



# Spokane County Head Start/ECEAP/EHS CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Head Start/ECEAP/Early Head Start (HS/E/EHS) program information about children, families, and staff is confidential and is protected from public scrutiny. The protection is critical to the maintenance of professional ethics and community respect. All staff of HS/E/EHS have a four-fold set of ethical responsibilities by which they are bound: to the family, HS/E/EHS, the community, and themselves. Families in HS/E/EHS act in good faith, expecting their circumstances and personal matters to remain confidential, and staff are obligated by law and ethics to reciprocate.

Information about children, families, and HS/E/EHS staff is shared on a “need-to-know” basis only. Need to know is defined as information necessary to complete a specific job task. Need to know categories are as follows:

1. Staff, consultants, volunteers that are providing direct services to children and families.
2. Staff and consultants that are assuring quality of direct services to children and families.
3. Staff that have conditional access, or permission to access information about children and families.
4. Person(s) authorized by the parent to access child or family information.

**The following is presented to provide guidelines concerning confidentiality:**

1. Information and details about a child or family may be discussed for educational purposes only. That is, the child/family may be discussed in Direct Service Team (DST) supervisory meetings so that the child/family may be provided the best services possible.
2. The program makes reasonable efforts to use, disclose, and request only the minimum amount of protected information needed to accomplish the intended purpose of the use, disclosure, or request.
3. Written and electronic information/records that are kept on families/children are to be used for educational/clinical reporting purposes, and not for general perusal. Other agencies requesting the records of given clients must first obtain releases of information from the parent(s). In no case are the records to be automatically sent to another person or agency without first receiving a release of information from the family or legal guardian, court order, or as required by law.
4. Details of a child/family should not be discussed outside of HS/E/EHS sites and may be considered a breach of confidentiality. For example, one might describe, without using names, facts about the family, and yet within the context reveal enough that the listener could identify the family.
5. Information about a family that has been made public through the news media does not alter the fact that this person still has confidentially privileges within the site itself. For example, if a family has been having difficulties with a given problem and arrested, confidentiality must still remain in effect.
6. In the event that a staff person leaves employment from the program, the staff person must keep private and confidential all identifying information on all families gathered during his/her experience at HS/E/EHS.
7. The fact that a child and their family is enrolled in HS/E/EHS is confidential information; i.e., any child or family name in the program cannot be released. Telephone requests for information are not accepted unless the parent has previously signed a written authorization to release information.
8. Written documents and information, electronic and hard copy records, and verbal discussions about children, families, and staff or other information obtained by staff or authorized individuals in performance of their duties are considered confidential.
9. Non-custodial parents/guardians have the same rights of access as custodial parents/guardians unless there is a court order that specifically prohibits access.

**I understand and agree to the above policy, and will adhere to the guidelines of this policy.**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_