NMCAA Early Head Start Attendance Policy and Procedure

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

**Recruitment:**

* Talk with families about the benefits of EHS and good attendance for establishing routines for school readiness and success.
* Discuss the expectation of one home visit per week that lasts an hour and a half with the total number of home visits equaling 46 per year.

**Enrollment visit**

* Talk with families about the benefits of EHS and the benefits of good attendance for establishing routines for school readiness and success.  Refer to the Parent Handbook.
* Discuss the expectation of one home visit per week that lasts an hour and a half with the total number of home visits equaling 46 per year.
* Staff will review the Parent Handbook Attendance section, explaining that it is important for parents to call the home visitor if they need to cancel or reschedule the home visit planned for the week. Highlight “What to Do When Your Child is Sick – When is too sick for a home visit?” as this is often the primary reason for missed home visits.
* Review the ***Family Partnership Agreement***, highlighting attendance,and acquire parental signature.
* Share the ***Attendance Success Plan*** and our goal to help families maintain consistent attendance; they will then be familiar with our processes.

**Throughout Enrollment:**

1.   Child Family Specialists (CFS) will set a home visit for the following week with the family on their Home Visit Plan, and document it on their Outlook Calendar.  There will be 10 home visits scheduled for full time staff and 5 home visits scheduled for part time staff. This will be completed by the last workday of the previous week, unless approved by the PSC or a transition on your class list is happening. This will accurately reflect your schedule, rather than be a recurring Outlook Calendar event.

2.   The CFS will always go to the home visit as scheduled unless the family has contacted to reschedule.  If the family contacts the CFS to reschedule, the CFS will attempt to reschedule the home visit with the family in that same week.The staff will go to the rescheduled home visit.  If the family cancels again, a visit for the following week will be scheduled.

3.   If the family is not home for a scheduled home visit, staff will leave a door hanger with the next scheduled home visit date and show up on that date unless the family has contacted to reschedule or cancel. This date will be added to the staff’s Outlook Calendar as rescheduled.

4.    CFS will document attendance according to CP-Attendance found on Weebly under Policy and Procedure – Child Plus Directions. *Ensure all offered visits are documented.*

5.   CFS will inform PSC of absences when 2 visits are missed within the same month, and documented why the visit was missed in HV attendance notes. CFS will discuss the importance of consistent attendance with the family in the ***Parent Handbook***. If visits are missed due to illness, review healthy habits and When is Too Sick for a Visit in the handbook. If there are extenuating circumstances, talk with your PSC about next steps, when reviewing the Parent Handbook does not seem appropriate.

6.    If families miss 2 additional visits the following month, contact the PSC again.  The CFS will review the ***EHS Family Partnership Agreement*** with the family. CFS will document under the Family Services tab as a Need Identified or Family Goal in Child Plus. Discuss any individualization with your PSC

7.   If absences continue, the CFS will inform PSC and complete an ***Attendance Success*** ***Plan*** with the family.  The Attendance Success Plan will be attached to Child Plus in the Family Services tab.  CFS will document this as an “add action” within the Need Identified or Family Goal and review monthly until the Need Identified or Goal is completed.

8.   If the staff cannot reach the family through a home visit or make other direct contact with the family to schedule a time to complete an ***Attendance Success Plan***, the PSC will discuss sending the family a ***Home Visit Missed letter*** with the EHS Manager.  If this is approved, families will be given approximately 10 days to respond; if there is no response, the Early Childhood Program Director will be asked for approval to place the family back on the wait list.

9.   If the family does complete an ***Attendance Success Plan*** but is not able to follow through on this plan, and still does not have regular attendance, the EHS Manager and Early Childhood Program Director will review the child’s attendance history.  The Program Director will make the decision whether to return the child to the waitlist.

**Special Considerations for Homeless Children or Children in Foster Care**

1302.15(3)  If a program serves homeless children or children in foster care, it must make efforts to maintain the child’s enrollment regardless of whether the family or child moves to a different service area, or transition the child to a program in a different service area

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

* The program supports families to promote weekly home visits.
* When the family continues to have chronic or sporadic home visits with ongoing unexplainable multiple missed home visits and no improvements resulting from program strategies, the Program Director will determine that the child has ceased to attend.

**Monitoring**

* EHS Manager will monitor ChildPlus Reports monthly
* PSC will monitor ChildPlus Reports monthly and discuss attendance issues at monthly recaps with CFS
* CFS’s will input notes in the Family Services tab as needed.

 **Checklist:**

q Review the Parent Handbook at enrollment, highlighting the attendance portion.

q Review the Family Partnership Agreement, highlighting the attendance portion, and obtain signatures at enrollment.

q Review the Attendance Success Plan at enrollment, explaining that we have many processes to support consistent enrollment.

q Set a home visits for the following week with each family on their PAT Planning Guide

q Document home visits in your Outlook Calendar by the end of the week for the following week.

q Attend scheduled visits – attempt a reschedule for that week if they are not home or cancel.

**If 2 visits are missed in the same month:**

q Contact PSC

q Discuss the importance of consistent attendance with the family (refer to handbook)

q Make notes in attendance as to why visits were missed, along with attempts to reschedule.

**If 2 visits are missed the following month**

q Contacted your PSC again

q Review the EHS Family Partnership Agreement with the family

q Note Need Identified or Family Goal under Family Services tab in Child Plus

**If absences continue**

q Contact your PSC again, letting them know you will complete an Attendance Success Plan

q Complete an Attendance Success Plan with the family

q Attach the Attendance Success Plan in CP in Family Services

q Add Action under the Attendance Need Identified or Family Goal and note Attendance Success Plan was completed.

q Follow-up on Attendance Success Plan monthly by adding actions under the Need Identified or the Family Goal until it is completed.

**If the staff cannot reach the family through a home visit or make other direct contact with the family to schedule a time to complete an Attendance Success Plan**

q Discuss sending the family a Home Visit Missed letter with your PSC - EHS Manager will approve prior to sending.

**If the family does complete an Attendance Success Plan but is not able to follow through on this plan, and still does not have regular attendance**

The EHS Manager and Early Childhood Program Director will review the child’s attendance history.  The Program Director will make the decision whether to return the child to the waitlist.

q Print out e-mails to put in drop file if the child is added back to the wait list.

**TIPS For Success**

q At enrollment discuss barriers to have set schedule

q Set schedule with family whenever possible

q Avoid sending reminders

q Always show up unless family cancels

q Have parents write out attendance plans & goals

Reference: HSSPS 1302.16                            4/23 EHS & HS Team\EHS\Policy and Procedure/ERSEA\Attendance Guidance