

Attendance Procedure

Purpose

This explains how to talk to families about the importance of regular attendance and how to document the conversations and activities that support attendance on the *Family Partnership Record/Contact Log*.

Guidance

Research shows that children benefit most from the preschool program and are more school ready when they attend class regularly. Nationwide, chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10% of school for any reason. PSESD Early Learning programs address this by promoting school readiness through conversations and activities with parents about the importance of regular attendance. Site/center staff partner to talk to families about how to develop healthy habits and build routines that promote regular attendance. The benefits of attendance are explained during enrollment, orientation and throughout the program year in support of school readiness goals. Site/Center staff also partner to monitor, document and analyze attendance trends and address the needs of any child who experiences barriers to regular attendance and/or chronic absenteeism.

Procedure

During enrollment and orientation, staff will inform families about the following program policies and attendance expectations:

- Why regular attendance is important for the child
- Who parents should call in advance (when possible) if the child will be absent
- How parent/guardian must call transportation to inform them of a child's absence (if applicable for your site/center program)
- How staff will follow up if there are unexplained absences/chronic absenteeism
- How FSS/FA will conduct a home visit safety check if a child is absent for three consecutive days without family contact
- Review and discuss the *Safe Arrival/Departure Form*, making sure each family receives a copy at the enrollment visit.

How to document attendance

- Site/Center staff must document in the file on the *Family Partnership Record/Contact Log* all contact and efforts made to support families concerning attendance.
- Teaching staff must record attendance on the *Attendance/Meal Count Form* each day class is in session and the reason for the absence.
 - For children transported by bus: Designated staff will call the family within 30 minutes after class starts if the absence is not reported prior to class time by the parent/guardian.
 - For children who are self-transported: Designated staff will call the family within 60 minutes after class starts if the absence is not reported prior to class time by parent/guardian.
- Site/Center designated staff must submit the *Daily Attendance/Meal Count* report to the PSESD on the last working day of each week (Friday) by faxing or scanning/emailing to the PSESD:
 - ECEAP Fax Number: (425) 917-7898 (King County), (253) 778-7898 (Pierce County)
 - ECEAP Scan/Email: sgettman@pseud.org or cdutton@pseud.org
 - Head Start Fax Number: (425) 917-7766 (King County), (253) 778-7766 (Pierce County)
 - Head Start Scan/Email: tmatthews@pseud.org
- Refer to the *Attendance/Meal Count Procedure* (under Health/Nutrition) for additional details on documenting attendance and meals/snacks

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- FSS/FA/Teacher must review the Daily Attendance/Meal Count report for completeness and accuracy of data by checking that the following are completed:
 - Current Daily Attendance/Meal Count report is printed at the beginning of each week.
 - Date of the week is included at the top of each Attendance/Meal Count report i.e. 4/15/2015 or April 15, 2015.
 - All enrolled children's names are included and spelled correctly
 - Codes are legible and accurate
 - Meals are totaled correctly
 - Reason for absence is documented and legible
 - Staff signatures and dates are present

How to monitor attendance at site/center and collaborate with parent/guardian(s)

- Site/center staff must meet regularly to analyze trends in attendance and discuss ways to engage and support families in developing good attendance habits.
- Before staffings, site/center staff must use attendance meal count, tracking spreadsheets or other relevant program data/reports to analyze and identify children who are experiencing attendance concerns/chronic absenteeism.
- FSS/teacher will partner to meet with the family to discuss how to support and work together with the family to help remove barriers to the child's attendance.

How to follow up and/or address chronic absenteeism

Note: Chronic absence is defined as missing 10% or more of school for any reason. On average school is in session for 180 school days a year, 10% means missing 18 out of 180 school days a year or 2 days a month.

