

PRACTICE GUIDE

Funerals and memorial services

Information about funerals

A funeral director will attend to formal requirements and practical arrangements relevant to the child's funeral, as advised by the child's parents. As part of the arrangements, the funeral director will ask the child's parents to consider:

- how they wish the body to be prepared and dressed
- whether the coffin will be open or closed
- whether the child will be buried or cremated, including arrangements for the disposal of ashes
- where the service will be held and who will lead the service
- newspaper notices advising of the death and funeral details
- whether they would like particular music, readings, photographs and other special mementos to be included
- whether they wish to use symbols during the service, for example, flowers, candles and memorial books.

It is usual for the funeral arrangements to include the serving of refreshments, either where the funeral is taking place, or at another location upon conclusion of the funeral.

Information about memorial services

A memorial service is held without the presence of the body and can be planned with or without the assistance of a funeral director. It can be held in a church, a funeral home, in the child's home or in a community-based setting of significance to the child, including an outdoor location. If a decision is made by Child Safety that a memorial service will be held, the following matters will need consideration:

- when the service will be held, and whether it will be announced by way of public notice in the newspaper, written invitation or personal phone calls
- who will lead the service, for example, clergy, family member or friend
- what music, readings, photographs and other special mementos would be suitable
- what role other children may play during the service.

Other matters for Child Safety staff to be aware of are:

- the memorial service should be respectful of the child's cultural background
- it is appropriate for refreshments to be provided during a bereavement gathering
- parents should be advised of, and invited to attend, the memorial service, where practicable.

Version history

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