

Confidentiality: Kids Allowed To Copy Charts.

A nurse worked for both physicians in a two-physician office practice.

The two physicians decided to dissolve their business partnership. One of them would move out and open a separate office in the same building.

The nurse was saddled with the job of coming in on a Sunday while the office was closed to photocopy the charts of the patients of the doctor who would be leaving.

The nurse brought her two children, ages eleven and thirteen, with her to help with the photocopying. The doctor had agreed to pay the children for helping out.

However, when the other doctor happened to come in and saw the children with the charts he quickly put a stop to the copying operation. His office manager filed a complaint against the nurse with the state board of nursing for violation of patients' medical confidentiality.

The children were not allowed to read the charts, only to feed the pages into the copy machine and press the "start" button.

No confidential information left the doctor's office.

The children were paid by one of the doctors for their work.

COURT OF APPEALS OF IOWA
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The Court of Appeals of Iowa overruled the state board of nursing. The court found no unethical conduct.

The children were closely supervised so that they did not read the information in the charts. They only performed manual tasks involved in the photocopying. No confidential information left the office. Hoffman v. Iowa Bd. of Nursing, 2006 WL 2421643 (Iowa App., August 23, 2006).