

TIPS FOR PROFESSIONALS

WORKING WITH FAMILIES WHOSE CHILD HAS SUDDENLY & UNEXPECTEDLY DIED

Be clear about who you are and why you are there, and what they should expect from you. Provide your contact information.

Use simple language and recognize that people forget what they're told. Provide as much information as you can in writing.

Families are going to want answers and timelines: know that you can't predict them.

Do what you say you are going to do and don't make promises that you can't keep.

Educate yourself about young child and infant death. Don't use terms that you don't understand fully. It's okay to say that you don't know something and will find the answer.

Use the child's name, instead of saying "the child" or "the deceased."

Remember that everyone grieves differently.

Be truthful and honest with children; include them in commemorative activities. Explain using developmentally appropriate language and stay away from euphemisms.

Provide resources for families to reference when they are ready. Don't assume that someone else has already done it.

Don't put the burden on families to call you.

Remember that there are no do-overs in showing compassion and care. What you say and do, for better or worse, will have an impact on people.

