



Death of a Child or Staff Member

Policy:

In the tragic event of a child dying who attends Stepping Stones Child Care Centre or whilst at Stepping Stones Child Care Centre, certain procedures must be put in place for legal purposes and for the emotional well-being of all those concerned.

Procedures:

Death from a serious accident:

- Assess the situation for any danger to other children and staff.
- Senior First Aid trained staff are to administer IMMEDIATE First Aid.
- Contact Ambulance by calling "000" (Ambulance MUST be contacted first, before the parents are contacted).
- Contact the Centre Director.
- The Centre Director or Company Director to contact parent/guardian immediately.
- If the child is taken from Stepping Stones Child Care Centre via ambulance to Hospital, the environment is not to be cleaned, or contaminated until confirmation is received that the child is alive. **The police will make further investigations if the child dies.**
- Have staff make comprehensive observations of anything seen or actions taken before or after the accident.
- Police in attendance will inform Stepping Stones Child Care Centre of any other matters that need to be addressed.
- The Director of Children's Services (The Office for Children, Youth and Family Support (ACT) or Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (Victoria) must be notified no later than the next working day (within 24 hours).

Death from SIDS or other non specific cause:

- Senior First Aid Trained staffs are to attempt to revive the child.
- Contact ambulance by calling "000".
- Contact the Centre Director.
- The Centre Director or Company Director to contact parent/guardian immediately.
- If the child is taken from Stepping Stones Child Care Centre via ambulance to Hospital, the environment is not to be cleaned, or contaminated any further until confirmation is received that the child is alive. **The police will investigate further if the child dies.**
- Have staff make comprehensive observations of anything seen or actions taken before or after the accident.
- Police in attendance will inform Stepping Stones Child Care Centre of any other matters that need to be addressed.
- The Director of Children's Services (The Office for Children, Youth and Family Support (ACT) or Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (Victoria) must be notified no later than the next working day (within 24 hours).

If revival is successful:

- Monitor the child and wait for the ambulance.
- If the child is taken from Stepping Stones Child Care Centre via ambulance to Hospital, staff are to make observations of circumstances including times prior to ambulance attendance. A Stepping Stones staff member will accompany the child to Hospital if a parent is not present.

If revival is unsuccessful by staff and ambulance:

- Leave the child where located and do not touch the area any further, as police will need to investigate the scene.
- Staff are to comprehensively document anything seen or actions taken before and after the death.

In respect to staff:

- In the event of a death at Stepping Stones Child Care Centre staff will receive immediate debriefing and counselling from a suitably qualified individual such as SIDS & KIDS
- Press statements are to be released only by the Proprietor. No other member of staff is to comment in any way to the media, unless otherwise directed by the Company Director.
- If staff are involved in the investigation and found to be negligent in any way, they will be suspended from duty until the case is settled or until further notice.
- If staff are found guilty of any offences relating to the case their employment will be terminated immediately.
- If staff wish to attend the funeral, special leave will be granted. This may result in the centre being closed for the day. Closure of the Centre will be considered on a case by case basis.

Death of a Child at Home:

- Staff are not to inform other children at Stepping Stones Child Care Centre of the death of the child, rather leaving it to the qualified counsellor.
- Grief counselling will be engaged to assist staff with the grief and loss of the member of the Stepping Stones Child Care Centre extended family.
- Staff members will be granted special leave to attend the child's funeral and offered grief counselling.

Death of a Staff Member at Home:

- Grief counsellors engaged to assist staff and children in dealing with their loss and grief, and advising staff how to inform the children.
- Parents will be notified as soon as possible, respecting the staff member's families wishes.
- Staff will to be granted compassionate leave to attend the funeral (this may result in the centre being closed so staff can attend- this will be considered on a case by case basis).

Death of a Parent during Operating Hours:

- Staff in relevant areas are to be informed immediately
- A counsellor will be contacted IMMEDIATELY and an offer will be made to assist the next-of-kin in telling the child of their parents' death. Stepping Stones Child Care Centre staff are NOT to inform the child themselves.
- Staff will be given compassionate leave to attend the funeral, to show support for the child and their family.
- Refer to Departure of Children Policy for more information.

Contact Phone Numbers:

SIDS and Kids ACT
Grant Cameron Community Centre
27 Mulley Street Holder ACT 2611
Phone: (02) 6287 4255
www.sidsandkids.org

SIDS and Kids Victoria
1227 Malvern Road VIC 3144
Phone: (03) 9822 9611
www.sidsandkids.org/vic/

The Office for Children, Youth and Family Support (ACT)
Phone: (02) 6207 1114

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (Victoria)
Phone: (03) 5226 4550

Source:

- SIDS & Kids www.sidsandkids.org
- ACT Childcare Services Standards, February 2009
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria. Children's Services Regulations 2009.

Developed: January 2007
Last Reviewed: 26th May 2009.
To be Reviewed: May 2010.

Reviewed in consultation with staff and parent committee members, current at May 2009.