

ATTENDANCE POLICY
DIVISION: HEAD START
Birth – 5 Program

Policy Number: ER9601-02	Effective Date: 9/01/05 Revision Date: 10/05/20	Policy Council Approval Date: 2/25/20
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PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE: (45CFR #1302.16) Head Start is committed to maintaining the funded enrollment in all Head Start/Early Head Start Centers, and partner sites, therefore will utilize the following procedures to ensure that attendance is maintained at all locations.

Definitions:

Satisfactory Attendance: 100%-96%

At Risk Attendance: 95%-91%

Moderate Chronic Absenteeism: 90%-81%

Severe Chronic Absenteeism: 80% or less

PROCEDURE: HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START CENTER-BASED/PARTNERSHIP OPTION:

1. Within the first 60 days of program operation and monthly thereafter, program staff will use individual child attendance to identify children with patterns of absence that put them at risk for moderate to severe chronic absenteeism.
2. Program Staff will follow a 3 tier approach to attendance strategies.
 - a. **Tier 1: Prevention**
 - i. Staff will create an engaging school environment, welcoming each child individually to their classroom.
 - ii. Staff will share information with families at enrollment on the impact of absences on school readiness. This will include ways the family can ensure their child attends class regularly.
 - iii. Staff will use the Attendance Works Chronic Absence report (ChildPlus report #2336) and the ChildPlus Attendance Dashboard monthly to identify children who are at risk for moderate chronic absenteeism and will identify and address common barriers.
 - iv. Staff will use the Attendance Works Chronic Absence report (ChildPlus report #2336) and the ChildPlus Attendance Dashboard to recognize and acknowledge families whose children have attended 90% or more of school days and those who have improved their attendance rates from previous months. Some ideas for recognizing children and families are stickers, high fives, certificates of attendance, special songs, thank you notes, etc.

b. Tier 2: Early Intervention

- i. The **first month** a child is identified as having moderate chronic absenteeism, meaning they have attended 90%-81% of school days, staff will:
 - Contact the family directly and discuss the reasons why the child was absent and offer support to assist the child in returning to satisfactory attendance.
 - Document the follow-up in the attendance follow-up section in ChildPlus.
- ii. If a child has **two consecutive months** of moderate chronic absenteeism, the FRS or FA will:
 - Schedule a home visit or conference with the family within the first two weeks of the following month to establish a Student Attendance Success Plan.
 - Support and/or refer families to appropriate services as needed.
 - Notify the Head Start Area Supervisor or the Early Head Start Child Care Partnership Services Coordinator of a Student's Attendance Success Plan who will review and sign the plan.
 - Upload the plan into ChildPlus in the Attendance Tab under Student Attendance Success Plans.
 - Document the contact in the attendance follow-up section in ChildPlus.

c. Tier 3: Specialized Supports

- i. If a child is identified as having severe chronic absenteeism, meaning they have attended 80% or less of the school days in **any month**, the FRS or FA will:
 - Schedule a home visit or conference with the family within the first two weeks of the following month to establish a Student Attendance Success Plan.
 - Support and/or refer families to appropriate services as needed.
 - Notify the Head Start Area Supervisor or the Early Head Start Child Care Partnership Services Coordinator of a Student's Attendance Success Plan who will review and sign the plan.
 - Upload the plan into ChildPlus in the Attendance Tab under Student Attendance Success Plans.
 - Document the contact in the attendance follow-up section in ChildPlus.
- ii. If a child has **two consecutive months** of severe chronic absenteeism, the FRS or Family Advocate will:
 - Follow the same procedures as letter i above.
- iii. The child may be dropped from the program after **three months** of attendance at 80% or less or if they attend less than 50% of class days in any month. Staff will contact the Enrollment Coordinator to discuss available options for the child.

