

Excused Absence

Policy

Head Start/Early Head Start sites are required to maintain records of child absence reasons and staff follow-up efforts to engage families in promoting regular attendance. All absences must be documented with the time and reason why the child is absent, any additional information provided by the parent, support offered by staff, or attempted contact with parents. Excused absences are documented on the Verification of Excused Absence form and filed in the Excused Absence Binder.

If a child is unexpectedly absent and a parent has not contacted the program within one hour of program start time, the program must attempt to contact the parent to ensure the child's well-being.

Reference and Regulation:

Head Start Performance Standards 1302.16

Enrollment and Attendance Accounting (*EC* 8221.5, 8261, 8269 and *5CCR* 18065)

General Record Keeping Requirements (*EC* 8227.3, 8262.1, 33421 and *5CCR* 18067)

California Department of Education Attendance and Fiscal Reporting and Reimbursement Procedures for Child Development Contracts

Neighborhood House Association

JLZ/CS

1/2020

ERSEA-03C

Excused Absence

Procedure

When a parent reports their child's reason for absence, the staff member receiving the information determines if the absence is excused or unexcused, in accordance to absence definitions, and records it either on the Verification of Excused Absence form (excused absence-health, Best Interest, or court-order) or in the Progress Note (unexcused absences, follow-up regarding absence) for the child in the Attendance Documentation Binders (See ERSEA 03-Attendance Documentation Binders). If a child is unexpectedly absent and a parent has not contacted the program within one hour of program start time, the program must attempt to contact the parent to ensure the child's well-being. These efforts must be documented in the Progress Notes housed in the **Attendance Documentation Binder** (SEE ERSEA SOP Unreported/Unexcused Absence & Attendance Documentation Binder).

Verification of Excused Absence

The purpose of the Excused Absence Verification form is to document excused absences (health, Best Interest, court-ordered visitation) and can be completed by parent or staff. The Excused Absence Verification form is completed for each reported excused absence as soon as an absence is reported and confirmed as excused, including the time. Each site maintains a binder separated by classroom and by child (alphabetically by last name) that contains the Excused Absence Verification forms and Progress Notes. This binder should be housed near the main phone at the site. ONLY excused absences are documented on the Verification of Excused Absences form. If a child's absence is unexcused, it is specifically documented in the Progress Notes (see ERSEA SOP: Unreported/Unexcused Absence & Attendance Documentation Binder).

- If a parent calls to report a child's absence, the staff person receiving the call will record the information on the next available line of the Excused Absence Verification form.

- The staff member receiving the information should complete all columns on the line: date absence is being reported, time absence is being reported, date of child's absence, reason for absence must be coded with A- Health/Illness/Quarantine, I- Best Interest or J- Court Ordered Visitation, description of absence, and staff or parent signature.
 - A (Health), the description of absence must indicate if enrolled child is sick OR parent is sick (no further description is needed).
 - I (Best Interest Day), write Best Interest Day, **10 maximum days** granted per program year (July-June).
 - J (Court-Ordered Visitation), write Court-Ordered Visitation- this must be pre-approved by CDE Program Advisor
- See Excused Absence Verification form for complete description of the verified excuses.
- Parent OR Staff Signature - If the staff person is completing the form, that same staff member **MUST** sign the form. If parent is reporting this information directly to the staff member in person, the parent should sign the form.

If the description of absence requires more explanation than is required on the Verification of Excused Absence form and additional space is necessary, staff must document in the Progress Notes and file in the **Attendance Documentation Binder**.

Documenting Absences on Class/Caseload Participant Sheets

Teachers and/or designated site staff are responsible for reviewing the **Attendance Documentation Binder** to accurately code any absences on the Class/Caseload Participant Sheet prior to submission to the Site Supervisor for review. Codes must be consistent across all attendance documentation.

Documentation:

Excused Absence Verification form
Attendance Documentation Binder
Progress Notes
Class/Caseload Participant Sheet