

Fact Sheet 3: Best practice in information sharing

Information sharing is to assist people and organisations with responsibility for child safety and wellbeing to work collaboratively. Professionals such as teachers, nurses, child care workers and youth workers play a part in the lives of many children and young people. Working together can ensure that children, young people and families can get the support they need.

Timely Response

Information sharers should distinguish between urgent and non-urgent requests for information. Urgent requests should be dealt with immediately. If the request is not urgent, the Authorised Information Sharer (AIS) can negotiate an appropriate timeframe for a response.

Sensitive Information

Information must be shared sensitively and with discretion.

For example, care should be taken that information about a family member is not disclosed unless that information is relevant to the safety or wellbeing of a child.

Confidentiality

Importantly, information sharing is not an information free for all.

Information shared under the information sharing framework continues to be confidential information. Treat it with respect.

Consent

It is legal for an AIS to share information

without consent.

However, it is good practice to seek the consent of a young person or family members before information relating to them is shared.

AISs are especially encouraged to seek the consent of older children (12 years+).

A good strategy is to inform a child or the child's family members early on that information about them may be shared.

Consider seeking consent to share at an early meeting.

You would not seek consent if you believed this could jeopardise the safety or wellbeing of any person, or if a young person or family members cannot be contacted and the request is urgent.

Preparing an information request

Take the time to prepare a request carefully, a well targeted request will save time for both the requestor and provider of the information.

Training

Information sharing authorities are responsible for ensuring their staff are trained.

The Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities has put its eLearning course and other resources on its website as examples. These tools may assist organisations in developing training to match their procedures and ways of working. The agency is also able to assist with training requests from your organisation. For more information contact the department on 1800 565 935.