3. Daily action and follow-up is required as follows:
 - a. Teachers will take in-class attendance, record meals, and document the information in ChildPlus each day. If a student is tardy or leaves early the teacher should record the time in ChildPlus.
 - b. Every day a child is unexpectedly absent, the FRS, Teacher or Family Advocate will make direct contact with the parent within one hour after the child's regularly scheduled arrival time via phone call, text message, or LifeCubby. The FRS, Teacher or Family Advocate will document the reason for the absence in the attendance follow-up section in ChildPlus and discuss the importance of attendance. Appropriate support measures will be initiated. For each absence a corresponding follow up/contact should be documented in the follow up section.
 - c. If a child has been absent for two consecutive days with no call/no show, and staff have not been able to contact via phone, text, or LifeCubby, the FRS or Family Advocate MUST conduct a home visit no later than the morning of the third day. If a family cannot be reached at the home, the FRS or FA will fill out and leave a Head Start door hanger at the residence. The FRS or FA will document the outcome of the home visit in an attendance follow up case note.
 - d. If the parent contacts the center with a reason for the child's absence, the appropriate staff will document the reason for the child's absence in the attendance follow-up section in ChildPlus.
 - e. FRS's and FA's will monitor attendance to identify trends, ensure completion and accuracy. FRS attendance review should be completed weekly by Friday. FA attendance review should be completed by the 5th of the following month.
4. A child's absence is Excused if:
 - a. The Health Services Manager or the Special Services Coordinator agree that the child has a serious health condition or disability that affects their classroom attendance for a specific period of time and the absence must be due to the condition specified in the health plan, otherwise it will count in the child's overall attendance rate for the month.
 - b. There is inclement weather and the busses do not transport children.
5. A child is considered present if they have a meal. (Exception – See Addendum)
6. A child is considered tardy if they arrive more than one hour past their class start time in Head Start or their scheduled time of arrival in Early Head Start. If a child reaches 10 "tardies" then the FRS or Family Advocate will:
 - Contact the family directly and discuss the reasons why the child was tardy and offer support to assist the child in returning to satisfactory attendance.
 - Document the follow-up in the attendance follow-up section in ChildPlus.
 - Children will not be dropped for tardiness.
 - Tardiness will be documented in the attendance section of ChildPlus.
 - If a child has more than 15 "tardies" it is recommended that the teacher contact the family to discuss what the child is missing from the school day.

7. A child is considered as left early if they leave more than one hour prior to their class dismissal time in Head Start or their scheduled time of departure in Early Head Start. If a child reaches 10 “left earlies” then the FRS or Family Advocate will:
 - Contact the family directly and discuss the reasons why the child left early and offer support to assist the child in returning to satisfactory attendance.
 - Document the follow-up in the attendance follow-up section in ChildPlus.
 - Children will not be dropped for leaving early.
 - Leaving early will be documented in the attendance section of ChildPlus.
 - If a child has more than 15 “left earlies” it is recommended that the teacher contact the family to discuss what the child is missing from the school day.

8. The Enrollment Coordinator will run the ChildPlus Average Daily Attendance Report (#2301) monthly to identify any classroom whose monthly attendance rate falls below 85%. The Enrollment Coordinator will notify the assigned FRS or FA of any location that falls below 85% and will require that they analyze the causes of absenteeism. The analysis must include a study of the pattern of absences for each child, including the reasons for absences as well as the number of absences that occur on consecutive days. Staff will complete the Monthly Attendance Analysis Log in ChildPlus by the 15th of the month following the month in question.

9. The FRS and Family Advocate will maintain documentation in the child’s file/Child Plus of all family support measures initiated due to attendance problems.

10. Addendum: Special Attendance Circumstances 2020-2021 School Year
 - a. A participant's slot will be held if their absences are related to COVID 19, such as contracting the virus, required to quarantine, etc.
 - b. A participant's slot will be held if their absences are related to fear of contracting COVID 19, for 90 days, if the family agrees to receive mental health services to work on decreasing their fear/concern. FRS/HV/FA is required to document progress once every 30 days. A family may not exceed 2, 90-day periods in a program year, as it relates to this concern.
 - c. If a participant is unable to attend HS/EHS services, or a classroom/center is closed due to COVID 19, they will receive services virtually, through phone calls, and other means of communication.

The following special situations should be followed when entering in Attendance

Attendance	When to Use	Meals?	Who	How Often
Present Offsite	Received Meal w/Service (make note of Service)	Yes	HV/FRS FA/FSA	Daily
Present Offsite	Received Meal w/o Service	Yes	HV/FRS FA/FSA	Daily
Present Offsite	Received Services, but no meal	No	HV/FRS FA/FSA	Weekly
Present	Participant is physically in the classroom, and had a meal	Yes	Teacher	Daily
Absent	No meal, no service	No	Teacher	Daily
Excused	Participant or Parent is under Quarantine, showing symptoms, experiencing unforeseen Internet service disruption or when HS/EHS Failed to provide services.	No	HV/FRS FA/FSA	Weekly
No Class	Don't use. If the Center is closed, then this should be marked under the Class Status as Closed or Holiday.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Not Scheduled	Home Based Only	No	HV	Weekly