

 VERMONT DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>133</h1>
Chapter:	Special Casework Issues	
Subject:	Death of a Child Served by the Division	Page 1 of 1
Approved:	Cynthia Walcott, Deputy Commissioner	Effective 12/10/2012
Supersedes:	Family Services Policy 133	Dated :10/16/98

Purpose

On rare occasions, a child who is in custody or whom we serve dies. When this happens, we 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 as defined in **Family Services Division Response to Critical Incidents** (or 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. The internal review will proceed according to the **Family Services Division Response to Critical Incidents (Appendix 11)**

Funeral Arrangements for a Child in Custody

The responsibility for arranging for the funeral of a child in 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 social 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 unit supervisor feels that an individual or group could benefit from grief counseling, he or she may contact the operations manager to discuss payment for that service.