

SIDS and Kids

Loss and Grief

The death of a child is an unbelievable and unacceptable tragedy. It is against the natural order of things. No one expects to outlive their children. The natural expectations, hopes, dreams and aspirations you had for your child have been shattered.

This could be the first time anyone close to you has died. You may feel shocked, overwhelmed, and confused about what to do next.

If the death of your child has been sudden and unexpected, you may be experiencing the effects of trauma as well as profound grief.

It is important for you and those around you to understand that although the feelings you are experiencing can be intense and even frightening, they are normal and natural expressions of your love and sense of loss. They are a natural reaction to the suddenness and enormity of this tragedy.

You may begin to question the meaning of your life in light of such profound loss. This search for meaning can leave you feeling isolated from others who do not seem to understand or be able to help.

“The only thing you can do is to keep breathing and remember not to be ashamed to ask for help.”

Counselling

Professional counselling cannot take away the pain of the loss. It can, however, be a valuable part of survival and provide you with support in your choices of expressing and experiencing your grief.

It can be helpful to talk with someone without having to worry about their reactions to what is being said. It can also provide you with an opportunity to speak from the heart about your hopes, dreams, painful emotions, relationship concerns and ways you wish to remember your child.

SIDS and Kids offers...

24 hour Telephone Support

Counsellors and trained parent supporters are available 24 hours a day to provide support and information to grieving parents, families and other people affected by the sudden and unexpected death of a baby or young child.

24 Hour Help Line: 1 800 240 400 or 03 9822 9611

Support for Family and Friends

Ongoing bereavement support is provided by qualified counsellors and/or trained parent supporters.

The support is available in person and by telephone to families affected by the death of a baby or young child.

Support is provided according to the wishes of the individual, couples or family for as long as required. Family members can attend groups and participate in other activities according to their wishes.

Groups and Activities

Regular support groups and activities are held for parents and other family members and friends affected by the death of a child. Daytime and evening groups are held in Melbourne and some regions in Victoria and provide mutual support and opportunities to share experiences. These include:

- Parent Support Groups – for parents whose baby died during pregnancy, at birth, or in early infancy, and separate groups for parents whose child died of SIDS and other causes.
- Fathers' Support Group and Outdoor Activities
- Grandparents' Group
- Family Days
- Remembrance Services
- Siblings/Children's Program
- Subsequent Pregnancy Evenings
- Creative Memories Sessions

Specific groups can also be held for families whose children have died in particular circumstances.

Resources

A variety of booklets and articles written collaboratively with parents and health professionals and relating to different aspects of grief are available free of charge to any family members. Titles include:

- Always your child
- Grandparent to grandparent
- Choices in arranging a child's funeral
- To family and friends: You can make a difference
- For SIDS families: Some answers to your questions
- Another baby? The decision is yours
- What about the other kids?
- Treasured babies

Remembrance & Memorabilia

Treasured Babies' memory boxes and booklets, naming certificates and layettes are available in a variety of sizes, styles and colours for babies who have died in the perinatal period.

Remembrance services are held each year on the last Friday in June coinciding with Red Nose Day, and during the Christmas season (in some areas). The services offer a unique opportunity for families and friends to pay tribute to their baby or child who has died.

Newsletters

SIDS and Kids newsletter **Circle of Friends** is a quarterly newsletter written by and for bereaved family and friends. Parents and family members contribute stories, special articles, poems, memorial tributes and birth notices.

SIDS and Kids News is the major newsletter distributed to all SIDS and Kids Victoria supporters.

Library

ASK Online catalogue of research articles is accessible via the SIDS and Kids website: www.sidsandkids.org

SIDS and Kids Librarian is also available for further information. Phone 03 9819 4595 during normal business hours. Or Email: librarian@sidsandkids.org



Much more than just SIDS...

Who do we support?

Parents, families and friends who have experienced the sudden and unexpected death of a baby or child during pregnancy, birth, infancy or early childhood.

The child may have died from stillbirth, neonatal death, genetic abnormalities, SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome), accidental death, fast onset illness, a pre-existing condition or homicide.

Referrals may be made for the death of a stillborn baby after 20 weeks gestation to a child six years of age regardless of cause (up to 18 years in some regional areas).

**Services are provided free of charge
and with little or no waiting time.**

About SIDS and Kids Victoria

SIDS and Kids Victoria was established in 1977 by a SIDS parent, Kaarene Fitzgerald, following the death of her eight month old son, Glenn.

SIDS and Kids Victoria has grown from a small self-help group to an organisation with wide community recognition. Counsellors, health professionals, speakers' bureau volunteers and trained parent supporters work in partnership in reaching out to support families and educate the community.

SIDS and Kids Victoria is funded primarily by the community.

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VICTORIA

For support and information
24 Hour Telephone Support **03 9822 9611**
or Free Call **1 800 240 400**

1227 Malvern Road

Malvern VIC 3144

Tel: 03 9822 9611

Fax: 03 9822 2995

Email: melbourne@sidsandkids.org

Website: www.sidsandkids.org



Hope Bereavement Care

Kitchner House

PO Box 281

Geelong VIC 3220

Tel: 03 5226 7269

Fax: 03 5260 3019

Email: bpbp@barwonhealth.org.au



SIDS and Kids Grampians Bereavement Support Service

Ballarat Base Hospital

Ballarat VIC 3350

Tel: 03 5320 4196

Fax: 03 5320 4811

Email:

sidsgrampians@bhs.org.au

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A support service for grieving parents and families
whose baby or young child has died suddenly
or unexpectedly