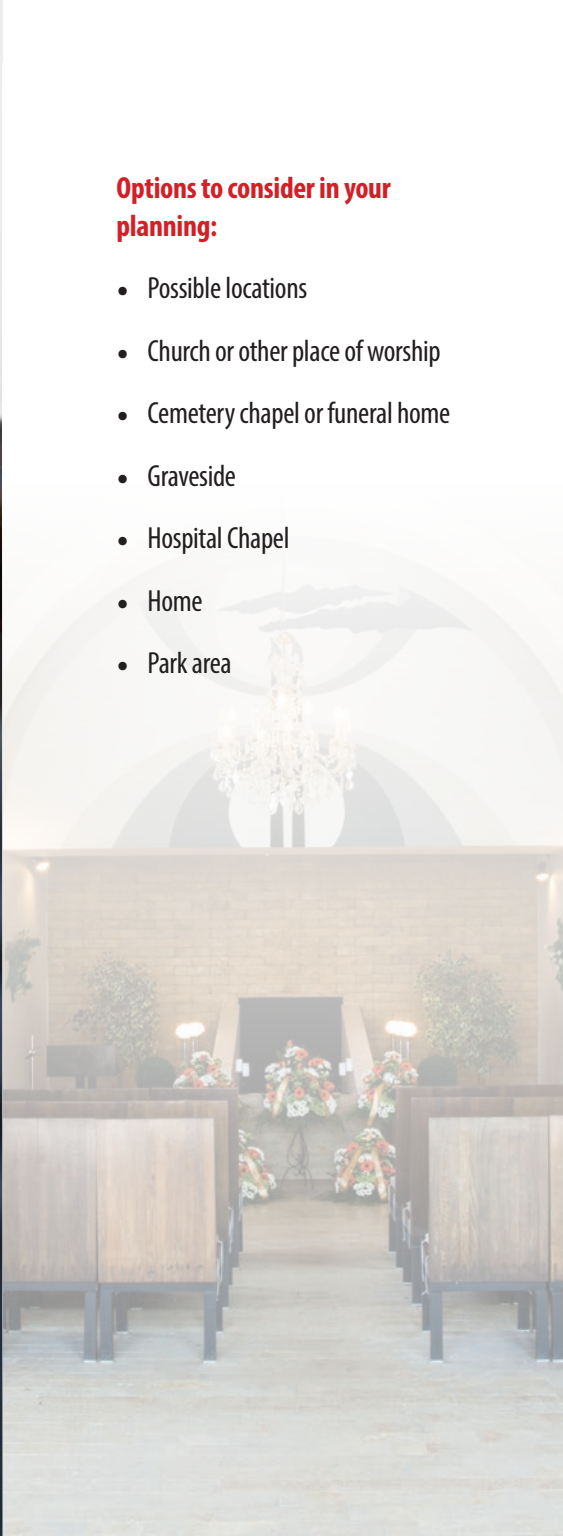
A memorial service is much like a funeral, except the body is not present. Memorial services can be held in the same places that funerals are held. They may also be held any time you choose, even several weeks after the death has occurred.





### **Options to consider in your planning:**

- Possible locations
- Church or other place of worship
- Cemetery chapel or funeral home
- Graveside
- Hospital Chapel
- Home
- Park area



## The Officiant or leader:

You will need someone to conduct the service. A clergy person is an appropriate leader for a funeral or memorial, particularly if you belong to a specific faith tradition and wish your religious beliefs to be expressed as part of the service. If you would like a religious leader but do not belong to a faith community, there are often local clergy members who are willing to conduct services. Check with the funeral director for names of people who might be available. You might also decide you would like to ask someone other than a priest or minister. Other possibilities might include the hospital chaplain, a funeral director who is experienced in leading services, or a friend or family member.



## Format

The shape of the service will vary depending on where it is held and who officiates. Religious services generally have more of a standard format, while non-religious services may be more loosely structured. Either way, you will have some options of readings and music that you would like to include. Choosing songs, sacred writings, poems and prayers will help to personalize the service and make it more meaningful for you and your family and friends. If you do not feel capable of making any decisions about the service, that is perfectly fine, and you can leave those choices to the officiant or someone else who knows you and your child and might have some good ideas.

**Some People Who May Be Good Resources For You:**

Your Social Worker: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone/email: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Your Chaplain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone/email: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Your Physician: \_\_\_\_\_

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Your Nurses: \_\_\_\_\_

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Others: \_\_\_\_\_

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**For more information, contact  
Bereavement Coordinator  
Children's National Medical Center  
Washington, DC  
202-476-3321  
[www.childrensnational.org](http://www.childrensnational.org)**

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[bit.ly/2e10t3K](https://bit.ly/2e10t3K) 



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