

GUIDELINES FOR SHARING INFORMATION
SOUTHERN OREGON CHILD AND FAMILY COUNCIL, INC.

All programs administered by SOCFC (HS, EHS and Listo) are covered by these guidelines.

The purpose of these guidelines is to clarify the sharing of information between:

- Head Start and Early Head Start staff
- Outside agency staff and professionals
- Staff, Parents and Others

The guidelines address written records, electronic records, and verbal information exchange.

During the program year, a Confidentiality Committee convenes to review related laws and regulations and update confidentiality procedures. Serving on this committee are: Health Manager, Disabilities/Mental Health Manager, Family & Community Partnerships Manager, Education Director, Area Manager, Office Manager, Early Head Start Management, and Operations Director.

When staff members have questions, they should consult their supervisors. Supervisors can contact a confidentiality committee member listed above for clarification.

In addition to these guidelines, refer to the Reference Chart for Sharing Information (see Page 6).

I. EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION BETWEEN SOCFC STAFF INCLUDING CHILD DEVELOPMENT SPECIALISTS

The provision of quality services is the driving principle in the sharing of information. Open communication is crucial to a complete and comprehensive understanding of the child and family. In order for staff members to be effective in their interactions and interventions with families, staff has the responsibility to share information with all relevant staff and specialists so that everyone involved has a complete and accurate picture.

In achieving this goal, it is better to err on the side of sharing too much rather than too little. Information which may not seem relevant in one context, becomes so when other information is revealed.

When parents enroll their child in SOCFC, they are enrolling their child and family in a comprehensive program. Therefore, informed consent is the best policy.

Parents must be informed during the enrollment process that information will be shared among staff.

Teachers, Family Advocates, and Specialists will restate on their first contact with parents that information about the family will be shared with relevant staff and specialists in order to provide the best possible services to the family.

II **EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES** **OR** **PROFESSIONALS:**

Prior Consent in writing is required in order to exchange personally identifiable information about a child, (which might prove harmful, or be an invasion of privacy if it were disclosed.)

Personally identifiable information includes, but is not limited to:

- Child's name
- Name of the child's parents or other family member
- Address of the child or child's family
- Telephone number of the child or child's family
- Photograph of the child
- Personal identifier such as the child's social security number
- A list of personal characteristics that would make the child's identity easily traceable
- Other information that would make the child's identity easily traceable
- Date of birth
- Directory information (name, address, date of birth)

Such personally identifiable information will only be released to others with prior written and dated consent of the parent (see important exceptions below) Personally identifiable information may be disclosed without prior written and dated consent, to the child's biological parents or legal guardian unless there is a legal document restricting their access to such disclosures.

Notice of and/or request for release of personally identifiable information shall specify the records to be disclosed, the purpose of disclosure and the identification of person(s) to whom the disclosure is to be made.

SOCFC may disclose personally identifiable information without prior consent under the following conditions:

- To personnel within an educational agency or institution if the student is enrolled in or receives services from Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education Services, transportation services, etc.
- To the Oregon Department of Education (ODE)
- To personnel connected with an audit or evaluation of federal or state education programs or the enforcement of or compliance with federal or state legal requirements of the program
- To personnel conducting studies for or on behalf of the program
- To personnel in accrediting organizations fulfilling accrediting functions, e.g., CDA accreditation
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena
- To personnel within the County Health Department of the child's residence
- To Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) and Law Enforcement
- For health or safety emergency
- To personnel within the public school district of the child's residence
- To DHS Child Welfare

III. PARENT REQUEST TO REVIEW CHILD AND FAMILY FILE

When a parent would like to review their child's file should they should contact the Area Manager and complete the Request for Child's Records form. If the Area Manager is not available the Head Teacher, Teacher, or Family Advocate may assist the parent in filling out this written request form and submit it to the Area Manager. The Area Manager will then follow the **Student Records – Parent Request to Review Records** procedure located in the Education Policies and Procedure. The Agency will respond quickly to a parent's request and records will be produced within 45 days.

Electronic files follow the same confidential guidelines as paper files.

IV. REQUEST FOR CHILD AND FAMILY FILE

A center that receives a request for records from another Agency needs to route this request to the Main Office: Attention Office Manager. Staff should follow the **Student Records – Subpoena Procedure** located in the Education Policy and Procedures. The Agency will respond quickly to all request and a response provided within 45 days.

V. STUDENT EDUCATION RECORDS

A child's student education records will be sent on to the school they are enrolled in after Head Start. Student education records consist of the following:

A. Early Head Start – When placement other then Head Start

- Certificate of Immunization Status (CIS Form)
- Family Conference Form
- ASQ/ASQSE

B. Head Start

- Family Conference Form
- Early Screening Inventory Summary

Immunization Records are given to the parents at the end of the program year. Parents are encouraged to pass this information on to their child's next placement.

