



# NSW PAEDIATRIC PALLIATIVE CARE PROGRAMME BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT SERVICE INFORMATION FOR PROFESSIONALS

## Mission

*To provide compassionate and coordinated bereavement care to all bereaved families whose child was cared for through the NSW Paediatric Palliative Care Programme.*

## What is the Bereavement Support Service?

The Bereavement Support Program forms an integral part of the NSW Paediatric Palliative Care Programme (PPCP). Best practice palliative care ensures the availability of bereavement care for relevant family members prior to the death of a child and through bereavement. The Bereavement Support Program is managed by the Bereavement Co-ordinator. The professional discipline base of the Bereavement Co-ordinator is social work. The PPCP Bereavement Support Program provides information and support during the acute phase of grief and includes routine and ongoing risk assessment. There are three specialist services in the NSW PPCP, each of which has access to Bereavement Co-ordinators.

## Values of Care

The Bereavement Support Program acknowledges:

- The death of a child has a profound lifelong impact on a family
- Grief begins before the death of a child
- Each person's grief experience is unique and individual
- Actively maintaining attachments with a child is an important part of the grief process
- Respect for cultural beliefs, values and preferences voiced by the family
- Bereaved families may find mutual comfort and support from each other

## What does the Bereavement Support Program offer?

The key aim of the Bereavement Support Program is to ensure all bereaved families known to the PPCP have follow up and access to ongoing bereavement care following the death of a child, wherever they live across NSW. Care may be extended to the Australian Capital Territory depending on the family's referral point.



**NSW Paediatric Palliative  
Care Programme**



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### **Emotional Support**

Emotional support and counselling, by telephone, video conference or in person, both prior to death and during bereavement.

### **Psychosocial Assessment**

Families with palliative care needs will have emotional, psychological, social and spiritual needs. Psychosocial assessment informs a holistic understanding of the person in their social and cultural context to help guide the development of individual care plans. Where existing psycho-social services are being provided to the child and family, the Bereavement Co-ordinator may take on a consultative role if required.

### **Bereavement Care Plan**

Families facing bereavement may experience enormous emotional turmoil and changes. Effective planning in partnership with families is the best way to ensure that relevant people have timely access to information, resources and support services.

### **Referrals**

Families and carers may require different types of social and emotional support. To ensure that these families receive optimal psychosocial services, the PPCP Bereavement Co-ordinators maintain collaborative contacts with services in local communities and other related professionals and make appropriate referrals to these services as required.

### **Anniversary Contact**

Whilst it is important to remember that reminders aren't just tied to the calendar date, the anniversary of a child's death can be a particularly difficult and challenging time for families. The PPCP Bereavement Support Program acknowledges this and recognises that in general families appreciate some sort of contact at this time.

### **Consultation and Education**

Bereavement Co-ordinators can support metropolitan and rural health workers. Co-ordinators can provide education, consultation, and advice on self-care. As noted, where existing psycho-social services are being provided to the child and family, the Bereavement Coordinator may take on a consultative role if required.

### **Research and Evaluation**

The Bereavement Support Program is committed to develop and participate in research, quality improvement and evidence based practice activities.

### **Contact us**

#### **The Children's Hospital at Westmead**

**Social Work Department**

**Tel: 02 9845 2641**

#### **Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick**

**Bereavement Coordinator**

**Tel: 02 9382 1021**

#### **John Hunter Children's Hospital, Newcastle**

**Bereavement Coordinator**

**Tel: 0437 916 149**

#### **Bear Cottage, Manly**

**Social Worker**

**Tel: 02 9976 8336**