



0-5 Attendance

POLICY/APPROACH:

Children who attend daily and on time experience better outcomes than those who do not. We encourage families to arrive on time each morning so that children may be included in the daily transition process and other morning routines, which prepare the child for that day's educational experience.

We support each pregnant woman and child's successful, regular attendance in the Head Start and Early Head Start programs and provide individualized comprehensive service plans when special circumstances occur that interfere with regular attendance.

Attendance will be carefully monitored to ensure vacancies are identified and filled promptly within 30 days.

When attendance falls below 85%, an analysis of the reasons for absence will identify the possible causes, and plans will be made to increase attendance to 85% or above.

Policy Council Approval 8/19/2014

Board Approval 8/21/2014

HEAD START PROGRAM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS:

1302.16(a)-(c)—Attendance

PROCEDURES:

If a staff member(s) is out sick or unavailable, the site manager will be responsible for assigning the tasks in this procedure to another staff member to ensure the procedure is followed correctly.

UNABLE TO MAKE INITIAL CONTACT – POST-ENROLLMENT

Staff are expected to make all reasonable efforts to contact a family and complete initial contact once they've been enrolled into the program. If a family is unresponsive to communication attempts, staff must ensure that 3 attempts on separate days, using a variety of contact methods (phone, email, text), are clearly documented in SHINE prior to processing a drop.

- If you're unable to reach the family by phone to complete initial contact, create an **"Attempted Contact"** case note in the Family Tab in SHINE documenting your attempt
- 2 additional contact attempts must be made by the T/SP/or FA. Each attempt is to be documented in the original **"Attempted Contact"** case note in the Family Tab in SHINE
- If staff are unable to contact the family on 3 separate days using a variety of contact methods, the FA will:
 - Mail a **"It's not too late"** (no initial contact) postcard to the family's address on file
 - Create a calendar reminder to process the drop 5 working days from the date the postcard was sent

- Update the original “**Attempted Contact**” case note to reflect that a postcard was sent
- If contact was not made, process the drop on the 5th day by submitting a **Child Change Request**

RECORDING ATTENDANCE

A. Sign-In & Sign-Out

- An iPad with the Playground App set to *Kiosk Mode* should be positioned at the designated drop-off location, so guardians and other authorized adults can sign the child into the program utilizing the family’s 4-digit code.
- After the health checks are completed, classroom staff should review the student roster on the check-in iPad. Children who are not yet checked in should have a yellow dot indicating the reason for absence has been entered. If there is no yellow dot, check emails and the center call log to see if the family reported the absence there. If so, enter the absence information at this time.

B. Daily Absences

If a parent calls the center to report an absence:

- And speaks to a staff member **with** Playground access; the staff will enter the reason into Playground
- And speaks to a staff member with **no** Playground access, the staff will email the center team (FA/SP/Teacher/SM/AA) and request that the AA enter the absence reason into Playground
 - Area Assistants - Check your email and the center call log. If the parent has reported the absence, enter that information at this time.

**To prevent families from receiving an automatic attendance call, please ensure that all reported absences are entered within 45 minutes of the class starting.*

NO CALL/ NO SHOW PROCESS

A. DAILY NO CALL/NO SHOW

For **each day** a child is absent from center classes with a No Call/No Show:

- **Within the first hour of the start of class:**

The AA will initiate the automatic calls. The primary guardian of each child who is not checked in and does not have an absence reason recorded in Playground will receive an automated phone call or text message. This will allow the guardian to report the reason for their absence, or let staff know they will arrive late.

- AA will Create a *No Call/No Show* absence reason in Playground for any child that does not have an absence reason entered or reported

**Refer to “Initiating the First Calls in Safe Arrival” guide for details on exporting reports from Playground to SafeArrival to initiate the automatic calls.*

- **No later than 45 minutes prior to class ending:** The AA will review the report from Safe Arrival, center call log, and/or Emails and enter all reported absence activity into Playground.

- **After class:** The FA/Specialist will review Playground and attempt to contact any family who has not already been reached or provided a reason for their child's absence.
 - If you reach the family: Enter the absence reason into Playground. Leave the 'No Call/No Show' note, adding the absence reason. (Example: 'No Call/No Show. Staff called family after class, and they reported child illness')
 - If you do not reach the family: Add your contact attempt to the existing 'No Call/No Show' note. Document your contact attempt and leave the family's No Call/No Show status in Playground. (Example: 'No Call/No Show. FA called and left a message for both guardians.')
- **At the end of each day:** AAs will send Family Advocates/Specialists an unexplained absence report that reflects consecutive No Call/No Show days. Once generated, any absence with a recorded reason can be removed from the report prior to forwarding it to the Family Advocate. Each day the AA will run the Daily Absences report from Playground with a start date of Monday of the current week and an end date of the current date.
 - e.g. by Wednesday, the report will show Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday absences.
 - Each week will begin with a new report

**See screenshot guides for how to document absence reasons and follow-up information in Playground*

B. Multiple No Call/No Shows (consecutive)

The No Call/No Show steps outlined above will be repeated each day a child is absent.

