

ATTENDANCE POLICY
DIVISION: HEAD START
Birth – 5 Program

Policy Number: ER9601-02	Effective Date: 9/01/05 Revision Date: 7/25/22	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 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 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 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 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 Child Plus 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 or Teacher will make direct contact with the parent within one hour after the child's regularly scheduled arrival time via phone call or text message. The FRS or teacher will document the reason for the absence in the attendance follow-up section in Child Plus 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 or text, the FRS 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 will fill out and leave a Head Start door hanger at the residence. The FRS 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 Child Plus.
- e. FRS's will monitor attendance to identify trends, ensure completion and accuracy. The FRS will review attendance weekly.

4. A child is considered present if they have a meal or Snack.

5. 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 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 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 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 Child Plus (Management tab-Average Daily Attendance below 85%) by the 15th of the month following the month in question.
9. The FRS will maintain documentation in the child’s file/Child Plus of all family support measures initiated due to attendance problems.
10. If a child is sent home by HS/EHS Staff, the reason will be documented in Child+ attendance notes. ex. *Child sent home early due to a fever of 101.2 or Child sent home due to having 2 diarrhea incidents.*