



## INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES

### CHILD WELFARE POLICY

#### Chapter 8: Out-of-Home Care

#### Section 49: Funeral or Burial Services for a Child in Out-of-Home Care

**Effective Date:** January 1, 2024

**Version:** 5

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#### POLICY OVERVIEW

It is important to ensure the wishes of the family, along with Acceptable Standards, are taken into consideration when planning the funeral and burial services for a child who is in out-of-home care.

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#### PROCEDURE

If Child Abuse or Neglect (CA/N) is suspected to be the cause of death, a report should be immediately made to the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) Child Abuse Hotline (Hotline) at 1-800-800-5556 and to the Local Law Enforcement Agency (LEA).

DCS will work with the child's family, or other persons as specified by IC 29-2-19-17, regarding funeral, burial, and/or cremation arrangements and expenses. DCS may provide up to \$4,000.00 in financial assistance related to funeral and burial costs for children who are ineligible for Medicaid benefits and up to \$2,150.00 for children who are eligible for Medicaid benefits. If the child's family is willing and able to assume responsibility for the funeral, burial, and/or cremation, they should be encouraged to do so.

**Note:** All costs that exceed the allotted amount for financial assistance will require RM approval. DCS staff will advise the family of funding amounts if approved by the Regional Manager (RM). All approved vendors will need to complete an Automated Direct Deposit Authorization Agreement form to receive payment.

If the child's family is unable to assume responsibility for the funeral, burial, and/or cremation, DCS may provide financial assistance to the family and/or contact local funeral homes and cemeteries to provide a basic service and burial.

DCS will:

1. Make a report of CA/N to the Hotline (1-800-800-5556) and LEA if CA/N is suspected;
2. Work with the Coroner who is required to notify the child's family unless Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) has occurred. The child's parent, guardian, custodian, and siblings should be notified of the child's death in person on the day of the child's death or as soon as reasonably possible, regardless of whether the death occurs on a weekday or weekend;

**Note:** Notification to the family is not required if Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) has been ordered; however, DCS may provide in-person notification of the child's death to the child's parents, siblings, and/or extended family if it is determined to be in the best interest of the surviving siblings and family. In-person notification should occur unless circumstances prohibit this from happening. If the parents and/or siblings live in another county or state, DCS will request immediate assistance from the specific county or state to make face-to-face contact with the child's parents.

3. Notify the court in writing and via telephonic communication of the child's death as soon as reasonably possible or within one (1) business day following the death or the first business day after a weekend or holiday;
4. Contact the Medicaid Enrollment Unit (MEU) to verify if the child is eligible for funeral, burial, and/or cremation benefits.

**Note:** The maximum allowable burial assistance is \$2,000.00 (\$1,200.00 for the Funeral Director's expenses and \$800.00 for cemetery expenses) if a child is eligible for Medicaid benefits. Medicaid will not cover the cost of a headstone. Additional funding may be available through a Request for Additional Funding.

5. Assist the family, or other persons as specified by IC 29-2-19-17, in making funeral, burial, and/or cremation arrangements for the child;

**Note:** If the child's parents are deceased, DCS should proceed with making funeral and burial arrangements on behalf of the child and consider the wishes of extended family members, resource parents, and/or persons identified by code, if possible.

6. Explore community resources available to assist the family with funeral, burial, and/or cremation expenses (see 4.G Tool: Community Resources and Prevention Services). Community resources that may be contacted for possible assistance include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Trustee's Office,
  - b. Community foundations,
  - c. Community clubs,
  - d. Churches,
  - e. Salvation Army, and
  - f. Goodwill.
7. Consult with the Regional Finance Manager (RFM) regarding financial assistance;
8. Ensure surviving siblings, including children under the care and supervision of DCS, are able to participate in funeral services as appropriate; and
9. Assist the family in locating community resources to address grief or other issues identified by the family, associated with the death of the child.

To request DCS financial assistance that exceeds the allotted amount:

1. The FCM will:
  - a. Complete the Request for Additional Funding form, detailing the need for assistance, and
  - b. Submit to the FCM Supervisor for approval or denial, and
  - c. Notify the family of additional funding, if approved.

2. The FCM Supervisor will review the Request for Additional Funding form for approval or denial:
  - a. Immediately notify the FCM if the request is denied, or
  - b. Submit the Request for Additional Funding form to the Local Office Director (LOD) for approval or denial if the request is approved.
3. The LOD will:
  - a. Approve or deny the Request for Additional Funding, and
  - b. Send the written request to the RM for a final determination if approved, and
  - c. Notify the FCM and FCM Supervisor of the RM's final determination.
4. The RM will:
  - a. Notify the LOD of the final determination via written correspondence, and
  - b. Send a copy to the RFM if approved.

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## RELEVANT INFORMATION

### Definitions

#### Acceptable Standards

For the purpose of this policy, Acceptable Standards are basic funeral and burial or cremation services where surviving siblings, relatives, foster parents, DCS staff, service providers, school personnel, and any other pertinent individuals in the child's life are given the opportunity to pay their respects and grieve the child's death through any combination of the following services: a visitation/viewing, funeral/memorial services, burial or cremation services (including a headstone).

### Forms and Tools

- [4.G Tool: Community Resources and Prevention Services](#)
- [Automated Direct Deposit Authorization Agreement \(SF 47551\)](#)
- [Critical Incident Response Team \(CIRT\) Request](#)
- DCS Child Abuse Hotline - 1-800-800-5556
- DCS Critical Response Team Email - [DCS.CIRT@dcs.in.gov](mailto:DCS.CIRT@dcs.in.gov)
- Medicaid Enrollment Unit (MEU) Email - [MedicaidUnit@dcs.in.gov](mailto:MedicaidUnit@dcs.in.gov)
- [Optum Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#)
- [Request for Additional Funding \(SF 54870\)](#)
- [W-9 Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification](#)

### Related Policies

- [GA-17 Critical Incident Response](#)

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## LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 12-14-17-2\(b\): Application of section; funeral expenses payment; preferred claim](#)
- [IC 12-14-17-3: Cemetery expenses payment; preferred claim](#)
- [IC 29-2-19-17: Priority among individuals as to right to control disposition of decedent's body and make other arrangements](#)
- [IC 29-3-5-3: Findings; appointment of guardian; limited guardianship; protective orders](#)

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## PRACTICE GUIDANCE- DCS POLICY 8.49

*Practice Guidance is designed to assist DCS staff with thoughtful and practical direction on how to effectively integrate tools and social work practice into daily case management in an effort to achieve positive family and child outcomes. Practice Guidance is separate from Policy.*

### **Support Services for Department of Child Services (DCS) Employees**

Support services are available to assist DCS employees following the death of a child. Any employee may request an individual or group Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Response by completing a [Critical Incident Response Team \(CIRT\) Request](#), contacting the CIRT Liaisons via email ([DCS.CIRT@dcs.in.gov](mailto:DCS.CIRT@dcs.in.gov)), or by calling (317) 407-6237 (see policy GA-17 Critical Incident Response). The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is also available to employees by calling (800) 886-9747 or visiting Optum EAP website (use “State of Indiana” to log in).

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