

Attendance and Family Support

Family Workers play a large role in the program’s attendance initiative. In their role as family support they will take a lead in parent education, family goal setting and tracking and follow up to attendance issues. A strong relationship is essential to the ability to partner with families in all areas of development and is essential to making families feel welcomed into the school community. Studies have shown that when families feel welcomed and connected to their child’s school, the child’s attendance improves.

Community Recruitment

* Recruitment materials and staff will present the program as an educational opportunity for children identifying the program goal of school readiness.
* Share with families that there is no cost for the Head Start portion of the day but we do ask parents to be involved in the program and to get their child to school consistently.
* Application interviews will include a conversation addressing attendance, family engagement and the importance of the family’s role in school readiness.

Parent Education

* Staff will review attendance expectations during the enrollment process and help families identify back up plans and support systems to insure consistent attendance.
* Staff will share informational materials with families on the importance of ongoing consistent attendance and share the long term effects on future educational success.
* Staff will review the program’s attendance framework with families and explain the need to call the center if their child will not be attending and that staff will follow up with them the same day if no call is received.

Staff-Family Relationships

* Staff will give feedback to families about their child’s attendance. The approach will be positive and engaging.
* Staff will reinforce attendance by recognizing and praising good and/or improving attendance with families. This can occur on a weekly/ occasional basis and at home and center visits. Thank families for their efforts to get their child to school.

Tracking and Follow Up

* Each day that a child does not attend and a call is not received from the family, the staff will call the family to check on the child and find out the reason for the absence. This information will be documented on the attendance sheet for that day insuring accurate information is input into the COPA data system.
* If a child does not attend for 3 days and no contact has been made with the family, staff will conduct a home visit to insure child and family safety and to offer any resources or support as needed.
* All health requirements will be tracked by staff to insure that a child does not miss school due to a lack of medical paperwork. Staff will also assist families in getting appropriate healthcare for ongoing medical or dental issues that may impact consistent attendance.
* If a child’s attendance declines, the Family Worker will meet with the family to identify barriers to consistent attendance and to partner with the family to address issues impacting attendance.
* All contact with families addressing attendance will be documented in the case notes of the child’s file to maintain a record of program tracking, follow up and support.

Transition

* As a child transitions from Early Head Start home based to Early Head Start or Head Start center based, staff will review transition materials on attendance, review the attendance framework and plan strategies with the family to insure consistent attendance.
* Whenever possible, families will have a chance to visit the next placement to meet the staff and begin to form relationships with the new center.