



Ethics

Children: Legal and Ethical Issues

Overview

Children also die – although as a society, we prefer to pretend this truth does not exist. When children become very ill – or are born with serious health problems – decisions need to be made about which therapies to utilize, similar to adults. Both legally and ethically, parents are considered to be the best surrogate decision makers for a minor child. This module examines some of the general questions involved when healthcare decisions must be made for, or with, children, and some of the ethical issues for children who are dying.

It is beyond the scope of this module to provide a general resource for healthcare decision making for children and adolescents. The laws governing these issues are complex and vary from state to state. For more specific information on healthcare decision making for minors, you may need to consult an attorney or other resource.