

What is a 'Peer Contact'?

Description: A Peer Contact is a parent, grandparent, other relative, childcare provider, or foster parent who has experienced the death of an infant due to SIDS or SUID and has volunteered to reach out to newly bereaved family members or caregivers to offer emotional support.

Qualifications:

- A parent, grandparent, other relative, foster parent, or childcare provider who has experienced a sudden and unexpected infant death.
- To be a minimum of one year past the death of their child. It is important that the Peer Contact has had time to experience specific 'milestones' such as the first birthday and first anniversary of death, prior to attempting to provide assistance and support to other families.
- Attend a Peer Contact training session and upon completion, feel comfortable with their role, participation, and limitations as a Peer Contact.
- Agree to and understand the importance of confidentiality and respect when working with a new family.

Primary Responsibilities:

- Contact assigned families after receiving a referral from the Iowa SIDS Foundation staff.
- Respect the family's right to privacy and operates within the strictest confidentiality during all contacts.
- If the family agrees to continue the peer contact relationship, peer contacts provide follow up calls, personally answer calls whenever possible, attend support group meetings with the new family if applicable, and provide support and offer an understanding 'shoulder' as needed by the newly bereaved family.

Why Are They Calling Me? Peer Contacts are NOT counselors, they are simply volunteers who have experienced a sudden and unexpected infant death and CARE about you! They understand that every person's grief is personal and hope only to be a resource for you during this difficult time. Below are some reasons that our current volunteers chose to attend a peer contact training:

- Gives comfort to help others, support other families.
- I want to be there for parents and give them support from someone who has lost a child to SIDS.
- Make something good come out of this terrible thing.
- I feel I can help others.
- No contacts in my area.
- Support others so they don't feel alone.
- A way of therapy for myself-the peer contact we had after our son's loss helped us in our grief.