- On the day of absence, designated staff will attempt to call the family to determine whether the absence is excused or unexcused.
- Designated staff will continue to make every effort to identify the reason in order to document it on the *Attendance/Meal Count Report* by the end of the week.
- If a child has been absent for three consecutive days without family contact, FSS/FA will conduct a home visit safety check on the fourth day.
- When a family is not home, staff must leave a notification message. The notification message includes the reason staff conducted an unscheduled home visit, the staff member's name and phone number and the next steps a parent should take to report the reason for absence.
- When necessary to make sure a family is safe, the site/center staff must use emergency contacts, email, or employer phone number (if available in the family file).
- Staff will notify Site/Center Director/Coordinator when a family cannot be reached after conducting the safety check home visit and using other contact options.
- Site/Center staff **cannot** withdraw a child until approved by Senior Regional Coordinator, ERSEA Manager and Operations Director.
- The Senior Regional Coordinator must support site/center staff when best practice advises that a family be returned to the waitlist due to no contact. This will be individualized and determined based on family situation, evidence of documented support by site/center staff, and equitable notification to family has occurred.
- Once staff receives approval to involuntarily withdraw a family by the designated ESD staff, the child's name will return to waitlist and be placed using the original points on the application for 60 calendar days. If the child returns to the program within the 60 calendar days, staff will follow the *ERSEA Returning Application* enrollment procedure and offer slot when available.

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- If the child who was involuntarily withdrawn does not return on or before the 60th day, the child's application will be removed from the waitlist. The family will need to start a new enrollment process if they want to return after this timeline.
- Enrollment **cannot** be discontinued due to behavior concerns. Expulsion is prohibited. Please see guidance on strategies to support children with challenging behaviors. This includes supports for the classroom teachers, planning to meet individual child needs, accessing additional resources, or choosing an alternative schedule or setting.

Writing a plan if attendance falls below 90%

In support of the Attendance Performance Standard (ECEAP B-112 and Head Start 1305.8): If a contractor's average daily attendance falls below 90% for any month, contractors must analyze the causes and patterns of absenteeism and **develop a plan to improve attendance**. The plan is written on the bottom of the *Daily Attendance/Meal Count Report*. Here are some examples of sample plans to address low attendance:

- If a site/center experiences frequent absences due to illness, the plan could have examples like this:
 - "Parents are planning a family education seminar on habits to stay healthy at next month parent meeting on November 15, 2015".
 - "Parent received tips on how to stay healthy during flu season ~ hand washing".
 - "Parents are creating a health living campaign to remind parents how to stay healthy during winter months".
- If a site/center is experiencing frequent absences due to transportation, the plan could have examples like this:
 - "Staff/Parents are working together to brainstorm resolution to transportation barrier".
 - "Staff/Parents are working together on ideas and locating community resources".
 - "Staff is working with parent to ensure home/school connection so learning continues for school readiness, healthy habits, and parent engagement".

Site/Center staff must also read the Daily Attendance and Meal Count procedures which explain when and how to properly document attendance and submit it to the PSESD Early Learning Program. The links below lead to the procedures and reports (Menus/Recordkeeping). You can also find the forms under "Nutrition" in the program manual.

Related Documents

[Daily Attendance and Meal Count Procedure - ECEAP](#)

[Daily Attendance and Meal Count Procedure - Center-based Head Start and Early Head Start](#)

[Daily Attendance and Meal Count Report - ECEAP 2014-2015 \(Excel\)](#)

Other training opportunity for learning on attendance

- <https://classes.earlylearningwa.org/login/index.php> (**required**)
 - New Staff ~ Tracking & Attendance Procedures
 - For Returning Staff ~ Tracking & Attendance Procedure
- www.attendanceworks.org
- PSESD Staff trainings throughout program year (**required or strongly encouraged**)
- First Year Club (**optional but strongly encouraged**)
- Conversation with program coordinators and directors

Tip: Staff are encouraged to collaborate with other early learning or education partners on solutions, activities, family/child support and parent engagement ideas for best practices that promote healthy attendance habits.