



Media Policy

Department Name Development/Communications		
CHAPTER:	SUBJECT: Media Policy	POLICY NUMBER: DC-001
APPROVAL:	EFFECTIVE DATE: 1/18/2005	REPLACES (policy # and date): New policy

- I. **PURPOSE:** The Children’s Network of Southwest Florida conducts media relations in a manner that accurately gets the message out about our organization and services and protects the privacy of children and families served.
- II. **REVIEW HISTORY:** None
- III. **CONTACT:** Director of Resource Development/Communications
- IV. **PERSONS AFFECTED:** Children’s Network staff and contracted providers
- V. **POLICY:** It is the policy of the Children's Network of Southwest Florida to comply with confidentiality laws in regard to release of information about dependent children and their families under its supervision.
- VI. **RATIONALE:** The Children's Network of Southwest Florida is committed to protecting the confidentiality and dignity of the people it serves as it responds proactively to media inquiries.
- VII. **PROCEDURES**
 - A. Media relations
 1. When a representative from the media calls regarding foster care or related issues, the call is directed to the Director of Resource Development/Communications. The CEO or the Director of Resource Development/Communications is the official spokesperson for the organization, unless otherwise designated depending on the issue or the topic.
 2. All calls and/or photographs regarding children or families in care are handled in a manner that protects the confidentiality of those populations. No names or photos are released to the media if the child is in care. For those children whose parental rights have been terminated and who are free for adoption, photos and names may be used for recruitment or other

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appropriate stories if used in a positive manner.

3. With regard to people served who elect to speak with the media, the Children's Network of Southwest Florida will explain the organization's confidentiality policy and obtain a signed statement from the person served. The statement will address client confidentiality issues and will require a signed release of claims from the person served discharging the organization from liability in the event that he or she voluntarily or inadvertently discloses confidential information.
4. The Director of Resource Development/Communications coordinates all media calls which include proactive and reactive inquiries. Some of these calls include
 - Recruitment of foster and adoptive homes
 - Fundraising events
 - Privatization stories
 - New innovative services for the Children's Network of Southwest Florida.
5. If the Case Management Organization is contacted by the media and it relates to a service offered through our contractual agreement, those calls are coordinated with the Children's Network of Southwest Florida through the Director of Resource Development/Communications.
6. If there are calls that relate to the Department of Children and Families and the contract between the two organizations, the Public Relations Director collaborates with the liaison at the local office of the Department of Children and Families or with a liaison at the central office in Tallahassee prior to talking with media representatives.
7. In cases where positive media stories are being developed, the provider who cares for children in foster care will collaborate with the Director of Resource Development/Communications before interviews or photographs take place.
8. The Children's Network of Southwest Florida will obtain a signed consent form from any individuals who are asked to participate in a press story; and inform all people that this is strictly on a voluntary basis.
9. The Children's Network of Southwest Florida works with the Legal Office of Department of Children and Families if a public records release is requested on a specific case. All statutes will be followed regarding public records requests.

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10. The Children's Network of Southwest Florida will consult with its legal counsel regarding matters involving disclosure to the media of client information and associated risks.

B. Publicity materials

1. In publicizing, advertising or describing the sponsorship of Children's Network programs, publicity materials will state: "Sponsored by the Children's Network of Southwest Florida and the State of Florida, Department of Children and Families." If the sponsorship reference is in written material, the words "State of Florida, Department of Children and Families" shall appear in the same size letters or type as the name of the Children's Network.
2. The Children's Network and its contractors will not, without prior departmental written consent in each instance, use in advertising, publicity or any other promotional endeavor any State of Florida mark, the name of the State's mark, the name of the State or any State affiliate or any officer or employee of the State, or represent, directly or indirectly, that any product or service provided by the Children's Network has been approved or endorsed by the State, or refer to the existence of this contract in press releases, advertising or materials distributed to the Children's Network's prospective customers.

Policy and Procedure Review Confirmation

I have reviewed and understand Policy and Procedure #_____.

Signature

Date