



Play and Learn School

Chronic Absenteeism Policy Aligned with NJDOE Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines

Purpose:

Consistent attendance in a high-quality preschool program is a key factor in school readiness and long-term academic success. The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) requires all state-funded preschool programs to monitor and address chronic absenteeism. This policy outlines our school's approach to supporting regular attendance and responding to excessive absences.

Definition of Chronic Absenteeism:

In accordance with NJDOE guidelines, chronic absenteeism is defined as a child missing 10% or more of the total number of enrolled school days, whether absences are excused or unexcused. For a typical 180-day school year, this equates to 18 or more absences.

Attendance Expectations:

- Families are expected to bring their child to school every day and on time.
- Parents or guardians must notify the school in the event of an absence, providing a reason for documentation.
- Excessive tardiness (arriving more than 30 minutes late) may be counted toward chronic absenteeism, per NJDOE recommendations.

Monitoring and Notification Procedures:

- Attendance is tracked daily and reviewed regularly by the program administrator.
- At 5 absences, a written reminder will be sent home.
- At 10 absences, the family will be contacted for an attendance meeting to discuss barriers, offer supports, and review the importance of consistent attendance.
- At 15 absences, the school will initiate an Attendance Improvement Plan in collaboration with the family.
- At 18 or more absences, the program must notify the district's Early Childhood Department and document all intervention efforts.

Acceptable Excused Absences May Include:

- Illness or injury (with or without documentation)
- Medical or dental appointments
- Religious holidays or observances
- Family emergencies
- Required screenings or evaluations
- Quarantine or COVID-19-related absences per public health guidelines

Intervention and Support:

Our goal is to work in partnership with families to reduce barriers to attendance. Support strategies may include:

- Referral to community health or social services
- Adjustment of arrival routines or transitions
- Transportation consultation (if applicable)
- Ongoing communication and family engagement

Program Placement and Continuity:

While our program is committed to serving all eligible children, chronic absenteeism may jeopardize a child's placement. If a family does not respond to outreach or fails to improve attendance after multiple documented efforts, the space may be offered to another eligible child on the waiting list, with district approval.

Compliance and Documentation:

All efforts to address attendance concerns—including communication logs, meeting notes, and improvement plans—will be documented in accordance with NJDOE requirements and may be reviewed by district or state monitors.

I understand the Chronic Absenteeism Policy

Print Parent/Guardian Name	Signature	Date
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