



Why is good attendance important?

There are positive benefits to be gained from regular attendance; this includes not only coming to every booked session, but also being there on time. So it is important that all staff understand why good attendance by children and good attendance practice among staff both need to be maintained. Benefits include the following:

Good habits

It builds in young children the idea that getting up and going to a setting is simply what you do. Children who attend every booked session develop a feel for the rhythm of the week and gain a sense of security from some regular elements, even when the actual pattern or focus of their learning or activity may vary widely from week to week.

Secure relationships

Young children find it easier to build and sustain a range of social relationships when they regularly attend their childcare setting. Regular times arranged with parents help to develop a secure attachment within the setting. For some families, particularly at times of stress, the child's regular attendance at a setting allows parents to get other things done and helps them enjoy spending time with the child when he or she is at home.

Self-esteem

Children who rarely miss sessions at an early-years setting and come on time are more likely to feel good about themselves. This is because they know what goes on and what to expect, feel more confident with the adults and the other children and have more opportunities to be valued and praised for their own special contribution. Children who regularly miss sessions or are generally late, can frequently experience a sense of having to try a little bit harder just to understand what is going on and what other children are talking about or doing. Regular attendance, on time, helps many young children to separate from their parents or carers at the start of the day and settle more readily into daily life in their setting

Learning and Development

Staff carefully plan every session for each child in their care and want to take every opportunity to help them thrive. Experiences gained in one session are often developed further in the next session, whether or not these are consecutive days. Children learn in many different ways through play with others and through being in the company of staff who actively support their learning and development. Underachievement is often linked to lower attendance. For some older students this

is linked to a steadily deteriorating trend in attendance which is traceable right back to their Early Years setting.

Safeguarding

Good attendance is important for every child, but especially those for whom specific factors make them more vulnerable to disengagement or underachievement. Most children are well supported by their families and continue to thrive, whatever their background or circumstances. However, there are some factors in children's lives which make it more likely that they will experience some difficulty.

It is particularly important to pay close attention to the patterns of attendance for potentially vulnerable groups of children, including, for example:

- children who are known to social care or criminal justice system
- there are immigration issues
- children who may be subject to a forced marriage, honour based violence, female genital mutilation, sexual exploitation children facing difficult family circumstances e.g., housing problems, bereavement, separation/ divorce
- children from families experiencing some degree of financial hardship, e.g., in receipt of 2yr old funding, Early Years Pupil Premium funding (EYPP) or claiming Free School Meals (FSM)
- **children with additional needs, learning difficulties or disabilities**
- children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) or from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) families
- children about whom other agencies have raised concerns, including those supported through the Early Help Assessment (EHA)/Team Around the Family (TAF).

If any child's attendance starts to cause concern in your setting, it is helpful for the Key Person to discuss this with the staff who work with any of the child's siblings who come to the same setting. This helps establish whether there are issues only for an individual child or if the family as a whole may be going through a difficult time.