



Spokane County Head Start/ECEAP/EHS (HS/E/EHS) keeps a record of the services we provide to your child/family. You have the right to see and copy the file, and to ask for any corrections to information in the file. HS/E/EHS will not disclose information in your file to others unless you direct us to do so or unless the law requires we release the information. You may look through your file, or get more information about it by contacting your Family Services Coordinator (FSC).

This notice describes how confidential information about your child/family may be used and disclosed, and how you can access this information. Please read it carefully.

HS/E/EHS staff respect your child/families privacy. Staff understand that your family's information is very sensitive, and that the law protects the privacy of the information HS/E/EHS gathers while providing services to your child/family.

1. HS/E/EHS uses and shares child and family information in the following ways:

a. Exchanging information with other community agencies or providers:

With your written consent, HS/E/EHS shares information about your child/family with other agencies and providers. Information received from other agencies is kept in your child/family file. For example, you may permit HS/E/EHS to receive a copy of your child's well child exam from your doctor.

b. Sharing information to help provide the best services to you and your family:

- i. Teachers and FSCs share information by talking with one another and by recording in your child/ family file. For example, the FSC may tell your child's teacher that your child has an illness and needs special attention.
- ii. Staff share information to protect your child. For example children's names and their food allergies may be posted in the classroom or kitchen so all staff will know how to protect the child's health.
- iii. Staff may share information with supervisors and/or hired specialists to plan for special circumstances. An example of this is when the teacher talks with the mental health consultant to share ways he/she can help a child who has tantrums.
- iv. HS/E/EHS uses your child/family information to plan new ways of serving children and families. The program uses information about children and families when evaluating staff performance, when training staff, and when planning for new services.
- v. Information is shared with federal and state auditors to show how HS/E/EHS is meeting regulations.

c. HS/E/EHS may share your child/family information *without* your authorization under the following circumstances:

- i. For public health and safety purposes as allowed or required by law.
- ii. To report suspected abuse and neglect to public authorities.
- iii. To protect a person or public.
- iv. To police when required by a court order or other legal process.
- v. To community disaster relief staff during a disaster.
- vi. To the court when directed by a subpoena.

2. **Your Rights to Privacy:**

The paper file and computer record the program creates and stores about your child/family belong to HS/E/EHS. The information, however, belongs to the legal parents and/or guardians of the child and family.

a. **You have a right to:**

- i. Receive, read, and ask questions about this *Notice of Privacy Practices*.
- ii. Ask HS/E/EHS to not share information with particular people or agencies. You should make this request to your FSC. There are times that the law tells HS/E/EHS to share information even without parental permission. Examples include:
 - (1.) Non-custodial parents/legal guardians have the same right to child and family information as custodial parents/legal guardians.
 - (2.) HS/E/EHS must share information with police or agencies presenting court orders.
- iii. Request that you, other custodial parents and/or legal guardians be allowed to see and receive a copy of your child/family information.
- iv. Have HS/E/EHS supervisors review a denial of access to your child/family file.
- v. Request that information in the file be corrected if it is in error. Staff will change the information in the file or, at minimum you will be allowed to write a statement of disagreement. The statement will be stored in your file, and be included with any release of information.
- vi. Request that the program give you a list of the agencies and individuals who have received information from your child/family file.
- vii. Be contacted by staff in a manner that protects you or your family. For example, families may ask their FSC to mail all information to a post office box that is different from their home address because they are living in a safe house.
- viii. Change who may have access to your child/family records. Any written authorization or release signed by you may be changed or cancelled.

b. **HS/E/EHS responsibilities include:**

- i. Keeping your child/family information private.
- ii. Giving you notice of HS/E/EHS privacy practices.
- iii. Following the practices on the *Notice of Privacy Practices*. HS/E/EHS has the right to change the program privacy practices. You will receive notice, in writing, of any changes to the policy and practices.

c. **If you need to ask for help or to complain about HS/E/EHS privacy practices:**

- i. Talk with any staff member.
- ii. Talk with the site center manager.
- iii. Contact the administration office of HS/E/EHS, 3939 N. Freya St., Spokane WA, 99217 or call 533-4800 and ask to speak to the Director of Administrative Services Manager (Privacy Officer).
- iv. You may also file a complaint with the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services at www.hhs.gov. HS/E/EHS respects your right to file a complaint, and no action will be taken against you or your family.

Approved by the AAG April 2004