

## **Emergency Department Checklist**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Assign trained clinician (SW, RN etc.) to family. This clinician should be present with family throughout their time in the ED and be available for longitudinal follow-up. Consider any shift-changes, and ensure family is aware of coming/going of staff.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ensure availability of private space for family.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Offer family the opportunity to visit with any members of hospital clergy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Family should be kept informed about child's status before agencies are contacted (e.g. Office of the Chief Medical Examiner [OCME], Law Enforcement, Department of Children & Families [DCF]).
- \_\_\_\_\_ If requested by primary caregivers, notify extended relatives, and involve them as per family's request.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Notify mandated agencies, per hospital guidelines (OCME, Law Enforcement, DCF). Contact child's Primary Care Provider.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ensure that family has meaningful opportunity to be with their child in a private space before saying goodbye. **This should not be rushed.**
- \_\_\_\_\_ Offer handprints/footprints/hair/clothing/pictures (if permissible) as keepsakes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Inform family of role of the OCME in taking custody of child's body, and that by law, an autopsy will need to be conducted. If the cause of death is not obvious, only the OCME can determine the official cause.
  - **Do not use terms like "SIDS" prematurely, as this determination can take months, or years, to formalize.**
  - **The time to prepare a final autopsy report varies – do not estimate.**
- \_\_\_\_\_ Give family information, and Referral Card, about the *Massachusetts Center for Unexpected Infant & Child Death*, and offer to make a referral by calling 617-414-7437 or visiting [www.magriefcenter.org](http://www.magriefcenter.org).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Follow-up with family within the coming days to check-in and offer condolences. Consider reaching out on the anniversary of the child's death.

### **REMEMBER:**

*Grief responses are completely unique, and will vary based on culture, circumstance, and family dynamic. Do not presume how any one person will react to this profound loss. All families should be offered compassion, validation of emotions, space, time and ongoing support.*