

We understand that planning a funeral or memorial service for your child can be difficult. Although it is painful, choosing a final resting place and arranging a special service for your child can help you with the grieving process and provide an opportunity for your healing journey to begin. The following information will help explain some of the options you have so that you and your family can decide what is right for you. Decisions about caring for your child's body are very personal. When making arrangements, there is no wrong answer; it is important to choose what is best for you, your child and your family.

Choosing a Final Resting Place

Having a burial, cremation or special ceremony is always an option, no matter your child's age. The Spiritual Care Department can provide additional information to help you determine what is best for you and your family.

Cemetery:

- Interment (earth burial)
- Entombment (above ground/mausoleum)

Cremation:

- Reduction of the body to cremated remains (ashes) using intense heat.
- A body may not be cremated immediately following death. Texas law requires a 48-hour waiting period prior to cremation (unless the waiting period is waived by the Medical Examiner).
- Ashes may be privately scattered, scattered at sea, scattered by airplane in unpopulated areas, buried in a cemetery, or placed in an urn to keep at home.

Information Needed When Making Funeral Arrangements

- Full name of child
- Date of birth
- Place of birth
- Social security number (if one has been issued)
- Residence/address
- Father's name, mother's maiden name
- Place of burial or disposition

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I get a copy of my child's death certificate?

The funeral home will send the death certificate to your child's attending doctor to sign. The doctor will return the signed certificate to the funeral home that will then file it with the Bureau of Vital Statistics. This process may take a few weeks. Fees vary for this service; credit cards are usually accepted. You can request copies of your child's death certificate by fax, mail, or in person. This information is slightly different in the case of a fetal death. For questions or more information, contact the local Bureau of Vital Statistics at 210.207.8815.

Do I have to consent to an autopsy?

Having an autopsy performed is your choice (although in some instances, it may be required by the Medical Examiner). Many times families give consent to an autopsy to learn more about the specific cause of death. You may return to the hospital or schedule a telephone call with your child's attending doctor to discuss the autopsy results, whichever is the most comfortable for you. At CHRISTUS Children's there is no charge to you for an autopsy. An autopsy will not delay your funeral plans. You can also be reassured that it will not alter the way your child looks at the funeral. If you are interested in having an autopsy performed or would like more information, speak with your child's attending doctor.

How much will my child's funeral cost?

The cost can vary.

What if I cannot afford a funeral for my child?

There are many funeral homes that work with families to assist with the cost of a child's funeral. There is also the option of having the county (Bexar) arranging the funeral at no cost to you. Next of kin must contact Bexar County 210.335.0757 to schedule an appointment for assistance.

We hope this information is helpful as you make decisions about the final resting place for your child. If you need more information or have questions, please speak with your spiritual leader, chaplain, funeral home director or social worker.