If staff are unsure how to proceed with a family, they may request an attendance consultation or reach out to PFCE for guidance.

- Staff must make reasonable efforts to make direct contact with a family in the event of multiple unexplained absences and utilize multiple methods of contact, including but not limited to phone calls, text, and email.
- Contact attempts should be documented in Playground, in accordance with the Daily No Call/No Show procedure outlined above

Home Visits will be utilized as an additional contact attempt by staff (FA/SP, T, SM), unless prior approval is granted from both PFCE & Site Manager, and are **required within 3 days** if there's a child/family safety concern - utilizing the buddy system when necessary.

If contact WAS made with the family at home:

- Ensure that we still have accurate contact information for the family
- Enter absence reasons into Playground for this date that contact was made – without deleting the previous 'No Call/No Show' note
- If absence reasons are now known for the previous day(s), go back and add absence documentation in Playground to any No Call/No Show notes- *DO NOT delete the previous 'No Call/No Show' note*
- Create and/or follow up on any Need Identified or Emergency/Crisis notes as needed

If contact was NOT made with the family at their home:

- Fill out and leave a **“We Miss You”** Home Visit Postcard at the residence
- On the day of the attempted visit, update the absence reason in Playground, stating that the family is still in No Call/No Show status and that a Home Visit postcard was left. Example: “No Call/No Show- FA left postcard at the family’s home”
- Create a calendar reminder to process a drop request 5 working days after the postcard was left (if the family remains in No Call/No Show status).
- Continue the daily No Call/No Show follow-up calls during this 5-day waiting period.

If the family has not re-engaged by the **end of the 5th day** from the date the postcard was left:

- FA/SP will notify the center team and PFCE that staff have not had contact with the family and that the family will be dropped from the program
- FA/SP will complete the ***Child Change Request***, and Enrollment will process the drop
- Enrollment will send a final ***“Drop” postcard*** to the family informing them of the drop, and the next steps if they’re interested in re-engaging in services

CHRONIC POOR ATTENDANCE

If a child is at risk of missing 10% of program days per year (about 2 days a month), appropriate strategies to improve attendance, such as contact with parents or intensive case management, are necessary. * See [“overall attendance percentage” screenshot guide for steps to view a child’s attendance percentage in Playground](#)

A. If attendance continues to be below 90%, with no improvement for 2 consecutive months:

**If chronic absence for 2 consecutive months is the result of illness, consult Health Services staff
If the child is on an IFSP, notify both the Case Manager and the Disabilities Manager, and consult with them while addressing chronic poor attendance

- FA/SP/T will connect with the family to discuss barriers and **create a plan** to increase attendance. If the plan deviates from standard services: FA/SP **MUST** submit an Attendance Consult Request Form to obtain director approval. This discussion/plan should address:
 - The reasons why a family is unable to attend
 - How and when they can participate in services in their current circumstances
 - How and when T/FA/SP will support the family and communicate with them
 - A timeline for the family’s ability to reengage fully in services
- FA/SP will **create an attendance goal** in SHINE (*Family Life Practices>Type: Family Routines> Goal: Attendance*) Goal steps = the steps that were agreed upon in the plan that was created with the family, addressing barriers (transportation, routines, child care, etc.).
 - At a minimum, the goal will be set at a “Benchmark Zero” to show the discussion was had, barriers were addressed and supports were offered. If ongoing support is needed, the benchmark will need to be moved to a “One.”
 - FA/SP will continue to document absences, supports offered, etc., as a follow-up to the Attendance Goal in SHINE.

Remember to practice UPR and celebrate any improvement and small successes with the family. FA/SP may need to revisit the goal steps and adjust, in partnership with the family, to continue to see an increase in participation.

B. If FA/SP is unable to create a plan with the family to increase participation and/or engagement: Contact PFCE Supervisor

FA/SP will create an **Attendance Goal** in SHINE (*Family Life Practices>Type: Family Routines>Goal: Attendance*) Goal steps = the steps that staff will take to address barriers (transportation, routines, child care, etc.) and engage the family to create a plan to increase attendance. The goal will remain at a zero benchmark until staff and the family have partnered together to create a plan.

