HIPAA – 30 minutes

## What is HIPAA?

HIPAA is federal legislation developed to govern the use and disclosure of personal health information. As an agency, NVFS has limited personal health information about their foster parents, foster children, clients and employees (e.g. physical forms, communicable disease status). All this information is protected under the HIPAA laws.

## What information should be kept confidential?

As foster parents, you have access to the personal health information of the foster children in your home. It has always been NVFS’s policy that the foster parents maintain the highest level of confidentiality as it relates to the child’s medical conditions, the circumstances surrounding their foster placement, and all other personal information. This would include physical examinations, dental examinations, any psychological or psychiatric evaluations, information discussed in counseling sessions and other information pertaining to a child’s physical or mental health. This also includes information about the child’s biological family as well. A child’s personal information should never be shared with friends, neighbors, co-workers, extended family, etc. According to HIPAA, medical information must be strictly maintained as confidential. Such information is released only under particular circumstances. Foster parents may disclose medical information to doctors and dentists when they are taking their foster children for medical appointments. Similarly, medical information may also be shared with social workers, CASA’s and Child Advocates. Medical information should only be shared with the school on a need to know basis. For example, the school needs to know if the child is on asthma medication or has been diagnosed with ADD. However, the school does not need to know if the child wets the bed.

## What does this mean for foster parents?

You have a responsibility under HIPAA to safeguard your foster child’s personal health information. This means that you share information only on a need-to-know basis with the child’s professional treatment team members. Furthermore, if you have a physical or dental form or a psychological evaluation of your foster child, you must ensure that it is not in a place where an inadvertent or deliberate breach of confidentiality could occur.

*Information taken from:* [*http://kids.delaware.gov/pdfs/fs\_hippa\_summary.pdf*](http://kids.delaware.gov/pdfs/fs_hippa_summary.pdf) *and* [*http://fccy.org/FPR%20Files/38%20 Confidentiality%20in%20Foster%20Parenting.pdf*](http://fccy.org/FPR%20Files/38%20%20Confidentiality%20in%20Foster%20Parenting.pdf)

***Answer these below questions and email them to*** [***tspeight@nvfs.org***](mailto:tspeight@nvfs.org) ***or*** [***mpalanci@nvfs.org***](mailto:mpalanci@nvfs.org) ***to receive credit for this training.***

1. What does it mean when we say that foster parents should share health information on a need-to-know basis only?

2. Name two people or parties who may be told the child’s health information.

3. True or False - NVFS is not required to protect the personal health information of our foster parents.

4. What does “HIPAA” stand for?