



## Tip Sheet 9

### ***Sharing Screening Results with Community Partners***

Upon obtaining parental consent, it is recommended that screening results be shared among professionals serving young children and their families. Sharing information can be especially valuable when the same tool is used across different sectors. Regardless of whether screening results are reassuring or concerning, sharing this information can benefit children and families.



#### **Considerations when sharing information among professionals**

- **Parental consent** to share information is essential. No information can be shared prior to obtaining consent. Explain to parents that sharing information will help ensure their child receives timely and appropriate follow-up.

There are several approaches that communities can take to implement universal screening. Communities may conduct screening during well-baby check-ups, at community health fairs, schools and/or in child care or public health settings. Developing a work plan with clear benchmarks and criteria for success and accountability is a key to successful implementation.

- **Joint release of information** documents can facilitate the reciprocal flow of information between organizations and reduce paperwork for parents and professionals.
- Remember that different organizations are often subject to different **privacy rules**. For instance, Wisconsin's *Birth to Three* program is subject to both the Health Insurance Portability and Affordability Act (HIPAA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) privacy rules. A separate release must be obtained by the *Birth to Three* program in order to share evaluation results with a referral source (such as a medical clinic) if the initial referral release is only HIPAA-compliant.

#### ***Why is developmental screening important?***

Routine universal screening of young children with a validated tool promotes a better understanding of each child's development. Early identification of potential delays allows for timely access to appropriate supports and services promoting optimal development for every child.

#### **HIPPA IS**

HIPAA is the acronym for the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act that was passed by Congress in 1996. HIPAA does the following:



## Tip Sheet 9 *(continued)* **Sharing Screening Results with Community Partners**

### **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)**

HIPAA was passed by Congress in 1996. HIPAA does the following:

- Provides the ability to transfer and continue health insurance coverage for millions of American workers and their families when they change or lose their jobs;
- Reduces health care fraud and abuse;
- Mandates industry-wide standards for health care information on electronic billing and other processes; and
- Requires the protection and confidential handling of protected health information

### **Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act is a federal law that outlines who has access to education records. It applies to all schools that receive federal funds from a program administered by the U.S. Department of Education.

### ***What's next for your team?***

Why is it important to share results among professionals and/or community partners and how do you ensure that parents are at the center of that conversation?

### ***For more information:***

- **Minnesota Quality Indicators for Child Health and Developmental Screening**  
*Reproducible Master Evaluation Checklists*  
[tinyurl.com/MN-QIChecklists](http://tinyurl.com/MN-QIChecklists)
- **US Department of Health and Human Services: HIPAA and FERPA Information**  
[tinyurl.com/FERPAandHIPAA](http://tinyurl.com/FERPAandHIPAA)
- **WI Department of Health Services' release of information document (one-way release)**  
[tinyurl.com/DHSRelease](http://tinyurl.com/DHSRelease)

**"Parents," throughout, refers to parents, family members who are primary caregivers, guardians and/or foster parents.**

Developmental screening is most effective when integrated into the context of families and local communities. Engaging families in the process of developmental screening in a way that honors their cultural and linguistic practices will result in more accurate identification of potential delays and increased follow through with referrals. After all, parents are the most important people in a child's life.