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**CONFIDENTIALITY**

**From a Parent's Point of View**

Dear Teacher and Staff:

I'm glad my child's records are now confidential - not be read by anyone but school staff and not to be sent to another agency or school without my permission. The records contain information that I don't want just anyone to know. I can now read my child's file if I wish and, if it contains anything I want removed or corrected, I have the right to request this.

These rights are very important to me and my child because they protect our reputations - what others think and say about us. Unfortunately, our reputations have no protections against loose talk - only your caring about us and being careful will help. So, *please remember*:

1. When you talk about me or my child to someone, she could be my best friend, my worst enemy, or my sister-in-law's sister-in-law! She may report it all back to me (making me dislike you) or tell it to my mother-in-law (when I find out I'll kill you!).

2. When you talk out loud in the Pizza Hut about that horrid little Scotty who's driving you crazy - someone may hear you who knows just who Scotty is.

3. When you speculate about the reasons for any trouble my child is having (sometimes I think Scott is hard of hearing) others may repeat them as fact (did you know - I heard it from Scott's teacher that Scott has a hearing problem?)

4. I am especially sensitive to opinions about my child's behavior and how his misbehavior might be my fault. I very often feel (and sometimes say) that I'm a poor mother but no one else had better even suggest it!

5. You have no idea what information about me that I want kept confidential. It could be: my boyfriend's name, how often I move, whether I am on welfare or receiving food stamps, whether you saw me at the Gopher or Mr. Frank's, whether my dad was an alcoholic, even my address and phone number. In other words, you shouldn't be talking about me at all!!!

I know you hear this rule being broken every day - in school and out - and I know people who ask questions that can make it hard for you sometimes, so to help you out, I am giving you some answers free!

That Scotty is a brat - doesn't his mother know how to discipline him? Scotty is like all other children in the room, he has his good and bad days.

What's the matter with that little girl - why does she have crutches? She has crutches because she needs them to walk - just like you need glasses to see.

Is his mother divorced or what? In our program, we consider such information confidential.

How did Scotty get in Head Start? His parents have plenty of money. Applications and admissions are handled by the main office.

Remember - just because someone is nosy, doesn't mean you owe them any information.

Finally, I would like to ask you to be aware of what my child hears. If someone remarks about him or me when he is listening, be sure your answer doesn't give him the idea there is something wrong (such as "You shouldn't ask if Scotty is Indian" "That's not anything we can talk about" "His mother doesn't want anyone to know about that"). He will remember your answer long after you've forgotten.

Thank you very much

Scotty's Mom