
CONFIDENTIALITY

Head Start of Washington County, Inc. employees will insure confidentiality and privacy in regard to history, records and discussion about the people we serve and our staff members. The very fact that an individual is served by this Agency must be kept confidential. Disclosure of information about the people we serve and employees can be made only under specified conditions, described below, for reasons relating to law enforcement and the fulfillment of our mission. All disclosure of information to anyone outside this Agency must be authorized by the Executive Director, the Human Resources Manager or, in the case of Head Start children, the Assistant Director for Programs/Head Start. These principles of confidentiality must be maintained in all programs, departments, functions and activities. The following information is to serve as guidelines of the Agency's confidentiality policy:

- Information requested by anyone outside the Agency will not be given over the telephone. Staff should respond to such a request with the statement: "Agency policy does not permit me to give out this information." Information includes whether or not a person is or has been served by the Agency.
- Release-of-information forms will be explained and completed in the presence of the person about whom any information is to be released, before it is released.
- Information about individuals or records will not be released to state, federal or other agencies that enable the identification of any person by name, address, Social Security number or other coding procedures, except as required by law.
- If records are inspected by an outside agency, the person who inspects the records must be specifically authorized to do so by the Executive Director or his/her designee. The taking of notes, copying of records or removal of records is specifically prohibited in such cases.
- Staff will not discuss any individual's record with unauthorized individuals, whether on or off duty. All staff members are required to sign the Agency's Standards of Conduct acknowledging their responsibility and commitment to the Agency's Confidentiality Policy.
- Employee information will not be released without a consent form signed by the employee or verbal consent from the employee to the Human Resources Manager.

*Approved BOD 8/30/2000
Approved by Policy Council 1/31/2001*