

<div>CFS</div> <div>Child & Family Services</div> <div>Operations Manual</div>	Program Information		X	Procedure		Policy
	Document Title: <u>Attendance Procedures</u>					
	Content Area: <u>PDM</u>					
	Policy Council Approval Date: <u>n/a</u>		Board Approval Date: <u>n/a</u>		Issue Date: <u>8/23/11</u>	
	Other Rec/App. Required: <u>n/a</u>				Reviewed on: <u>4/28/25</u>	
	Regulatory References: _____					
	Key Word1: <u>Attendance</u>			Key Word2: <u>Late Pick Up</u>		
	Related Documents: <u>Program Attendance Letter, Individualized Attendance Plan, Transition Procedure</u>					

Purpose: To ensure that children receive optimal benefits from participating in early care and education programs, regular attendance will be emphasized in program-family connections. Staff will work with families to promote the benefits of regular attendance, follow-up promptly on unplanned absences, and work with families to address barriers to regular attendance.

Procedures:

Promoting Regular Attendance

- Upon enrollment into the program, families will receive information about the attendance procedure, the benefits of regular attendance, and program contact information to use in the event of a child absence.
- Families are asked to inform the program when:
 - The child will be absent.
 - The child will be late in arriving.
 - An on-time departure will not occur.
- Families and staff shall discuss and agree upon a child's daily schedule/attendance plans upon the child's entry into the program, and whenever a change in their child's schedule is needed.
- Staff will discuss child attendance during each parent-teacher conference and intentionally link attendance with school readiness outcomes.
- Adjusted Education Plan- in extraordinary circumstances where persistent, dangerous behavior occurs, an adjusted education plan may be considered (*in conjunction with the applicable Content Manager and Director*). Please reference the *Child Development and Behavior Support Plan Process* for further guidance.

Absence Follow-Up

Following unexpected absence(s) with no contact from the parent:

- Each site/option will designate staff with responsibility for attendance follow-up, including a back-up for days that the designee is unavailable.
- Designated staff will reach out to parents as soon as possible to assure the child's well-being, beginning one hour after the child's typical arrival time and no later than the end of the day.
- Staff will inquire about the reason for the child's absence and determine if further follow-up action is required to support child attendance.
- In the event that staff cannot reach a family after a second consecutive absence, a staff conversation should occur to review family information, assess potential risks, and begin planning for a home visit. The home visit may occur as soon as the day of the 2nd consecutive absence, but no later than the day of the 4th consecutive absence.
- When a child's absence results from short-term illness, no special action is required. When a child's absence results from family challenges or resource limitations, staff should engage in discussion with the family to address those barriers to the extent possible.
- If needed, an Individualized Attendance Plan shall be developed, uploaded into ChildPlus under the Attendance tab, and implemented with the family.
- All contacts with the child's family as well as special family support service activities provided by program staff must be documented.

- Individual attendance follow-up communications should be documented in the Attendance section of ChildPlus under Attendance Follow-Up, located on the mobile ChildPlus site.
- More comprehensive summaries of conversation and planning to support ongoing child attendance should be documented in the Family Services Section of ChildPlus as an “Attendance” event including the development of an Individualized Attendance Plan.

In circumstances where chronic absenteeism persists and contact with family is not established, a “Program Attendance Letter” will be sent to the family to determine the family’s interest in having their child remain enrolled. When a parent does not respond in accordance with the timeline noted in the letter, the child’s slot will be considered an enrollment vacancy.

Staggered Attendance/Gradual Entry

Gradual entry may be utilized to support group transitions for children. If a site chooses to gradually enter half of the children one day, and the remaining children the next day, the program can only count one day of service provided to all of its enrolled children. Gradual entry will not extend beyond two weeks. Some children may require a longer gradual entry at which time an Individualized Attendance Plan will be developed which is outlined in the Transition Procedure.

