

Confidentiality Policy

Confidentiality in relation to the EPIC Early Head Start/ Head Start/Pre-K Program is interpreted as the following: preserving information received in confidence and disclosing to agencies/professionals only such information as is needed to plan and deliver effective services to parents/guardians and children and preserving information contained in personnel records. The EPIC Early Head Start/ Head Start/ Pre-K Director is held responsible for overseeing procedures which will assure adequate protection of confidential information.

EPIC will adhere to the following principles:

1. Parents/guardians shall be the primary source of information about themselves or their families (Example: other relatives such as grandparents are not entitled to information on the child or family unless the parent or guardian has provided written consent. Emergency contacts are listed for emergency purposes only and does not allow them access to confidential information).
2. Only facts and objective information relative to services to a family shall be recorded or discussed among staff members on a need-to-know basis.
3. The family has a right to know what specific use will be made of the information collected.
4. Parents/guardians are prohibited from reviewing records other than those of their own children.
5. Children's health and education records and family social service records are open only to Early Head Start/ Head Start/ Pre-K staff and special consultants on a need to know basis. These individuals must sign in on the inside cover of the permanent file.
6. Information to be treated as confidential and kept in a locked file:
 - A. Children's permanent records including the following:
 1. Application and verification of income screening criteria.
 2. Information contained in correspondence forms or notations from or about individual families.
 3. Information contained in reports and records relating to specific individuals and/or families.
7. No information shall be released to other agencies or professionals without the specific written authorization of the parent/guardian unless required by law (Example: Information cannot be released to a physician or other medical facility/agency without a release of information signed by the parent/guardian).
8. All program information shall be made available to auditors and other federally appointed review/evaluative personnel.
9. Because federal/state laws require employees to report suspected child abuse/neglect, specific information must be reported through proper channels as outlined in the Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting Procedure.
10. Any breach of confidentiality or program information by a program employee shall be grounds for disciplinary action. (Example: Sharing information about children and families outside of the workplace. Communicating about children and families where confidentiality is compromised such as when children are present in the classroom, on the playground, in common areas, in public places or around other staff not related to the caseload.)
11. Confidential and sensitive information (such as referrals to child protective services and some court orders) will be kept in a sealed folder marked Confidential and binder clipped to back of file.

_____ (print name) have read the EPIC Early Head Start/ Head Start/ Pre-K Confidentiality Policy and will adhere to its requirements.

Staff Signature

Date