



Anniversaries, Holidays and Special Occasions

An infant death is one of the most devastating experiences any parent can face. Nothing can take away the pain of the loss or fill the void in their heart; but it helps to acknowledge their grief and allow them to share their feelings.

Holidays and special events may be extremely difficult and bring on feelings of grief and anxiety. It is important to encourage families to continue their family traditions and even make new ones. The baby will always be a part of their lives and traditions.

Suggestions for remembering your child

Birthdays

- Give a birthday present to the charity of your choice.
- Visit family and friends, bring pictures of your child and share memories.
- Spend some quiet time at home looking at pictures of your child, or invite family or close friends over to share time with you.
- Work on a craft project making something to remember your child by or share craft time with another child.
- Have a birthday party. Invite family and friends, just as you would if your child were here.
- Visit your child's gravesite.
- Have a birthday cake and sing Happy Birthday.

Holidays

- Write down happy memories to be read when your family celebrates the holiday.
- Make or buy a holiday ornament. Hang the ornament on your tree in the same spot every year.
- Light a candle, saying your child's name out loud.
- Do what you feel you have the energy to do.
- Decorate your child's gravesite with evergreen branches, wreaths, a small tree, or lights. (Check the guidelines of your local cemetery and make sure that you do not put anything out that you would not want stolen.)

Anniversaries of death

- Have a remembrance ceremony at home, church, school or somewhere special. Have everyone light a candle, sing a song, say a prayer or read poetry.
- Have a party to celebrate your child's life no matter how short it may have been.
- Visit with family and friends.

How can I remember a family member's child or a friend's child during significant holidays?

The most important thing to do is to acknowledge their child. As time goes on, families share that fewer people acknowledge their child. Send a card, give them a call or visit. Anything that shows you remember.

For additional information on this topic, please view After Sudden Infant Death <http://www.sidscenter.org/documents/SIDRC/FacingAnniversaries.pdf>.