

CHILD & FAMILY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS
Community Action Team, Inc.
Attendance Policy

- A. If a child is unexpectedly absent and a parent has not contacted the center within one hour of class start time, Head Start staff must attempt to contact the parent to ensure the child's well-being. Absences are documented on the Sign In/Out sheet documenting "E" for excused and "U" for unexcused with a one word explanation. For example: Ill, transportation, medical appointment, etc. When no contacts with the family or absences are an ongoing problem, document in the SOAP the plan and follow-up.

Examples of excused absences can be:

1. Hospitalization.
2. A serious illness or injury or other health problems.
3. A child contracts a communicable disease and/or impetigo, head lice etc.
4. There is a death in a child's family.
5. A need to complete medical treatment or therapy during class time.
6. Family situations not to exceed three consecutive weeks.
7. Any illness or condition listed on Policy 3-19, Exclusion of Ill children.
8. Transportation difficulties

Absences without reason or contact from the family are considered unexcused.

- B. Daily attendance will be reviewed monthly by the Area Supervisor.
- C. When the average daily attendance rate drops below 85% for the center, the center manager will send an email to the director with percentage and explanation. For individual children, the Center Manager will analyze the absences and determine the need to initiate action.
1. No special action is required if the absences are recorded, excused absences.
 2. The program will initiate appropriate family support services for all children with two or more consecutive unexcused absences, excused absences resulting from family situations, transportation difficulties and irregular attendance (ex. missing one day a week).
 3. In some situations, families may be offered an alternative service such as weekly home visits.

These efforts must include direct contact with the child's parents/guardian and staff will record the efforts in the SOAP and also by using CP5 when appropriate.

- D. In the event of two unexcused absence staff will make contact with the family to offer support services when needed.
1. Contact methods should include, but not be limited to; phone calls, home visits,

and memos/notes. If the family cannot be contacted directly, staff may use the 3-11 form to find alternative contact points.

2. When possible, note any acceptable reasons for absence. If no contact is made, or when there is no acceptable reason for absence, continue with appropriate follow through.
- E. In circumstances where chronic absenteeism persists (more than two weeks of unexcused absences, with no family contact) despite the provisions of family support services or alternative services, a letter will be sent to the family requesting contact within a 10 work day period.
1. This letter must specify the child's slot will be considered vacant at the end of this period if there is no response. The day after the last possible contact day is considered the first day of vacancy.
 2. All vacancies must be filled within thirty days of vacancy §1302.15(a).
- F. Non-medical excused absences that exceed the approved three-week consecutive timeframe will be considered unexcused. The child's slot will be considered vacant on the next school day and will be immediately available to allow the program to fill the vacancy with an eligible child from the wait list.
1. Accommodations will be made for pre-arranged medical absences for the enrolled child or an immediate family member. A note from the attending physician will be used as documentation for the excused absence.
- G. The Head Start program requests and promotes regular and on-going home visits and parent/teacher conferences during the year. Home visits are the primary learning environment for the Home Base model.

Home Visits:

1. Program staff will schedule home visits time and place in partnership with parents, each partner being flexible with their time. Home visits that are canceled by the family or the home visitor, will be rescheduled.
2. In center models or center combination models, when a family chooses not to participate in home visits or parent/teacher conferences, staff will conference with the family to determine the reason and share the importance of home visits.

Parent-Teacher Conferences:

1. Program staff will schedule parent/teacher conferences taking into consideration the family's schedule.
2. If the family chooses not to participate, staff will contact the family to determine the reasons and find an alternative time/method to share the information.

Appropriate documentation, including parent's explanation and signature, should be completed, and placed in the child' file.

- H. Any vacancy created by a child withdrawal, by a parent/guardian, must be filled within thirty days from date notified by parent/guardian.
1. Children who do not attend the first scheduled program class day and no contact with the parent/guardian, a letter will be sent to the family requesting contact within a 10 work day period. If no contact is made by the date noted in the letter, the enrolled child will be dropped and the vacancy will be filled with the next eligible child prioritized on the waitlist.
 2. If the child is unable to attend due to transportation challenges, the family will be given two weeks to work out a solution that will allow the child to attend. If the child is unable to attend after two weeks, the child will be dropped and the vacancy will be filled with the next eligible child prioritized on the waitlist.
- I. A family may begin receiving services once they are enrolled. In order for a child to participate in the classroom setting, a class day or socialization session at the center, the following criteria must be met.
1. Parent has completed required paper work. If appropriate, child may attend class while parent is completing required paper work as long as the parent is on-site. At a minimum, the CFDP's Emergency Form will be completed before child can attend a class without the parent.
 2. Child has a least one immunization in each required category or meets alternate state requirements with the exception of homeless children as described in §1302.16(c)(1).

A family may receive home visits once they are enrolled prior to the completion of 1 and 2 above.