

**WASHITA VALLEY COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL
HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM
CONFIDENTIALITY**

Policy:

Agencies funded by the federal government are bound by the laws of confidentiality. Washita Valley CAC Head Start will ensure that all private and personal information regarding children, families and personnel is kept confidential. Information will be released only upon receiving a signed Authorization for Release form. Any violation of this policy is considered grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Procedures:

- (1) Staff members may discuss confidential information privately with other staff persons on a need to know basis only.
- (2) Confidential information can never be discussed in the presence of volunteers, parents or children.
- (3) Conversation about children, families and personnel must be avoided in public and in the home. Staff needing advice or assistance should discuss the information with your supervisor, a manager, or the Head Start Director.
- (4) Employees' health issues are confidential and may not be disclosed without consent from the employee.
- (5) Information about children, families and personnel may be collected only when needed in the performance of duty. All information collected must be securely guarded so that the information does not become known by unauthorized persons. All information received in confidence must be maintained in confidence.
- (6) Training on confidentiality procedures will be provided annually for all employees and upon hire of new employees.
- (7) Confidentiality procedures will be posted at each center.
- (8) When requesting information from a third party staff will discuss with the families the need for the information and will have the family sign a Release of information form.
- (9) All families' and children's folders and personnel information will be kept in locked file cabinets when not in direct use by staff. All cabinets will have labels listing persons authorized to review folders.
- (10) With the exception of the classroom teacher and assistant, those authorized to review children's folders must sign, date and state purpose on the inside of the folder. Anyone not authorized and listed on the label must have written parental permission to view confidential records.

- (11) Those authorized to review Family Advocate notebooks must sign, date and state the reason on the inside of the notebook. Those authorized to review the notebooks will be listed on the outside of the notebook.
- (12) Those authorized to view personnel files must sign, date and state purpose on the personnel file log sheet.
- (13) Parents may view and request a copy of their own child's records but may not take the original records off the premises.
- (14) Records of children with professionally diagnosed developmental disabilities will be kept in a locked file in the Head Start central office, and IEP's will be kept in the child's folder at the local Head Start center.
- (15) Only information necessary for a home visit or information that needs to be transferred from one site to another will leave the designated site. Upon completion of the home visit materials must be returned to the site and properly stored in a locked file cabinet. Confidential information must not be left unattended at any time.
- (16) Confidential materials will not be taken home to work on.
- (17) Family Advocates must keep confidential information in their offices under lock and key when not in direct use.
- (18) All forms and notes concerning children, families and personnel will be immediately placed in files to avoid lost and misplaced confidential information.
- (19) Parent authorization must be obtained for the following.
 - Releases of family or child information to and from other public service agencies, child placements, schools or health delivery systems.
 - Completion of various child screenings.
 - Release of child's shot records.
- (20) All Head Start staff will sign this confidentiality policy upon employment.

I HAVE RECEIVED A COPY OF THE CONFIDENTIALITY PROCEDURES AND
AGREE TO ABIDE BY THESE PROCEDURES.

Employee Signature

Date