

## ATTENDANCE POLICIES

**RATIONALE:** Attendance is important to everyone - providers, parents, and most of all, the children. Regular attendance is a major indicator of children's future success at school.

**PHILOSOPHY:** While taking the attendance policies as a guideline for attendance follow-up, providers are encouraged to make contact with parents and/or care givers sooner than the attendance policies require. This should always be in the spirit of providing support, information, and service; not merely to enforce or satisfy a requirement. Our goal is to engage parents and/or care givers in their child's ongoing success by encouraging good attendance in early learning programs.

### Recording Attendance

- Attendance is maintained and recorded by provider.
- Daily, as children arrive, a provider or a member of the teaching staff should document attendance.
- Attendance must be completed prior to the first meal of the day.
- When a child comes to class for any length of time they are counted as present for the whole day.
- When a child arrives late or leaves early the times must be documented on the attendance sheet in the notes.

### Documenting Absence

- The reason for a child's absence should be written in the notes area of the attendance form.
- If the parent has made no contact regarding the child's absence that day, document that as an *Unexcused Absence*.
- If the parent calls, and the child has an excuse, document the excuse in the notes area of the attendance form.
- Document all the information available to ensure accurate input and follow-up.

### The following are the possible reasons for an excused absence:

- Chronic Illness, e.g. asthma
- Contagious Condition
- Appointment for illness or treatment, e.g. medical, mental health, special education, etc.
- Family appointments or illness
- Family Crisis
- Fever
- Head Lice/Nits
- No transportation
- Out of town/vacation/home with family

Approved Extended Absence – for up to 8 school days. Must have prior approval and a note must include the reasons for absence and the agreed upon date of child's return to class.

Approved Extended Absence – for more than 8 school days. When the family plans to be absent more than eight (8) school days, the child could be dropped from the program unless prior approval for the absence has been obtained. Documentation must include the reasons for absence and the agreed upon date of child's return to class.

### **Attendance Follow-Up**

- Review the attendance sheet for accuracy and submit it daily for data entry. During this review, monitor children's individual attendance.
- Once a child has been out for three days in a row with no call from a parent, a provider/staff should attempt to call/email a parent, establish a reason for the absence and update the attendance notes for all days the child was out.
- If a child is absent for four days in a row with or without call, a provider/staff will begin to document the contacts with the family.
- When notified of an absent because of illness, a provider/staff can make contact with the family via phone/email to avoid exposure to contagion, and offer supports as needed. If the child's illness persists or is chronically recurring, a provider/staff will make direct contact with the family to offer more support.
- Contact should be made as soon as possible, to offer support, explain the benefits of regular attendance, listen for barriers to attendance, offer resources to support the child's regular attendance. All contacts and attempted contacts should be documented.

### **Other opportunities for follow-up**

- Run regularly an Attendance report to establish which children have attendance levels below 85% and create Attendance Alerts. Initiate follow-up as needed.
- Review Attendance Alerts as they arise, monitor weekly to ensure contact with families and follow-up activities.
- Conduct an analysis of reasons for absence in excess of 85%
- Monitor children with three or more days of no call, or four consecutive days absence for any reason, or less than 85% attendance for the month, to ascertain accuracy and thoroughness of attendance documentation in the areas of contact made with the family, offers of resources and family supports for child's attendance, and the correct implementation of this policy.

### **Chronic Poor Attendance**

If the family continues to have a pattern of sporadic absence, for illness as well as for other reasons, staff should develop a plan to address attendance concerns. The plan may include developing an Attendance Agreement between the family and the program.

The Attendance Agreement will be given to the parent, and a copy maintained in the child and family file.

### **De-Enrollment Procedure**

In circumstances where chronic absenteeism persists and it does not seem feasible to include the child in either the same or a different program option, the child's slot must be considered an enrollment vacancy.