



CONFIDENTIALITY

Head Start

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Hello!...I'd like to take a few minutes to speak with you about confidentiality within our Head Start program....like this picture of one hand in another, we trust and depend upon each other here at Head Start. Parents and staff share a lot of information with one another...much of the information we share is sensitive and shared in confidence

WHAT MAY BE “SENSITIVE”?



- ▶ Children's records
- ▶ Family information (e.g. application, enrollment)
- ▶ Private Conversations
- ▶ Medical information
- ▶ Interview information
- ▶ School and Head Start Staff issues

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What are some examples of information that may be considered “sensitive” to staff, parents, and children? (ask parents at this point for some examples they know of)

Great!...those are some outstanding examples...just like in some of your examples, some sensitive information may include:

- The Head Start children records, which are kept in a locked file...parents may certainly see what is in their child's folders to check and make sure what is in the folders is correct; parents may not look at folders that belong to children other than their own, however


- Family information is sensitive and also filed under lock and key...for example, when a child is enrolled or application made to Head Start, family information such as income, Social Security numbers, and work status is very personal and sensitive to that particular family

- Private conversations – It is important that a family feel that what they say to one another and to staff in confidence will only be shared in a helpful way to those who need to know so that trust is built between those who have communicated with one another

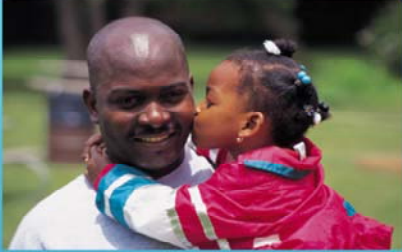
- Almost all medical information is considered private, according to a federal law called HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act)...parents and staff should know that any medical information about a child or family should be handled very sensitively

- Policy Council members are asked to be part of interview teams for Head Start staff...sensitive information is shared in interviews, so to maintain respect for those being interviewed, information that interviewees give and discussions about those being interviewed should remain between the interview team members

- Another possible source of sensitive information could be rumors and gossip regarding what is going on with the Head Start school and staff members...a good rule of thumb to use is to ask yourself, “Will it help the Head Start program to share this information with so-and-so?”



WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?



- ▶ Sensitive information about Head Start families and staff is respected by limiting access to only those having a legitimate reason to know
- ▶ HS Federal Standards, 1304.51 (g), requires agencies to have procedures regarding confidentiality

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Confidentiality is really important to each of us, whether we are staff, parents, or the children. It helps us build respect and trust with one another...when faced with sensitive information, some good thoughts to have regarding confidentiality in the Head Start program may be: “Do I need to know this?” and “Will I help or hurt by sharing this with someone?” We are all responsible to one another, and so by making sure that any sensitive information stays with those who have a legitimate reason to know that information will be a positive step in growing a great program

The Head Start Performance Standards also require each Head Start program to have procedures about confidentiality.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Region 7 E.S.C. Head Start has a confidentiality policy for staff and parents...thanks for reading it and helping to keep respect for one another an important issue throughout the program



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Region 7 E.S.C. Head Start has written policies to help parents and staff better understand how important confidentiality is to our program. Please read these policies...if you have any questions about confidentiality, please do not hesitate to ask. I hope, by talking about this issue, all of you get a better sense of the trust and respect we at Head Start have for one another. You play such an important part in building this trust, and I thank you for making this such an uplifting program!