Arrival/Pick-Up

- Information about arrival and departure routines will be reviewed with families upon enrollment.
- In full-day options, the person(s) dropping off/picking up will be asked to sign the child in and out each day.
- If a child arrives at the site prior to program start, staff will request that the parent/guardian or transport person wait with the child until the scheduled time. If a child is not picked up by the scheduled time for session end (part-day) or program closure (full-day), steps will be taken in the following sequential order:
 1. Staff will attempt to contact the parent/guardian or designated pick-up person.
 2. If no contact is made, staff will call persons listed as emergency contacts for the child.
 3. If no contact has been made with a parent or emergency pick-up, a supervisor will be notified.
 4. In the event the child is at the program 1 hour after session end/closure time and there has been no contact with the parent/guardian or emergency pick-up person, the supervisor will support staff in contacting the Police and the Department of Health and Human Services for assistance in providing alternate care and to locate the parent/guardian.
- If a child is routinely picked up late (3 or more instances) or pick-up times vary in a manner that disrupts routines and learning for the child, Teachers will work with Family Coaches to hold a Family Child Review.
- A meeting will be held with the family to review this policy and may include the development of an Individualized Attendance Plan.
- If there continues to be challenges in meeting the expectations of this policy, a Director shall be consulted to evaluate appropriate next steps.

C&FS CACFP Sites and Sites participating in school USDA Program, Family Child Care Home or other facility:

1. Staff will sign in/out for any children who were not signed in/out by parent/transporter.
2. Staff should indicate an attendance/absence code for each child - see below.
3. If a child is absent, a brief comment should be added to indicate the specific reason for the absence. **If the absence reason is unknown, Attendance Code of Unexcused should be chosen.**

Once known, update with the Attendance Code of Absent and with appropriate reason.

If a paper copy is used for attendance, a staff member will review the attendance after the last child is picked up and sign at the bottom. Prior to staff departure, the form should be left in designated location for B&I processing.

Attendance/Absence Codes

In ChildPlus there are 5 options to choose for attendance:

1. **Present** – Child attended
2. **Present Offsite** – Child does not participate in class because child (or child with family) is fulfilling a single day Head Start requirement and/or relevant service or event. Examples of these occurrences may include Well Child Visits, Dental appointments, medical and developmental screenings, evaluations, services or treatments, Head Start goes to Augusta or other family events.
3. **Absent** – Child is absent; use absence codes below. If reason for absence is unknown, use UNEXCUSED until the family provides information. Once known, UPDATE Absent reason using one of the codes below.
 - **FH Family Health** - Use this in situations such as: parent is sick and unable to get child to program.
 - **FE Family Emergency** - Use this if child is unable to attend due to an emergency situation that impacts the family.
 - **H Health Reasons** - Use this for child's mental and/or physical health-related absences such as: child is sick, child is in the hospital, child is not able to be in the program due to the presence of communicable disease.
 - **T Transportation** - Use when the child's regular transportation cannot be provided for any reason and no alternative can be arranged.
 - **V Vacation** - Use when a child is on vacation or parent chooses to keep their child at home with them for the day (i.e. Mom's day off; at home with Dad; etc.).
 - **W Weather** - Use when a family indicates that they will not bring the child to the program due to weather conditions.
4. **Not Scheduled** - Child was not scheduled to attend. Use the appropriate code of:
 - **IAP Individualized Attendance Plan** - Use when there is a written individualized attendance plan developed by C&FS with the parent. (Child has an IEP/IFSP that indicates an individualized plan, an adjusted education plan due to serious, dangerous, and persistent behaviors, or awaiting Ed Tech support). Manager/Director awareness is required for IAP's and education/family supports must be provided during this time.
 - **ENA Enrolled Not Attending** - Use for special circumstances, i.e., if a child is enrolled but is not able to attend because the child is too young for the setting (newborn).
 - **SA Staggered Attendance/Gradual Entry** - Use at program start up.
5. **Unexcused** – Child is not present and the reason for absence is unknown. **Once absence reason is identified, change Attendance Code to Absent and list appropriate Absence Code.**

Attendance Monitoring

- C&FS will maintain records of all dates and times of attendance as well as absences; the reason for absences will be noted using approved attendance codes.
- On a monthly basis, average daily attendance rates will be reviewed at a program and site level. In the event that monthly program attendance falls below 85%, an analysis will occur to identify the causes of absenteeism and identify necessary changes to support increased participation.
- Within the first 60 days of the program year and ongoing thereafter, individual child attendance data will be used to identify instances of chronic absence and assure appropriate strategies are in place to partner with families and address attendance barriers.