

Home-Based Attendance

Performance Standard

§ 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/participant 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/participants 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 Meetings will be established with families whose children/participants are falling below 90% of attendance.

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

Home Visitors 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 Home Visitor is unaware of the reason for the absence, the Home Visitor will contact the parent/guardian to determine the cause of the absence.

Procedure

Absences/Missed/Cancelled Home Visit

Parent/guardian are asked to call their Home Visitor at least an hour before their scheduled home visit if a home visit cannot be completed. If a family misses or cancels a home visit, the missed/canceled home visit will not be rescheduled.

In the event that a family is not present for their home visit, the Home Visitor will;

1. Wait a minimum of ten minutes for the family to arrive- or be present.
2. Call the phone number(s) on record.
 - a. If contact cannot be made, the Home Visitor will leave a voice mail on the family's phone or leave a note on the family's door asking for the family to contact them by the next business day with the reason for the absence.

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Canceled Home Visits

In the event a home visit is canceled by the program for any reason, the Home Visitor will reschedule the home visit during the same week or no later than 30 days from the cancellation. Home Visitor will plan to offer a minimum of two attempts to reschedule Home Visits that are canceled by the program. *This communication will be documented in the Home-Based Module. Refer to SharePoint for documentation guidance.*

Attendance becomes a concern when:

- A family has not contacted the Home Visitor after three consecutive absences/missed or canceled home visits and after three attempts and contact their emergency contact
- If loss of contact occurs, see the **Loss of Contact** section below.
- A child/participant has 2 or 3 absences/missed or canceled home visits in a month which equates to less than 90% attendance.

Coordinated Care Meeting (CCM)

Within 60 days of the start of the program, if a participant's average daily attendance (year to date) is below 90% or shows a pattern of missed home visits will be encouraged to discuss the reasons with their Home Visitor and identify barriers to participating. The Home Visitor will work with their Program Area Supervisor to identify barriers and support the family. During the communication with the Home-Based Program Area Supervisor, the decision will be made if the Home Visitor needs to initiate a **Coordinated Care Meeting (CCM)**.

If a Coordinated Care Meeting (CCM) needs to be established, the Home Visitor coordinates the meeting. The Coordinated Care Meeting includes the child's parent(s)/guardian(s), the Home Visitor, and Home-Based Program Area Supervisor.

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

During the CCM, the Home Visitor, along with the team, will:

- Complete the **Early Head Start Home-Based Attendance Plan** form with the parent(s)/guardian(s). One copy of the completed form is given to the parent(s)/guardian(s). A copy of the completed form is uploaded into the Education Module in ChildPlus and a copy is sent to the ERSEA Supervisor.
- The family may want to consider whether the current home visiting schedule is still appropriate or if missed or cancellation home visits is due to a temporary situation.
- Support the family if there is a barrier that prevents the participant from attending regularly and develop a plan to support the child and family.
- Identify the reasons for absences
- Use the **Parent Agreement** form as a guide for discussion
- Share the participant's conference form, attendance record, and TS Gold child outcomes report. *Refer to SharePoint on how to run the attendance report.*
- Incorporate parent's comments to develop a plan to support the participant.
- Identify a date for establishing consistent attendance.

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If the family participates in a **Coordinated Care Meeting**, the Home Visitor will document the meeting in the Events tab of the Family Services module in ChildPlus. *Refer to SharePoint for documentation guidance.* Once an attendance plan is written to reengage the family, it will then become part of the family's new **Family Partnership Agreement & Family Goals and Plans (FPA)**. The Home Visitor will update the **FPA** goal in ChildPlus. *This communication will be documented in the Home-Based Module. Refer to SharePoint for documentation guidance.*

If the family continues to have barriers in attendance, the Home Visitor will determine if another Coordinated Care Meeting is needed with the Home-Based Program Area Supervisor. Families with chronic absences will be placed on the program's waitlist based on Home-Based Program Area Supervisor (PAS) and the ERSEA Supervisor's recommendations.

Loss of Contact

Loss of contact occurs when:

- Parent/Guardian has not responded after at least three attempts at contact in five business days.
- Staff has exhausted the list of emergency contacts with no response.

When loss of contact has occurred, Home Visitors will notify their Program Area Supervisor first, then ask their Enrollment Assistant to send the family a Loss of Contact letter via postal mail.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) can re-establish contact and continue participating in the program by responding to program staff within five business days of receipt of the notification.

Socialization

Socialization schedules and reminders will be shared with families during their regular home visits and documented on the Home Visit Record. If a scheduled socialization must be canceled families are informed by their Home Visitor. A make-up is required for any socializations that are canceled by the program. *This communication will be documented in the Home-Based Module. Refer to SharePoint for documentation guidance.*

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 their Home Visitors 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 participant.
- 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 Home Visitor will collaborate with their 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.

Home Visitors will report all extended absences to their Home-Based Program Area Supervisor (PAS) and to the ERSEA Supervisor. The PAS will review the absence to determine whether it is considered a vacancy.

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If the extended absence is considered as vacancy, the PAS will instruct the Home Visitor to:

1. Document the reason for this under the home visit record. *This communication will be documented in the Home-Based Module. Refer to SharePoint for documentation guidance.*
2. Fill out and follow the steps outlined in the “Dropping from Program” section of the Change Notification Form that will be sent to the assigned Enrollment Assistant.
 - a. Enrollment staff will then receive the file and drop the participant from ChildPlus and then select the next eligible participant from the waitlist.

If the absence is not considered a vacancy, the Home Visitor will work with the family upon their return to complete as many missed home visits as possible. *This communication will be documented in the Home-Based Module. Refer to SharePoint for documentation guidance.*