



## Expectations for Each Profession <sup>17</sup>

**E**ach Child Death Review Team is unique. Teams vary by the size of the population served, types of cases reviewed, and the members on the team. However, there are some common themes, including expectations of each profession.

All members must be prepared to present information available to them regarding the child and family including, but not limited to, child welfare reports, autopsy reports, ambulance trip reports, law enforcement reports, health department vital records and reports, and hospital/medical records. Teams may follow a pattern for case presentation that may begin with the coroner's report, law enforcement, child protective services and health records followed by other team members adding information from their respective agencies. Teams may consider interviewing and/or inviting professionals with expertise in a specific area to a particular review. Hospitals, schools and others who have had contact with the child may be invited.

### Coroner/Medical Examiner

The Coroner/Medical Examiner presents material from the death scene investigation, autopsy and laboratory studies. [Coroner's cases include unexpected or unexplained deaths. This includes intentional injury (homicide and suicide), unintentional injury (accidents), and deaths where the manner of death cannot be determined (undetermined). Coroners may receive some natural deaths, including all suspected SIDS, and other natural deaths where the cause of death was unclear at the time the child died.]

### Law Enforcement

Law Enforcement may be asked to present the facts of the death. This could begin with the 911 tape, if available, followed by the history of the investigation. The team, including human service professionals, may add to the Team's understanding of children and injuries. Law Enforcement Representatives who wish to pursue evidence, should connect with others outside of the meeting setting and be prepared to provide a court order or subpoena, as with other professional witnesses or confidential records.

### District Attorney/Prosecutor

Prosecutors may follow cases and may assist with legal issues. Criminal case data on the prosecution and trial may come much later but should be added to the case outcome. Prosecutors may also assist with invitations to local law enforcement to attend team meetings. They may

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<sup>17</sup> Refer to SECTION TWO, Chapter 2 for more detailed descriptions of individual Team Members' roles and responsibilities.

know of services for victims and may play a role in a prevention program supporting action to enforce safety laws.

### Child Welfare/Child Protective Services

This Agency should bring records of previous or present contacts with the child and his or her family. As line workers add to the presentation, it is important to be factual and to include information about previous contacts, and any information on surviving siblings, such as attendance at funerals and ongoing grief support. Many cases have had previous Child Welfare or Child Protective Services contact, but this does not at all mean that the agency failed.

### Health Professional/Public Health

A Health Professional may have seen the child or may be present at CDRT meetings to assist with medical information. A pediatrician or nurse may interpret medical records and information. This may include the autopsy report, since many teams do not have a medical examiner. Expertise may also be requested on child development, e.g., what a child can do at certain ages that might cause injuries and what a healthy infant should weigh. This information may also be used in the team's collection of birth records on infant deaths and filling out growth charts.

Public Health has accepted an increasing role in child death review in the last few years. This may include data collection and analysis and assistance with writing reports. Prevention programs may require data systems or expertise on data-driven prevention programs with outcome measures.

### Mental Health

Mental Health professionals can play a central role with issues of grief and mourning and depression. Child therapists may have skills with interviewing child survivors. Hospital-based child life therapists may add expertise on this work with their background in child development and experience with multiple child deaths. Experts may also address grieving issues for professionals affected by the death.

### Fire Emergency Medical Team (EMT)

EMTs are on some teams and play a role as first scene responders. The EMT at the scene may know or see something that law enforcement may have missed. Fire personnel also understand many issues of prevention and may be resources for fire safety and drowning prevention.

### Education

Representatives from education may have a particular role with older children, including suicide and adolescent high-risk behaviors. Educators may assist with schools and funerals and with campaigns for safe driving and sobriety. Schools also provide a population of children who may consult on prevention campaigns for home and community safety.