**NMCAA Head Start/Early Head Start**

**Attendance Guidance**

**Policy: HSPPS 1302.16 (a) (2) A program must implement strategies to promote attendance**

**At Orientation the Family Services Specialist (FSS) will:**

* Explain the importance of attendance and communication of absences to families. Give attendance handouts to families.
* Use the Attend Today, Achieve Tomorrow/Build the Habit of Good Attendance handout to explain the importance of regular attendance for success in school to families. Missing more than two days a month will result in a child falling below 90%, which could negatively impact students learning.
* Explain that it is important for parents to call the classroom when their child will be absent and if we don’t hear from them within the first hour of school starting we will call them by the end of the day to check on the wellbeing of their child and family.
* Explain the Family Partnership Agreement form and acquire parental signature.

**Steps to attaining optimal attendance**

* Teacher will document absence and reason for absence in the ChildPlus Attendance App using attendance codes and then writing in detailed notes on why the child is absent.
* If a child is unexpectedly absent and a parent/guardian has not contacted the program within one hour of expected arrival time, the program staff will contact the parent/guardian by the end of the day to ensure the child’s well-being. Documentation of this contact will be included within the ChildPlus Attendance App.
* If absences continue, problem solve with family about barriers preventing their child from attending.
* Explore strategies to achieve regular attendance with families. Inform your coordinator of absences once discussions are taking place with families on problem solving barriers to child attending on a daily basis.
* Continue to document contacts regarding attendance in the ChildPlus attendance app. Your Coordinator/FSS will document attendance follow up, communication, and plans in ChildPlus Attendance Follow Up.
* If absences continue, the teacher and/or Coordinator/FSS will schedule a time to complete an Attendance Success Plan with the family. This meeting can be scheduled to take place during a home visit or in the classroom.
* If the staff cannot reach the family through a home visit or make other direct contact with the parent/guardian to schedule a time to complete an Attendance Success Plan, the Coordinator/FSS and Program Manager will make a decision to send the family the Attendance Letter.
* If the family does complete an Attendance Success Plan, but is not able to follow through on this plan and the child is still unable to return to regular attendance, the coordinator will contact the program manager.
* The Program Manager will review the individual child’s attendance history with the Early Childhood Program Director; and the Program Director will make the decision whether to put the child back on the waitlist and consider the slot vacant.
* If the child is homeless under the McKinney Vento Act or in Foster Placement, efforts to maintain the child’s enrollment will continue for 90 days from last day in attendance. FES will check-in with the ERSEA manager every two weeks to update the family status.

**NMCAA’S definition of regular attendance / Ceases to Attend**

* The program supports families to promote the child’s regular attendance.
* When the child continues to have chronic or sporadic attendance with ongoing unexplainable multiple absences and no improvements resulting from program strategies, the Program Director will determine that the child has ceased to attend.
* The child/family current situations of trauma, foster placement and/or homelessness, including offering potential support services will be considered prior to dropping or transferring

**Monitoring**

* ERSEA Manager and Program Manager will monitor ChildPlus reports monthly.
* The Coordinator/FSS will monitor ChildPlus reports monthly and document in ChildPlus Follow Up as needed.
* Education Staff will input notes in the Attendance App as needed.