



Risks Associated with Electronic Communication

Partnership for Children of Essex ("PCE") strives to protect the privacy of information about the youth and families that we serve. Due to the need for frequent communication, many youth and families request that we communicate with them via text messaging and/or e-mail.

Text messaging and e-mail are convenient ways to communicate, but these methods are not always secure, and there are risks involved. For example, unsecured text messages and e-mails may be read by others during transmission or may be obtained by third parties who were not the intended recipients.

When considering the use of text or email please be aware of the following:

1. E-mail and text messaging do not replace the need for regular and ongoing phone and face-to-face contact between you, your youth, and your PCE Care Manager.
2. If your youth or family needs immediate assistance, e-mail or text messaging is **not** the appropriate form of communication to contact your PCE Care Manager. In the event your youth or family needs immediate assistance, call the PCE office or the after-hours on-call service. For psychiatric or medical emergencies, call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest emergency room.
3. PCE is not responsible for the privacy or security of Child Family Team members' computer(s), laptop(s), tablet(s) or phone(s). Each member of the Child Family Team is individually responsible for maintaining the privacy and security of information about your youth or family.
4. You may change your preferences with respect to text messaging and e-mail at any time, for any reason. To do so, complete and sign a Change of Communications Preferences form. The changes will be effective as of the date PCE receives it. You can get a Change of Communications Preferences form from your PCE Care Manager.