

Attendance – Coffee Creek

Head Start Performance Standards

§ 1302.16

Policy

All families are encouraged to maintain regular attendance in Head Start/Early Head Start programs. To promote regular attendance, the Head Start/Early Head Start programs must maintain attendance records for each child according to Head Start Performance Standards (HSPS). If the Head Start/Early Head Start program's monthly average daily attendance rate falls below 85%, the program must analyze the causes of absenteeism.

Within the first 60 days of the program operation, and thereafter, Head Start/Early Head Start programs will utilize the attendance data in ChildPlus to identify individual children with patterns of absences that put them at risk of missing less than 90% (ten percent of program days per year). Attendance will be monitored to ensure vacancies are identified and filled promptly within 30 days. Coordinate Care Meeting will be established with families who children are falling below the 90% of attendance.

Attendance policy is discussed during the enrollment visit and described in the Family Handbook. The program provides families with information that helps them understand the importance of regular attendance.

Program staff, including Teacher and Family Service Assistant, will support families in identifying barriers to help children maintain regular attendance. Staff will initiate appropriate support regardless of the program option. If a child is absent and the classroom staff is unaware of the reason for the absence, the classroom staff will contact the parent/guardian to determine the reason of the absence.

Procedures

Absences from the Coffee Creek Program

Caregivers are asked to call, send a note, or communicate with the child's Teacher or Family Advocate within one hour of the class start time. The Teacher or Family Advocate will inquire about the reason for the child's absence and the anticipated return date.

- If the parent/guardian calls to excuse their child's absence and provides a reason, the Family Advocate will document the reason for the absence in ChildPlus in the child's record under the Attendance Module.
- Department of Corrections Minimum Security staff will notify the Teacher or Family Advocate if a mother will arrive late or miss the scheduled class time. If a mother will miss the scheduled class time or home visit for more than 30 consecutive days, this constitutes a vacancy. The Family Advocate will Fill out and follow the steps outlined in the 'Dropping from Program' section of the **Change Notification Form**.

Unexcused Absences

An unexcused absence happens when a child is unexpectedly absent, and the Caregiver has not made contact with Teacher or Family Advocate within one hour of the class start time that the child is absent with the absence reason.

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- The Family Advocate will inquire about the reason for the child's absence and the anticipated return date. The absence stays 'unexcused' until the Family Advocate inquire the reason for the absence. The Family Advocate is completing one of the following 'Attendance Follow-Up' and documenting in ChildPlus under the Attendance module by the end of the class day.
 - If the family has opted-in for text/email, send a message through ChildPlus to notify the family of the absence and instruct them to contact you with the reason for the absence. *Refer ChildPlus training portal on how to document.*
OR
 - Call the family.
OR
 - Send a message through Remind App if family has opted in.
- If the Caregiver has not made contact with the Teacher or Family Advocate within one hour of start time, Family Advocate will then attempt to contact the parent.
 - All attempts will be recorded in the Attendance module under 'Attendance Follow-Up'.

Attendance becomes a concern when:

- A family has not contacted the Teacher or Family Advocate after three consecutive absences.
 - Family Advocate will conduct attendance follow-ups that consist of phone calls to the Caregiver (**not** text/email notifications) and document as a 'Multiple Absences' follow up in the **Attendance Follow Up section under the Attendance Module of ChildPlus** until the child returns.
- A child has 2 or 3 absences in a month that equates to less than 90% attendance.
 - The Family Advocate will contact Caregiver to discuss attendance concerns and schedule a Coordinated Care Meeting.
- If loss of contact occurs, see the **Loss of Contact** section below.

Loss of Contact:

Loss of contact occurs when:

- A Caregiver has not responded after at least three attempts at contact within five business days.
- A family has not contacted the Family Advocate's attempts after three consecutive absences.
- Staff has exhausted the list of emergency contacts.

When loss of contact has occurred, the Family Advocate will ask their Enrollment Program Assistant to send the family a Loss of Contact letter via postal mail. Caregiver can re-establish contact and continue participating in the program by responding to the program staff within five business days of receipt of the notification.

Coordinated Care Meeting:

If a child's attendance has not improved, the Family Advocate initiates a **Coordinated Care Meeting (CCM)**. The meeting includes the child's Caregiver, Family Services Assistant, and Program Area Supervisor. The Family Advocate will work with the family to develop potential solutions, ensuring that the family is involved and participating in removing barriers to increase attendance.

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- In cases of medical issues or prolonged illness absences, invite the Health Services Supervisor to attend the CCM meeting.
- If child is receiving Early Intervention services or Mental Health services, invite the Disabilities & Mental Health Services Supervisor to attend the CCM meeting.

During the meeting, the team will:

- Support families if there is a barrier that prevents the child from attending school regularly and develop a **plan to support the child and family**.
- Identify the reasons for absences.
- Provide the benefits of regular attendance information to the family.
- Share with Caregiver the child's attendance record and TS Gold child outcomes report. *Refer ChildPlus training portal on how to document.*
- Incorporate Caregiver comments to develop a **plan to support child and family**
- Identify a date for establishing consistent attendance
- Complete the **Head Start Attendance Plan Form** with the Caregiver. Give one copy of the form to the Caregiver and scan the form into the Attendance Module in ChildPlus and send a copy to the ERSEA Supervisor.

If the family participates in a **Coordinated Care Meeting**, document the meeting in the Events tab of the Family Services Module. Select **Coordinated Care Meeting** as the Event Type and enter Attendance Concerns as the event description. Coordinated Care Meetings that are attendance-related should also be documented in the **Attendance Follow Up section under the Attendance Module of ChildPlus** as an "Attendance Plan" option. *Refer ChildPlus training portal on how to document.*

Extended Absences

Extended absences are accommodated on a case by case basis. Extended absences may occur due to a family's long-distance travel or other unforeseen circumstances. Families are encouraged to notify the Teacher or Family Advocate in advance with an anticipated timeframe for the absence.

- Extended absences due to a child's illness are accommodated on a case by case basis.
- Depending on the circumstance, a **Coordinated Care Meeting** may be needed to develop a support plan for the child and family.
- For some extended leaves, it may be necessary to establish continued services for a child who is working with Early Childhood Special Education or another agency. The Family Advocate will collaborate with the Family Services Assistant and Disabilities & Mental Health Services Supervisor to assist families whenever possible to arrange for services in the home or another location until the child returns to the Head Start program.

The Family Advocate will report all extended absences to their Program Area Supervisor (PAS) and notify the Early Childhood Program Manager (ECPM) and the ERSEA Supervisor.

- The PAS will review the absence to determine whether it constitutes a vacancy.

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- If the absence constitutes a vacancy, the PAS or ECPM will instruct the Family Advocate to:
 - Document the reason for this determination in the Family Services Module of ChildPlus under the **Closing Entry event type**.
 - Fill out and follow the steps outlined in the 'Dropping from Program' section of the **Change Notification Form**.
 - Enrollment staff will then receive the file, drop the child from ChildPlus and select the next eligible child from the waitlist.

Homelessness:

If a child is experiencing homelessness and unable to attend class regularly because of lack of transportation, the Family Advocate will communicate with their Family Services Assistant and Family Services Supervisor to utilize community resources, where possible, to provide transportation for the child.