

~Empty Cradle ~

Empty Cradle is a self-help support group for parents who have experienced the loss of baby due to miscarriage, stillbirth or infant death. In order to effectively meet the needs of newly bereaved families, we offer support by means of a resource parent network, monthly meetings, and written material.

The death of a baby is one of life's most devastating experiences. It leaves parents feeling shocked, disoriented and heartbroken. This grief reaction is a powerful and complex emotional response to the loss of a beloved child. Often others may have difficulty understanding the depth of the sorrow or the length of time needed to deal with the pain. For this reason, grieving can be very lonely.

There are other parents, however, who have faced a similar sorrow. Assisting families through the normal grieving process is why Empty Cradle exists. Through sharing, reading, and listening, the newly bereaved come to understand that their feelings are natural, thus giving them a sense of direction and hope. The grief then eases and healing begins.

We are not professional counselors, although we do count professionals among our number. We are a non-sectarian and non-profit group composed entirely of volunteers. We are funded by a combination of community grants and individual contributions.

~What We Offer ~

Every family experiencing the death of a baby is unique, and each has different needs. Our hope is that within the group, parents will find many options for support and healing.

**Monthly group meetings** provide a forum for the open discussion of feelings and concerns. Parents are free to share in whatever way is most comfortable for them. Although there are no simple answers to the complex emotions surrounding the death of a baby, mutual reassurance is obtained in the group setting.

A valuable resource at monthly meetings is the **lending library**, which contains an extensive collection of literature on the death of a baby and the grieving experience.

Parents can receive **individual telephone support** through a network of trained resource parents, each of who has experienced a loss.

Our **newsletter** is published bi-monthly. It includes articles, announcements, upcoming events, and members share stories, letters and poems they have written or have found comforting.

When the time is right, our **subsequent pregnancy support group** helps parents receive reassurance and help in dealing with the anxieties and special concerns of a pregnancy following a loss.

We encourage **volunteering** within the group as a way of coming to terms with one's own bereavement, while helping others come to terms with theirs.

~How to Contact Us ~

Our message phone numbers are available 24 hours a day:

San Diego – (619) 595-3887  
Riverside – (951) 686-5677

Please leave your name, phone number, and a short message. Your call will be returned as soon as possible. At that time, a resource parent who has had a similar loss can be referred to you. You may also receive information and be added to our newsletter mailing list.

~Meetings ~

For the convenience of parents, our monthly group meetings are scheduled on different evenings in several locations throughout San Diego and Riverside County. Parents and others who support them are welcome to attend any or all of the meetings. The subsequent pregnancy group meets each month in at least one location. Please telephone us for exact times and locations.

The 2-hour meetings begin with a brief business and announcements period, usually followed by a speaker addressing various issues relevant to parents' concerns and the grief process. Professionals as well as group members participate in such presentations. After a short break for refreshments, the group gathers into smaller "sharing circles." Here parents may share their own experiences and feelings or they may simply listen to others and receive validation. As one father said, "*At last I've found a safe place to talk about how I really feel.*"

~ *Empty Cradle and the Community* ~

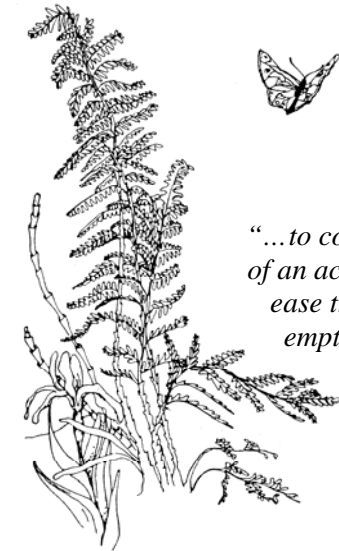
Community education is another focus of our group. Our parents have given numerous presentations to local hospitals, schools, and civic organizations in an effort to improve professional and community awareness of the needs of bereaved parents. The response has been positive, resulting in many beneficial changes in both professional and personal responses to the death of a baby.

In an effort to “get the word out” to the San Diego and Riverside County communities at large, Empty Cradle has had numerous stories done about what our group offers parents in newspapers and magazines, as well as through radio and television programs.

Since 1982, Empty Cradle has established itself as a vital resource in the community. The group was founded by three families to offer comfort, information and friendship to parents suffering the loss of a baby. We have discovered that the common bond of a shared experience draws us together and helps us with the painful task of resolving our grief. For this reason, our resource parent network is vital not only to the newly bereaved, but also to those whose grief is no longer new. By reaching out to others, we can achieve our stated goal:

“...to comfort the grief of an aching heart and ease the pain of an empty cradle...”

# *Empty Cradle*



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