

SCS Head Start Policy on Confidentiality

WHAT INFORMATION IS PRIVATE?

SCS Head Start Program respects the privacy of each Head Start participant, and complies with the federal regulations on confidentiality of information.

All information held by the program, whether gathered formally or informally, is private and protected. This includes medical history, family status, financial information, and other personal data.

1. All records are confidential. They should be kept in a locked file. When working on records, be sure the files are inaccessible to anyone other than the staff.
2. At no time should records be available for parents, volunteers or transportation provider to go through unless it is records of his/her own child.
3. At no time should a child or family be the topic of conversation in the presence of anyone other than the classroom staff, social service staff, administrative staff and/or other professionals involved with the family. Do not discuss a child or family in the presence of volunteers or substitute staff.
4. Great care must be given during telephone conversations that confidentiality is not broken.
5. In most verbal talk situations names are not needed. Every family has the right for their privacy to be respected and enforced.
6. Do not give other agencies information about families without special written permission.

WHEN CAN CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION BE SHARED?

The simple rule of thumb is to ask the basic question, "**Who needs to know this information to carry out their responsibilities?**"

Obviously, it is essential for the well being of the children enrolled in Head Start that some information is passed along. Always apply common sense and respect for the dignity of the person(s) involved to resolve any particular question.

When in doubt, talk to the Director or supervisor before sharing confidential information.

WHO HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT INFORMATION?

Everyone associated with the Head Start Program, including staff, service providers, board members, other parents, and volunteers, has the responsibility to protect confidential information.

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

As a volunteer of the SCS Head Start Program, I will strive at all times to maintain the confidentiality of information known to me about the children and families within the Head Start Program.

I understand that information made known to me about families is only to be shared with other employees on a very selective and need-to-know basis. I also understand that violation of the confidentiality ruling could result in termination of my involvement with the Head Start program.

Any staff person, volunteer or transportation provider who feels confidentiality is being or has been breached should feel free to discuss the issue with the person(s) who are involved.

Signature

Date