

ROCKY MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, INC. (Rocky)
HEAD START
ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

POLICY: In accordance with Head Start Program Performance Standard (HSPPS) 1302.16 Rocky Head Start will strive to maintain 100% Average Daily Attendance (ADA). If a program's monthly average daily attendance rate falls below 85%, the program will analyze the causes of absenteeism to identify any systematic issues that contribute to the program's absentee rate. The program will use this data to make necessary changes in a timely manner as part of ongoing oversight and correction as described in HSPPS 1302.102(b) and inform its continuous improvement efforts as described in HSPPS 1302.102(c).

PROCEDURE:

1. The attendance policy and procedure will be explained to every parent/guardian at intake when completing the child's application for Head Start. The Attendance Policy and Procedure Agreement will be signed and a copy will be given to the parent/guardian.
2. Every Head Start child's parent/guardian will receive a copy of the Attendance Policy and Procedure at the Initial Family Visit. Rocky Head Start will obtain a signed acknowledgement of receipt.
3. If a child is absent and a parent/guardian has not contacted the program within one hour of program start time, Rocky Head Start ERSEA Specialist will call or text the parent(s)/guardian(s) to ensure the child's well-being. If a parent/guardian is reached, documentation of the absence will be made in the program's tracking system, *ChildPlus*.
4. If the parent/guardian is unable to be contacted, and there are two consecutive unexplained absences Rocky Head Start staff will make a home visit to ensure the child's and family's well-being. The outcome of this visit will be documented in *ChildPlus*.
 - A. If the parent/guardian is not home at the time of the home visit, Head Start staff will leave a note explaining that Head Start made a home visit concerning their child's unexplained absences. The note will also ask the parent/guardian to contact Head Start within 24 hours from the home visit. Upon returning to the facility Head Start staff will call the emergency contacts for the child. If staff is able to connect with one of the contacts, staff will ask the contact to have the parent/guardian call Head Start. If the parent/guardian does not contact Head Start and the child is not in school the following day, Head Start staff will conduct another home visit. If staff are still unable to connect with the parent/guardian, Head Start staff will contact local law enforcement to conduct a welfare check.
5. If a child's ADA drops below 90%, the attendance record will be evaluated. If the ADA falls below 85% at any time during the year, the following procedures will take effect:
 - A. Family Advocate will contact parent(s)/guardian(s) to create an Attendance Plan. Head Start staff will support the family to promote the child's regular attendance.

- B. If the Attendance Plan is not met, a letter will be sent home from management informing the family that the child's placement is at risk and withdrawal is pending. This letter will inform the family of necessary steps to retain placement.
- C. Withdrawal will occur if the conditions of the letter and/or Attendance Plan are not met; this will allow another child on the waiting list an opportunity to enroll in the program.

PROCESS:

1. Parents/Guardians

- A. Call Rocky Head Start attendance line, 406-457-7307, or email headstartattendance@rmdc.net, and excuse child from class giving a reason for child's absence

2. Classroom Staff

- A. Check in every child on iPad using **ChildPlus** application when the child arrives in class and check out every child on iPad using **ChildPlus** application when the child is picked up at end of class
- B. An hour after class begins call the Rocky Head Start attendance line, 406-457-7307, leaving a message of who is absent from class

3. ERSEA Specialist or designee

- A. Check messages on attendance line. Mark child's absence in **ChildPlus** attendance tab making any necessary notes regarding reason for absence.
- B. An hour after class begins review **ChildPlus** report 2305 looking for what child is not present and parent has not excused child from class. (Notify Education Supervisor and classroom teacher via email if notice check-in times, check-out times and/or meal counts appear off).
- C. Mark all children who are not in class and who have not been excused by parent/guardian as unexplained
- D. Send text/email to the primary/secondary/other person(s) who's child has an unexplained absence utilizing **ChildPlus** LM00:
 - a. Subject: unexplained absence
 - b. Description: unexplained absence
 - c. Message: Your child is not in class today, _____. Please call the Rocky Head Start attendance line at 406-457-7307 or email headstartattendance@rmdc.net to excuse your child from class. Thank you.
- E. Continue to check attendance line and update the child's individual attendance in **ChildPlus**, make note of child's reason for absence.

- F. If a child has two unexplained absences in a row the ERSEA Specialist and family advocate/or designees, does an attendance home visit the following morning.
- G. If the parent/guardian is not home at the time of the home visit, Head Start staff will leave a note explaining that Head Start made a home visit concerning their child's unexplained absences. The note will also ask the parent/guardian to contact Head Start within 24 hours from the home visit. Upon returning to the facility Head Start staff will call the emergency contacts for the child. If staff is able to connect with one of the contacts, staff will ask the contact to have the parent/guardian call Head Start. If the parent/guardian does not contact Head Start and the child is not in school the following day, Head Start staff will conduct another home visit. If staff are still unable to connect with the parent/guardian, Head Start staff will contact local law enforcement to conduct a welfare check.
- H. Notifies the child's family advocate via email when the child has an unexplained absence and if the child's attendance drops below 90%.

4. Family Advocate

- A. Goes on attendance home visits with ERSEA Specialist
- B. Makes copy of letter and scans into **ChildPlus**
- C. Evaluates child's attendance when it falls below 90%
- D. Creates an attendance plan with the family when ADA falls below 85%