

Maliu

Te Tangihana

Your Baby's Funeral/Service



No parent should ever have to bury their child. No parent should ever have to think about funeral arrangements for their child. The decisions you must now make can feel surreal and overwhelming and all of this is on top of your grief, your shock and pain of your baby dying. We hope that this chapter can help with some of the practical things you will need to think of.

New Zealand law states that you are required to register the birth of your baby, and bury or cremate them in a registered place, if:

- Your baby was born alive and subsequently dies, or
- Your baby was born after the 20th week of pregnancy, or
- Your baby weighed 400g or more when he/ she was born.

Making choices for your baby's funeral/service are part of parenting your baby and it is important that you are allowed to have the opportunity to make these decisions. Whanau and friends can help but the ultimate decisions should be yours. In saying this however, it will greatly help to have others who care for you, assist with the planning.

Where will baby go between birth and the funeral/service?

You may choose to have your baby at home with you for a few hours/days and this can help further the memory building. Alternatively, your baby can stay with the funeral home you have chosen.

Arranging the funeral

You can choose to arrange the funeral yourself however a funeral director knows all the ins and outs, paperwork etc that is needed and it can make things easier to go with a funeral home.

If you choose cremation, you will receive your baby's ashes which you can then decide where you would like them. There are many options and you can take your time in deciding what to do. Some ideas are:

Buy a special container for them – this can be anything from an urn to a little trinket box you like

Have the ashes made into jewellery (details can be found in the resources section)

Buy specific cremation jewellery

Teddy bears can be specially made with a zipped area for the ashes

Scatter the ashes at a significant place

Bury the ashes at a cemetery/crematorium – you can place a plaque with message as a marker

If you choose to bury your baby, you can talk with your funeral director about various options available. There are special stillborn/children's areas in many cemeteries. Remember to check if you are able to place a headstone, plants and decorations if these are things you would like to see when visiting your baby.

Some thoughts for the funeral/service

Open or closed casket

Flowers or other significant item available to place with baby

Music

Candle lighting

Readings and who you would like to do this

Taking photos/video of the service

Order of service

Releasing of balloons/butterflies – remember to check if this is allowed at the place you have chosen

Message book for those attending to write a special message for you/your baby

Transportation

This is another choice you can make. Your baby can travel with you if you would like this. If your baby needs to be flown anywhere, the hospital/funeral director will help with arrangements for this. Alternatively your baby can travel with your funeral director.

Costs:

Costs do need to be paid for by the parents. Funeral directors are able to give you quotes if you are unsure but you must meet the costs. Some charge limited fees or none at all for a baby's funeral however in these cases, there may still be some charges e.g. baby's casket

You may be eligible for a grant from WORK AND INCOME (WINZ) if you are struggling to meet the costs. This is income tested and you need to complete an application form which you can get through your local WORK AND INCOME (WINZ) office. Some funeral directors may have this form available too.