Resources can be mailed to parents or downloaded at www.sands.org.au.

**Library** - A collection of relevant books and DVDs are available through each Sands office.

**Member newsletters** - Written by Sands members, these feature stories, poems, birth notices and memorials.

**Bereavement literature** - Sands has a range of supportive guides that are free to parents. These resources have been written in consultation with bereaved parents and include their personal comments.

**Education** - Sands provides free education sessions in hospitals, clinics, universities and other organisations.

**How to get involved**

Sands relies heavily on the generous support of the community. We are grateful for all contributions, examples of which include:

- Joining Sands as a parent supporter
- Becoming a volunteer (activities include fundraising, office administration, newsletter production and professional advice)
- Signing up as a paid member (to receive newsletters)
- Serving on a Sands state management committee
- Making a donation (all donations over $2 are tax deductible).
About Sands

Sands is a national not-for-profit organisation that offers support when a baby dies before, during or soon after birth.

No one can be prepared for the level of grief that follows the death of a baby. Families’ dreams for a future with their child are lost and their heartbreak can be immeasurable. Parents may wonder if their feelings are normal and how long they will last. They may also need to make some difficult decisions at a time of great distress.

Sands understands what it is like, because we have been through this experience ourselves.

Sands is available to offer immediate support and quality information whenever a baby has died - whether through miscarriage, termination due to medical reasons, stillbirth, newborn death or other pregnancy loss. We are here to comfort parents and offer hope for the future.

Our services are not just for those touched by the recent death of a baby. We also offer support prior to the death of a baby, to bereaved parents who are feeling anxious throughout a subsequent pregnancy, as well as those who were unable to express their grief when their baby died many years ago.

Numerous people may be affected by a baby’s death, including family and friends, who may not know what to say or do. Sands offers ongoing support for all, in the hope that no one will ever have to say “if only we had known help was available”.

Sands was established by bereaved parents in the early 1980s and since then has been dedicated to improving the quality of care delivered to those affected by the death of a baby.

We work in partnership with obstetricians, midwives, nurses and other professionals, often advising on best practice in the care of bereaved families. We supply these contacts with education packs to be given to parents at the time of their baby’s death, enabling parents to instantly access information and support services.

Sands has offices in Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia. We have parent supporters in every state, including some regional areas.

The Sands model of support

Providing access to specially trained parent supporters is a key Sands service. All parent supporters are volunteers who have experienced the loss of their baby and are using their understanding to help others through their journey.

Society often underestimates the profound grief that can be felt by parents whose baby has died before, during or soon after birth. Grief can involve all sorts of emotions and thoughts, many of which are not considered socially acceptable. When the reasons behind these strong reactions are not properly understood or acknowledged, parents can be left feeling isolated and confused.

Talking freely with parent supporters who have lived through the experience can help to reassure bereaved parents that they are not alone and their reactions are normal. Sands also recognises that this model of caring and non-judgemental peer support can help to minimise grief-related problems later on.

“After the death of my baby, it was a comfort to speak to someone who truly understood the depths of my grief – because they had been there before and come out the other side.” - Sarah

How we can help

Sands offers a variety of services that accommodate the different experiences and needs of bereaved parents, their families, friends and the wider community.

Opportunities to talk about, remember and acknowledge babies who have died:

Phone support - Talk with a parent supporter on our national telephone support line on 1300 0 sands (1300 072 637).

Support - Our parent supporters are also available via email on support@sands.org.au or live chat at www.sands.org.au.

Monthly meetings and coffee mornings - Held in metropolitan and regional areas, these local support groups are run by, and for, bereaved parents.

Memorial services - Held annually, these non-denominational services provide an opportunity for family and friends to celebrate the lives of babies who have died.

‘In Memory’ certificate - Available for all babies, especially those who do not have birth certificates.

Professional counselling - For those experiencing difficulties that require the support of a mental health clinician, Sands can recommend services in various locations.

“Coming to a Sands support meeting with my partner helped us open up and realise that while we grieved in different ways, we could get through this together.” - Nigel

Opportunities to access information and further assistance:

- Your baby has died - This in-depth book guides parents through all aspects of their experience, such as seeing and holding their baby, understanding their legal rights and obligations, arranging funerals as well as other practical and emotional aspects that follow the death of a baby.

We also have a collection of booklets to help those affected by pregnancy and infant loss, such as:

- Creating memories
- For fathers
- For family and friends
- For grandparents
- Caring for your other children
- Planning another pregnancy
- Making decisions after a poor prenatal diagnosis
- Older loss (for babies who died some years ago)
- Easy English (for culturally and linguistically diverse communities)
- Caring for bereaved parents (for healthcare professionals)