

NORTHEAST SOUTH DAKOTA HEAD START PROGRAM, INC.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Program promotes regular attendance by all children and tracks attendance for each child in the computerized child tracking system (Child Plus). The attendance goal of 100% is encouraged to be maintained by each child, but the Program aims for an overall 85% monthly attendance rate in its Center-based program. In order to monitor attendance and support the families in maintaining an individual 85% monthly attendance, strategies to promote attendance are implemented.

Strategies used will include, but are not limited to, providing information about the benefits of regular attendance, conducting phone calls, home visits, or other direct contact with the child's parent/guardian. If a child ceases to attend, every effort will be made to re-engage that child and family into the Program. If this is not possible, the slot will be considered a vacancy.

The Head Start Program implements a process to ensure children are safe when they do not arrive at school. If a child is unexpectedly absent and the parent/guardian has not contacted the Program within an hour of start time, the Program will contact the parent/guardian to ensure the child's well-being. In the event the parent/guardian cannot be reached by telephone concerning the well-being of the child, the emergency contact person will be notified to assist in the well-being of the child. Documentation will be written on the attendance sheet, and also given to the Family Service Coordinator to document in Child Plus.

The Head Start Family Services Coordinator will make a home visit or other direct contact after a child has two consecutive days of unexcused absence. If absences are due to family circumstances, appropriate family support measures will be initiated. All family support measures initiated due to attendance problems will be documented in Child Plus. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are informed that failure to contact the Center/Home Base unit may result in the child being withdrawn from the Program.

The Office Manager will be notified when chronic absenteeism has been identified by staff. This policy will be implemented by the following:

- a. When a child's attendance has fallen below 85%, a letter will be sent to the parent/guardian stating the importance of attendance and requesting contact be made with the Head Start Staff in their area.
- b. When a child's attendance continues to be unexcused or fall below 85%, a second attendance letter will be sent to the family requesting the child be present for the remainder of the school year and contact be made with the Head Start Staff in their area.
- c. If Head Start Staff receives no response to the first or second attendance letters, or the child continues to be unexcused, a letter will be sent to the parent/guardian stating the child has been withdrawn from the Program.

The Office Manager must be contacted to review the situation before the child is dropped from the Program. The Office Manager will also discuss the situation with the Executive Director, Education, and/or Family Services Managers.

1/24/2017