

 <b>VERMONT</b> DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES <b>Family Services Policy Manual</b>		<h1>133</h1>
Chapter:	Special Casework Issues	
Subject:	Death of a Child Served by the Division	Page 1 of 1
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## Purpose

On rare occasions, a child who is in DCF custody or a child served by the division may die. When this happens, the division must closely follow procedures below not only because of possible liability but so we can learn and, hopefully, avoid or minimize similar occurrences.

## Policy

When a child receiving services or a child who has received services within the last twelve months dies, there will be an internal review of the child's overall case plan and the events leading to the child's death. At the discretion of the Commissioner, the case may also be reviewed by the Child Fatality Review Team and the Vermont Citizen's Advisory Board.

### **Funeral Arrangements for a Child in DCF Custody**

The responsibility for arranging the funeral of a child in DCF custody is shared with the child's primary family (even if parental rights have been terminated), any substitute care providers appropriate to involve, and other people who have had a significant relationship with the child. Unless the child's family would prefer to handle these responsibilities, the child's worker will contact a funeral home to request assistance with obtaining a burial lot, contacting a clergy person, securing the release of the child's body from the hospital, etc.

Division staff will apply for burial benefits under General Assistance from the Economic Services Division if the child did not have sufficient financial resources to cover the costs of the burial. The Economic Services Division will make recommendations of appropriate funeral homes and how to arrange payment.

### **Support for Staff Following the Death of a Child**

If the district director or supervisor feels an individual or group could benefit from grief counseling, they may contact the assigned operations manager to discuss payment for that service.