

Early Head Start/Head Start Attendance

1302.16 Attendance

(a) *Promoting regular attendance.* A program must track attendance for each child.

(1) A program must implement a process to ensure children are safe when they do not arrive at school. If a child is unexpectedly absent and a parent has not contacted the program within one hour of program start time, the program must attempt to contact the parent to ensure the child's well-being.

(2) A program must implement strategies to promote attendance. At a minimum, a program must:

(i) Provide information about the benefits of regular attendance;

(ii) Support families to promote the child's regular attendance;

(iii) Conduct a home visit or make other direct contact with a child's parents if a child has multiple unexplained absences (such as two consecutive unexplained absences); and,

(iv) Within the first 60 days of program operation, and on an ongoing basis thereafter, use individual child attendance data to identify children with patterns of absence that put them at risk of missing ten percent of program days per year and develop appropriate strategies to improve individual attendance among identified children, such as direct contact with parents or intensive case management, as necessary.

(3) If a child ceases to attend, the program must make appropriate efforts to reengage the family to resume attendance, including as described in paragraph (a)(2) of this section. If the child's attendance does not resume, then the program must consider that slot vacant. This action is not considered expulsion as described in §1302.17.

(b) *Managing systematic program attendance issues.* If a program's monthly average daily attendance rate falls below 85 percent, the program must analyze the causes of absenteeism to identify any systematic issues that contribute to the program's absentee rate. The program must use this data to make necessary changes in a timely manner as part of ongoing oversight and correction as described in §1302.102(b) and inform its continuous improvement efforts as described in §1302.102(c).

(c) *Supporting attendance of [homeless children](#).*

(2) If a child experiencing homelessness is unable to attend classes regularly because the family does not have transportation to and from the program [facility](#), the program must utilize community resources, where possible, to provide transportation for the child.

Staff promotes the importance of attendance and the benefits to regular attendance to each family from initial enrollment through ongoing conversations and sharing resources. The trusting relationships established between staff and families strengthens child and family attendance and communication around attendance. Attendance is discussed from the beginning of the relationship and continues throughout the child's participation in the program.

If a child does not arrive at the center within one hour of their scheduled start time and there has been no contact from the family stating reason for absence, staff initiate contact with the family. These contacts/attempted contacts are documented in the family file.

- Each site will have on-going conversations at their Direct Service Team meetings or Technical Assistance meetings about attendance and patterns.
- If there are two consecutive days with no contact from the family, direct service staff will conduct a home visit.

- If there continues to be no contact from the family, staff may use emergency contacts or email to attempt contact.
- If direct service staff need additional support to conduct a home visit, they are expected to reach out to supervisors, Family Services Coordinator Assistants or Family Services Program Manager for support.
- Each home visit attempt or completion will be documented in the family file.

At each Direct Service Team meeting:

- Staff will discuss child/family attendance
- Staff utilize attendance reports from **PROMIS** to:
 - Analyze classroom and individual child attendance patterns to identify children and families that might need intensive case management.
 - Discuss if additional case management might be beneficial in the form of home visits, conferences, developing a written attendance plan etc. These plans will be initiated with the direct service staff.
 - Look at and analyze classroom and individual child attendance that drops below 85%

Homelessness

If a child is unable to attend class regularly due to transportation challenges related to homelessness status, staff will make every attempt to connect the family to community resources that will meet their need of transportation.

Ongoing Attendance or Disengagement

If a child stops attending class and every effort described in the Performance Standards and procedure has been exhausted, direct service staff will initiate contact with the Family Services Program Manager and develop a plan for the next steps.

A letter will be sent to the family requesting contact no more than 5 days after the letter should be delivered. If the family does not initiate contact within that time, the slot will be considered vacant.

When a program option or individual classroom falls below 85%, the program will analyze the causes of absenteeism to identify systemic issues that may contribute to the absentee rate. Program attendance is monitored monthly with Policy Council and the OESD 114 Board.