



No One Ever Needs to Abandon a child

CT's Safe Havens for Newborns Act

By Linda Ziac
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WON'T YOU HELP SAVE A CHILD'S LIFE BY SPREADING THE WORD ABOUT CT's SAFE HAVEN LAW

Unfortunately, there have been too many cases in the news of infants being abandoned. One of the most recent reports involved the discovery of an infant's body last week in a Connecticut reservoir.

Child advocates and other professionals are hoping to get the word out about CT's Safe Havens for Newborns, so no other child has to suffer the same fate.

WHAT IS CT'S SAFE HAVEN LAW

CT's Safe Haven Act which took effect in 2000, allows a parent who can't keep a child to drop off an infant 30 days old or younger at a hospital emergency room, with no questions asked and will not face prosecution for abandonment.

APRIL 4th is CT's SAFE HAVEN AWARENESS DAY

Please help spread the word in your community, to let people know that there is always a safe place for newborn children.

In 2000, the State of Connecticut passed the Safe Havens Act for Newborns, a law that allows anyone to safely drop off a newborn baby, within the first 30 days of life, to any hospital emergency room in Connecticut, without being subject to arrest for abandonment. Under this provision, new parents or caregivers can safely handover custody of their infant children with no questions asked and without fear of legal repercussion.

The intention of this law is to ensure the safety of newborns, as well as provide support for new mothers, fathers or caretakers that are not able to care for their newborn children.

Infant abandonment legislation has been passed in every state across the country and every state has reported lives saved through the existence of these laws.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN A CHILD'S LIFE

Since Connecticut's Safe Haven law took effect in 2000, more than 34 babies whose overwhelmed mothers dropped them off at state hospitals have been adopted into loving homes.

Source: United Way

CT's SAFE HAVEN INFORMATION

The following information is being reprinted from the State of CT Department of Children's & Families.

Q. What will happen when I bring my infant to the emergency room?

A. A nurse will meet with you in a private area and ask you to provide information about your child's medical history. The nurse will also ask you questions about yourself such as your name and address. You do not have to answer any questions.

Q. What will happen next?

A. You will be given a packet containing information on your rights and how to contact the Department of Children and Families.

Q. What will happen to my infant when I leave the hospital?

A. Within 24 hours of your leaving the hospital, the nurse will be required to contact the Department of Children and Families who will take immediate custody of your infant. DCF will then begin to develop a plan of permanent care for the child. This plan will involve a court hearing to apply for legal termination of your parental rights to free the child for adoption.

Q. Will DCF contact me or the other parent when they go to court?

A. DCF is required by law to notify both parents of its intent to keep custody of the infant and to seek termination of parental rights. If you have given your name and address or the name or address of the other parent, a court officer will notify you and the other parent of the court action and the first hearing date. If your names and/or addresses are not known DCF may publish notice in the local newspaper and that will be the only notice you will receive.

Q. What if I change my mind and want to regain custody of my child?

A. A request to be reunified with the child should be made to DCF as soon as possible. The parent should also apply to the court for an attorney. This is very important because the court can terminate your parental rights at the first hearing.

Q. What is a termination of parental rights and when does it occur?

A. It means that the court will declare that you are no longer the parent of the child. You will be unable to make any decisions regarding the infant and the infant will be freed for adoption. The court will schedule a hearing within 30 days of DCF's application and termination of parental rights can be granted at the first hearing.

Q. How long will it take for adoption to be completed?

A. If the court grants the termination petition, the court will appoint DCF statutory parent and order DCF to submit a plan for adoption within 30 days. The court will continue to review the plan until adoption is finalized. DCF will file a petition in the local juvenile court, and after the hearing the juvenile court may finalize the adoption.

Q. What if I change my mind after the court process begins?

A. If you change your mind you should seek legal advice. A parent has the right to an attorney in any neglect, uncared for or termination court action. If you cannot afford an attorney the court will appoint one for you. You may call your local juvenile court to apply for the services of an attorney.

Q. What should I do if I have more questions after I leave the hospital?

A. Contact the Department of Children and Families Careline at **1-800-842-2288**

Q. Where can I get more Help?

A. Infoline: This is a free telephone information service that can offer referrals to many resources in Connecticut including your local juvenile court. An Infoline caseworker will be able to direct you to a service in or near your community. Call Infoline at 211
Source: State of CT Department of Children's & Families.

En Español

<https://portal.ct.gov/DCF/1-DCF/Safe-Havens-Act---Spanish-Version>

INFOLINE 2-1-1

2-1-1 is a free and confidential service that helps people find needed resources 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Ways to Reach 2-1-1 Assistance

1. You can pick up the phone and dial 2-1-1
2. You can visit - <http://www.211.org>

You will be taken to a website where you can search for by zip code, city, or state

This can be especially helpful if you are searching for resources for a friend or family member who lives in another area of the country.

CT's SAFE HAVEN LAW - CGS 17a-57,58,59,60

To read a copy of CT's Safe Haven Law, you may visit the following website:

http://safehaven.tv/states/connecticut/Connecticut_Safe_Haven_Law.pdf

NATIONAL SAFE HAVEN ALLIANCE

To view Safe Haven Laws in all 50 states, you may visit the following website:

<http://www.nationalsafehavenalliance.org/maps>

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Photo from the Printshop

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Please consult your health care provider for an appointment, before making any healthcare decisions or for guidance about a specific medical condition.

Linda Ziac is the owner and founder of The Caregiver Resource Center. The Caregiver Resource Center is a division of Employee Assistance Professionals, Inc. which Linda founded in October 1990. The Caregiver Resource Center provides a spectrum of concierge case management and advocacy services for seniors, people with special needs and families.

Linda's professional career spans more than 40 years in the health and mental health field as a CT Licensed Professional Counselor, CT Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor, Board Certified Employee Assistance Professional, Board Certified Case Manager, and Board Certified Dementia Practitioner. In addition, Ms. Ziac has 15 years of experience coordinating care for her own parents.

Linda assists seniors, people with special needs and their families; in planning for and implementing ways to allow for the greatest degree of health, safety, independence, and quality of life. Linda meets with individuals and family members to assess their needs, and develop a Care Team, while working with members of the Team to formulate a comprehensive Care Plan (a road map).

Once a plan is in place, Linda is available to serve as the point person to monitor and coordinate services, and revise the plan as needed. This role is similar to the conductor of an orchestra; ensuring that there is good communication, teamwork, and that everyone remains focused on the desired goal.

<http://www.TheCaregiverResourceCenter.com>