



<b>14.15 Confidentiality of Child Protective Services Cases</b>	
<b>Application:</b> All Department of Children's Services Employees	
<b>Authority:</b> TCA: 37-1-401 et seq.; 37-1-601 et seq.; 37-5-105 (3); 37-5-106; 37-5-107	<b>Standards:</b> COA: PA-CR2
<b>Commissioner:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
Original Effective Date: 12/01/23 Current Effective Date: 12/01/23	Supersedes: 14.13 12/08/20 Last Review Date: 12/01/23
<b>Glossary:</b> None	

### Policy Statement:

All records and documents concerning reports of child abuse/neglect, including files, reports, records, communications and working documents, video tapes, reports made to the abuse registry and to local offices of the Department and all other records that are related to an investigation or for providing services shall be kept confidential to protect the rights of families and children or other persons involved in a CPS case.

### Purpose:

To ensure confidentiality, DCS has identified certain agencies and professionals as having a legitimate need to know about information gathered during a CPS case. The CPS Supervisor in consultation with DCS Legal Counsel, will determine the information appropriate for release. CPS information must not be released except under the conditions described in the procedures outlined in this policy.

### Procedures:

#### A. Release of CPS Investigative Information

1. CPS information may be released to the following personnel:
  - a) Employees or individuals responsible for supervising or administering the DCS Office of Child Safety; DCS Internal Affairs and all other DCS employees with a need to know;
  - b) Contractor or providers involved in delivering services or providing treatment to the child and family;
  - c) Professionals providing case consultation;

- d) If the alleged child victim is hospitalized, the IPA can be shared with the hospital staff for the purpose of safety, custody, placement, visitation, or treatment of the child (refer to [Protocol for Working with Hospitals](#)).
  - e) Local state or federal law enforcement agencies investigating a report of known or suspected child abuse or crimes against children, including Child Protective Investigative Team (CPIT);
  - f) State and local Child Fatality Review Teams; and
  - g) Any state licensing agency that licenses programs serving children that can provide a justification for a need-to-know.
2. Upon consultation and approval of DCS Legal Counsel, CPS case information may be shared with other agencies, professionals and individuals that includes, but not limited to:
- a) Child's primary caretaker or parent with any custodial rights;
  - b) Foster Care Review Board (FCRB);
  - c) Teaching professionals or child care providers;
  - d) Court holding jurisdiction over a case, including divorce cases;
  - e) Guardian ad litem assigned to the child;
  - f) Other persons as ordered by the court;
  - g) Other state or federal agencies investigating cases of child abuse or neglect;
  - h) Probation or parole officers preparing pre-sentencing or other court related reports or supervising probationers or parolees; or
  - i) Individuals, who are conducting scientific and governmental research on child abuse and neglect, provided that the Department has formally approved such research.
3. Release of information to perpetrators Certain limited information may be released to perpetrators as part of the notification of due process rights in classification hearings or for appeals of the classification findings as described in DCS Policy [14.16, Due Process Procedures and the Release of Information for Alleged Perpetrators of Child Abuse and Neglect](#).
4. The release of confidential case file information must be in accordance with Federal and State laws, statutes, rules and regulations, DCS policies [9.4, Confidential Client-Specific Information](#), [9.5, Access and Release of Confidential Child-Specific Information](#), and DCS Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) policies and procedures as applicable.

**Forms:**

None

**Collateral Documents:**

[9.4, Confidential Client-Specific Information](#)

[9.5, Access and Release of Confidential Child-Specific Information.](#)

[14.16, Due Process Procedures and the Release of Information for Alleged Perpetrators of Child Abuse and Neglect](#)

[Protocol for Working with Hospitals](#)

[Engaging Parents and Other Involved Adults: Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#)