



Practice Alert

Safeguarding Case Information

In our work with children and their families, we hold a great deal of their private information in our hands. Our records contain not just the details of their family interactions, but also their health and mental health information; drug usage; treatment and recovery information; domestic violence information; and even identifying information like Social Security numbers. Because much of our work is done outside of the office in Family Support Team meetings, home visits, court hearings, etc., safeguarding the families' information can be challenging. However, it is critically important that we remain mindful of the harm that can come to children and families if this information is compromised.

Recently, there have been several instances across the state of case information being stolen. We know that crimes occur daily and we cannot assure that we will never be victims of it. This Practice Alert is simply a reminder to carefully secure your work products to reduce the likelihood they will be stolen.

For example, take care with both computers and paper files while you are transporting them. Don't, for instance, leave these items in cars overnight where they could be stolen.

In offices, make efforts to safeguard information when you are away from your workstation. Something as simple as a scribbled note containing a Social Security number would make it easy for someone walking by to steal the identity of one of our clients.

For additional information, contact the Children's Division Privacy Officer, Deb Hendricks, Debra.L.Hendricks@dss.mo.gov.