

Big Sandy Area C.A.P., Inc. - HEAD START
Program Policies and Procedures

SUBJECT:

Confidentiality of Information

POLICY:

The grantee and its delegate agencies will enforce and maintain the confidentiality of client information.

- *This policy relates to [Head Start Performance Standards Part 1302.1, 1302.61, 1302.90, 1302.92](#)*

PROCEDURE:

1. Identifying information concerning children and families will be kept in locked files at all times.
2. Access to files may be made by authorized personnel after signing a disclosure form which states who looked at the information, the date and reason for access.
3. Staff will not discuss children or families with anyone other than Head Start staff when necessary, unless parents have given written permission.
4. All program volunteers and consultants will be informed of the program's confidentiality policy. Staff will ask others to leave Head Start premises if they are discussing Head Start children and families.
5. A client's rights regarding the confidentiality of records will be ensured and enforced.
6. Written permission will be obtained from the client before releasing confidential information (telling about it, giving a copy of it or allowing someone to see it) that actually identifies a client.
7. Confidential information is defined as any of the following information when the client's name is attached: Specific screening data, family needs assessment, service plans, client counseling reports, client progress reports.

8. Personally identifiable information is defined as that information about a client or family which would make it possible to identify the family or client with reasonable certainty. This includes any information that has on it: the client's name, address, telephone number, insurance number, or any other data that can readily identify a client or family.
9. General information which is non-specific, unidentifiable, does not include the name, address, or other identifying information may be released without written consent. (Examples includes: number of client's in agency programs, compiled family needs assessment data, number in families, family members by age, etc.)
10. Client permission is not needed to release client information to the following:
 - a. Agency staff and consultants directly involved in planning and delivery of services.
 - b. Local School District that the client or child plans to attend.
 - c. Funding source officials and contractors who are conducting an audit or assessment.
 - d. Officials dealing with client's application for/and receipt of financial aid (e.g. DSI, DDS, Home Health).
 - e. Courts via a judicial order or subpoena.
 - f. Officials involved in health and safety emergencies.
 - g. Agencies from whom the client is receiving additional services.
11. However, any of the above parties to whom records are released must be informed in writing that the information is not to be released to anyone else without written client approval. Exceptions to this include courts, state, federal, and local education agencies.
12. A list of citing each time another agency/organization asked for and received information on a client, who asked for it, and why the information was

needed will be maintained in each client's record for as long as the record is maintained.

13. Client records shall be maintained prior to destruction for 3 years from the date which the client leaves the program. The records will be maintained longer than 3 years in the following situations:
 - a. If any litigation claim, negotiation, audit or other action is stated before expiration of the 3 year period.
 - b. If records are formally transferred to the awarding party, or
 - c. If there are any outstanding requests to review them.
14. All portions of client's records must be destroyed at the same time. To destroy a record means to burn, shred, or render no longer legible or identifiable.
15. A client shall have the right to inspect his records within 45 days of written request.
16. A client shall file in writing complaints regarding the violation of confidentiality to the agency Personnel Finance and Grievance Committee. If the Committee cannot resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant, he may file in writing the complaint to the appropriate funding source.
17. An employee found guilty of violating the client's rights to confidentiality may be dismissed from the agency.