- One goal step must include: “PFCE will send the family an “**Attendance Concern Letter**.”
 - FA/SP send an email to your PFCE Supervisor requesting that an Attendance Concern Letter be sent to the family.
 - PFCE Supervisor will send the “Attendance Concern” letter, notify staff that the letter has been sent, and add a follow-up note to the active attendance goal.
- FA/SP will continue to document the support offered and attempts to create a plan with the family as a follow-up to the attendance goal
 - If an attendance plan is created in partnership with the family, the Attendance Goal steps should be changed to reflect the plan discussed with the family, and the goal should be advanced to benchmark 1 to become active.

C. FA/SP will submit an Attendance Consultation Request form if:

- The family has not contacted staff within 7 days of the Attendance Concern Letter to create a plan
- There has been **NO** improvement in participation in 60 days, and attempts to set a goal have been unsuccessful
- Staff need team support to problem-solve attendance and/or communication issues

If there has been even a minor improvement, continue supporting the family and celebrating all successes!

EXTENDED ABSENCES

**Extended Absence plans are not used for chronic attendance issues*

A. Extended Absence – for up to 7 school days

If a parent wants a child to miss up to 7 days, there must be prior approval of the center team. The Center Team (SM, Ed Coach/Supervisor, HT/T/SP/FA) will discuss the following:

- the reason for the absence
- the agreed-upon date of the child’s return to class
- services/support offered (*Examples: class materials, parent and child activities, books, check-ins/Home Visits, etc.*)

Once approved by Center Team:

- Area Assistant will notify ERSEA Manager to ensure accurate attendance recording

B. Extended Absence - for more than 8 school days

This option provides short-term, individualized services from two weeks, up to two months, to enrolled families in Head Start and Early Head Start when special circumstances (such as a special medical condition of the child, hospitalization, custody changes, homelessness, travel to visit relatives, etc.) prevent the child from participating in the services of the program they are enrolled in.

Prior approval must be obtained, or the child will be dropped from the program in accordance with the attendance procedure outlined above.

- FA/SP/T will connect with the family to create an attendance plan that must include:
 - the reasons for the absence
 - the agreed-upon date of the child's return to class,
 - services and support offered. (*Examples: class materials, parent and child activities, books, weekly check-ins via phone or home visits, etc.*)
 - FA/SP will submit the Attendance Consult Request Form
- PFCE will communicate the request/needs with the Education Department, PFCE Manager, HS Director, and other departments as needed.
 - Once the plan is approved: PFCE will communicate the outcome of the review to center staff and ERSEA Manager
- FA/SP (once approved) will create an attendance goal in SHINE (*Family Life Practices>Type: Family Routines> Goal: Attendance*) Goal steps = the steps that were agreed upon in the plan that was created with the family, including the return to school date.
 - FA/SP will document all follow-ups as a "Follow-Up" note to the Attendance Goal in SHINE.

If a child is experiencing homelessness and 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 (1302.16(c)(2)).

MODIFIED SCHEDULE

When there will be a consistent barrier to a child attending a full school day, and **will last more than 2 weeks**, individual supports and schedule accommodations may be offered. *Examples: a child needs to be picked up 20 mins early twice a week due to a conflict with picking up a sibling.*

**If the schedule is modified due to Child Guidance Plan, refer to "Child Guidance Plan" procedure.*

Prior approval must be obtained in order to modify a child's schedule that deviates from standard program services.

- FA/SP/T will connect with the family to create a plan that must include:
 - The reasons for modifying the child's class schedule
 - Services and support offered in lieu of modifying the schedule. Best practice is to provide support, resources, or activities that align with the specific class activity or skill the child will miss due to a modified schedule.

- FA/SP will submit the “Attendance Consult Request” Form
- PFCE will:
 - Communicate the request/needs with the Education Department, PFCE Manager, HS Director, and other departments as needed
 - Communicate the outcome of the review to center staff and ERSEA Manager (once the plan is approved).
- **Once approved:** FA/SP will create a **Special Service Plan** goal in SHINE (*Family Life Practices>Type: Family Routines> Goal: Special Service Plan*) Goal steps = the details of the modified schedule, including an end date, if there is one.
 - Family must sign the “Modified Services Agreement” form. The form will outline the goal steps of the Special Service Plan and should be uploaded as an attachment to the SSP goal once completed.
 - **Plan should include steps to support skill building in the area or activity that will be missed due to the modified schedule.** *Example: If the child will be missing a mealtime, the goal should reflect how the FA/Family will support skill building and/or benefits around family-style meals and might include a step such as “family will eat dinner together 1x a week”*
- Staff and family will review the plan every 30 days minimum to determine if steps should be modified to ensure successful skill building.
 - FA/SP will document all progress on the plan as a Follow-Up note to the Special Service Plan Goal in SHINE every 30 days minimum.

* If a child transitions from an Attendance goal to a Special Service Plan, the FA/SP will add a follow-up note to the original Attendance goal stating a Special Service Plan was created and approved. The Attendance goal will then be *deactivated*.