

Reasons for Protecting the Privacy of Children and Families

(From Critical Issue: Addressing Confidentiality Concerns in School-Linked Integrated Service Efforts)

Soler and Peters (1993) outline several reasons for protecting the privacy of children and families:

- "Confidentiality restrictions ***protect embarrassing personal information from disclosure.***
- Confidentiality provisions also ***prevent the improper dissemination of information about children and families that might increase the likelihood of discrimination against them*** (i.e. HIV status, mental health history, use of illegal drugs, or charges of child abuse).
- Protecting confidential information can be necessary to ***protect personal security*** (i.e. domestic violence situation).
- Confidentiality provisions also ***protect family security.*** (i.e. Immigrant families may shy away from using services for fear that the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) will take action against them).
- Restricting the information that human service agencies receive may also ***protect job security.***
- Children and families also want to ***avoid prejudice or differential treatment*** by people such as teachers, school administrators, and service providers.
- Confidentiality provisions also may be necessary to ***encourage individuals to make use of services designed to help them.*** Adolescents may avoid seeking mental health services at a school-based clinic, for example, if they believe that information will get back to their teachers, parents, or peers." (pp. 6-7)