Special Education Records are sent by Early Childhood Services in Josephine County and Child Development in Jackson County to the school the child will be attending or the child's next placement.

VI. RECORDS:

A. Specific written and electronic Head Start/Early Head Start records considered confidential information, include but are not limited to:

- Child and family file (located at the center)
- Child's Health File (located at the office)
- Child's Mental Health Records (located at the office)
- All records related to disabilities, such as IFSP's, evaluations, etc.
- Medical Assessments
- Personnel Files
- Special Projects Data
- Classroom Observation completed by Child Development Specialist

B. Storage of Records

Records which involve personal information about children or families will be kept in locked filing cabinets or are secured electronic files when not being utilized by authorized staff. Personally identifiable information will be kept secure at all times while in transit.

C. Staff access to Center/Office/Electronic Files

Directors, Area Managers, Center Supervisors, Department Managers, Teachers, Family Advocates, Specialists and Supervisors have full access to center paper files. All other persons who need to access the child and family file must obtain permission from the Area Manager or Site Supervisor. All personnel except for Teachers, Advocates, Specialists and Area Assistant are required to sign the File Review Sign In sheet located in the front of each child/family file and document the reason for their review when they access a file. Electronic files are held on a secure website and all access is password protected.

Access to office files is also restricted. Please consult the Department Manager, Supervisor, or Office Manager regarding access to office files.

VII. VERBAL INFORMATION:

Verbal information is subject to the same guidelines as written information. Verbal information should never be given in the presence of other parents, volunteers, or general public. Verbal information that is personally identifiable is not to be disclosed without prior consent. The same exceptions to prior consent apply to verbal information.

Always verify that the person requesting verbal information over the phone is the person or agency that they claim to be. If you are not familiar with the person or agency you should request their phone number and call back so you can be sure you are giving the information to the correct person.

A current Request for Information (ROI) from the agency requesting information must be on file.

VIII. HIV STATUS:

The diagnosis of a child or his/her family member with HIV infection must be kept confidential. Even when a parent or other caregiver discloses the HIV diagnosis of a child/family member to a staff member, the staff member has legal responsibility **NOT** to share that information with anyone else in the program.

If a parent or legal guardian discloses a child's or family member's HIV status (or his or her own) to a Head Start/Early Head Start staff member, the staff person should respond with concern and compassion. He or she should also explain that the diagnosis cannot be shared with other staff. Only the parent or legal guardian may share this information at their own discretion.

IX. RIGHT TO REVOKE AUTHORIZATION

A parent/guardian has the right to revoke an authorization at any time, provided that it is done so in writing and except to the extent that the agency has already used or disclosed the information in reliance on the authorization.

- Written revocation must include date of revocation, specific release that is being revoked (i.e. specific Doctor, Dentist, Mental Health, FCP-G-10) and signature.
- Family Advocate or Teacher will give Area Manager the written revocation.
- Area Manager will write "revoked" on original ROI from child file and copy both the written revocation and ROI and send copies to the relevant Department Manager. Original ROI and Revocation will be stapled together and placed in child file.
- Department Manager will follow-up and document in database.

A parent is unable to revoke exchange of information in legally mandated situations such as with CASA, DHS open cases, etc).

REFERENCE CHART FOR SHARING INFORMATION

	DO SHARE	DO NOT SHARE
WHO	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All staff whose job is affected by the information. 2. All staff that interact officially with the child and/or family. 3. Replacement for employee previously doing the same job. 4. Area Managers, Center Supervisors, Department Managers, Supervisors, and Head Teachers and Consultants 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Other Parents. 2. Staff outside Head Start/Early Head Start 3. Friends and /or family of staff. 4. Children 5. Head Start/Early Head Start volunteers
WHAT	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is necessary for employee to work most effectively with families? 2. Issues that would cause endangerment to staff and/or family should be shared immediately. 3. Items listed on health history which affects child and/or family functioning. 4. Past history which may be pertinent to present family situation. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Details not related to issue at hand or needed for staff to function optimally. 2. Conditions covered by state or federal regulations that state what information may not be shared (e.g., HIV status).
WHEN	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family crisis shared immediately. 2. Changes in family status or situation within 2 days. 3. During work hours or business only phone calls. 4. Schedule/periodic team updates. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. During class time. 2. When other parents are present. 3. When staff who do not need to have this information to perform their job are present (except your direct supervisors). 4. After hours or during personal phone calls.
WHERE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Center staff meeting if information applies to all employees attending the meeting. 2. One-on-one meetings with appropriate staff. 3. Private settings where parents or children will not overhear conversations. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In public places.
WHY	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask yourself "Why am I sharing this information?" 2. Be clear as to what intent is for sharing information. 3. State source of information 4. Clarify fact vs rumor, gossip, conjecture, intuition. 5. Staff needs to know in order to do their job 6. Benefits each family's ability to receive services. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do not share for the sake of gossip or curiosity.