

Attendance Procedure

1. Parents/Guardians must contact the Head Start Classroom if their child will be absent, or the Home-Base Educator if they will be canceling a home visit.
2. If a child is absent from the classroom without notification staff will contact the parent/guardian as soon as possible, within 1 hour of the classroom start time to find out why the child is absent. Parents/Guardians will be contacted by text messaging. If there is no response from the parent/guardian within 5 minutes, or reasonable amount of time with class schedules, staff will call the parent/guardian. If staff are unable to contact the parent/guardian by phone they will begin contacting persons listed on the child/family emergency contact list. Staff contact efforts will be tracked in the ChildPlus attendance module.
3. Head Start classroom staff must contact the assigned Family Support Specialist (FSS) when a child has been absent for 2 consecutive days without contact. If the family does not have a telephone or other method of contact, a home visit must be made.
4. If a Home Base enrollee has missed 2 consecutive home visits without contact from the parent/guardian, then the assigned Home-Based Educator will do a home visit.
5. In the event of a planned absence, advance notice must be given by the Head Start parent. The Teacher will document planned absences as an event in the education tab of ChildPlus.
6. In the event of an extended, unexcused absence of 4 consecutive days or 3 consecutive home-based home visits a child may be unenrolled from the program and replaced by a child on the waiting list. However, staff must first make thorough efforts to reengage the family and work through any barriers assisting as much as is as reasonably possible. If a child is dropped, they may be readmitted when a vacancy occurs at the site, depending on their eligibility status and point ranking.
7. As per ACF-OHS-IM-25-26 (9-26-25) The program must consider a slot vacant after a child has not attended for a **maximum** of 30 days (consecutive calendar days). A **minimum** of 3 attempts will be made to re-engage the family and will be documented in ChildPlus through attendance follow-up notes, case management notes, or a family service staff persons on-going notes. The child must unenrolled at this time. Exceptions can be made in circumstances (with a documented rational from the program in enrollment/attendance notes) such as:
 - a. Extenuating family circumstances require a family to travel out of the service area for more than 30 days
 - b. A child with an extended illness or requiring hospitalization
 - c. A family recovering from a disaster
 - d. A family emergency that might hinder a family's ability to ensure their child is able to get to the program.

- e. In extraordinary circumstances, a child may be temporarily suspended only as a last resort when there is a serious safety threat that has not been or cannot be helped through program supports. The child will be considered “Not Scheduled” during this time and staff will maintain contact with the family to help ensure a safe return to services. The child will be unenrolled if not able to return after 30 days.
8. A child that is enrolled in the classroom that has been ill for more than 4 consecutive days, may be required to have a physician’s verification to have an approved extended absence.
9. Individual attendance will be monitored through regular Site Case Management Meetings (bi-weekly). Staff will use ChildPlus reports to identify children with moderate or severe attendance concerns. Staff will identify persistent patterns and determine if the absences are reasonable. Reviews may result in staff contact with the parent/guardian or an attendance. Children with on-going, intermittent illnesses may be referred to the Health Manager for more in-depth conversation with the family.
10. Center-based children consistently attending less than 91% of the time will have an Attendance Plan Event created in ChildPlus, with continuing reviews completed at three check points during the program year. (First Parent Conference, Mid-year Home Visit, and Second Parent Conference) All Attendance Plan Events will be reviewed by the Program Manager and Teacher to determine if the absences are reasonable, or if strategies need to be developed with the family for improvement. Children and families that are consistently and persistently missing classes/home visits will be given as much support as managers consider to be reasonable, while also focusing on improvement rather than attainment of the 91% goal.
11. Home Base participants consistently missing home visits will have an attendance plan put in place. Criteria for a plan is missing 2 consecutive visits or when a pattern of absences emerges.
12. Within the first 60 days of program start date and regularly thereafter, the parents or guardians of all classroom enrollees will receive a report on their child’s attendance as well as information about the importance of attendance.
13. Monthly attendance will be monitored and reported to the IDT, Policy Council and AEOA Board of Directors. If program wide attendance drops below 85%, the reason for absences will be analyzed and, when necessary, strategies to improve attendance will be implemented.
14. Families will be encouraged to be on time when attending classrooms or for home visits. In cases of persistent tardiness, staff and the Program Manager will work with the family to identify any barriers the family may be experiencing and help them to improve their punctuality. Excessive and prolonged tardiness may result in a child being placed on an attendance plan.

15. A child will be counted as present, regardless of what time they leave the classroom, if they are present at the time attendance is tracked in the Child Plus system. Children who arrive after attendance is tracked will be changed to present in the ChildPlus system.
16. During pandemic or other emergency related classroom closures, enrollees will be provided with alternative learning opportunities such as virtual classroom activities and at-home learning packets. The child and family's participation will be monitored and tracked.

12-16-24