



Meck Pre-K Attendance Policy

Studies show that high-quality public pre-k can lead to greater school readiness for all children, particularly low income children. However, access to high-quality public pre-k is only one part of the challenge.

For children to benefit, to maximize learning gains, children also have to regularly attend. Several city-wide evaluations show that children are more likely to enter Kindergarten ready to learn when they have attended preschool regularly and that many of the children who are chronically absent in preschool continue that pattern in future school years. Chronic absence is defined as missing 10% or more of preschool days.

Meck Pre-K Attendance

The goal for Meck Pre-K is for all participating children to attend at least 90% of the time they are enrolled (much higher if possible, understanding that children may from time to time be ill). Child attendance data will be aggregated and published on a public dashboard (along with aggregated Teaching Strategies Gold child assessment data and classroom data utilizing the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) professional development tool. **Parents are required to sign the Meck Pre-K Parent Handbook Signature Page, which includes mutual agreement on Meck Pre-K's attendance policy.**

Like NC Pre-K, Meck Pre-K hours of operation are consistent with the public school system in the county and follow the local public school calendar. Hours of operation include a minimum of a 6.5-hour instructional day for a 10 month or 36 week Meck Pre-K year.

Child attendance must be taken daily and submitted monthly to Smart Start of Mecklenburg County. When a child enrolled in Meck Pre-K is absent for more than three consecutive days, the Site Administrator shall contact the child's parent to discuss the absences and determine whether the parent wishes the child to remain in the Meck Pre-K Program. The Site Administrator shall document each attempt to contact the family and include decisions the child's parent makes regarding the child's continued participation in the program.

The Site Administrator shall contact Smart Start of Mecklenburg County to share information related to the child's absence and to collaboratively determine what further actions may be necessary to maintain the child's attendance in the program. The Site Administrator shall not terminate a child's participation in the Meck Pre-K program before determining if barriers to the child's attendance exist and can be remedied through assistance such as access to transportation or additional educational activities in the case of a child's illness or disability.

Exceptions for an individual child's attendance can be requested for certain conditions such as illness, hospitalization, military leave, a family emergency, crisis requiring family travel or for natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding or conditions that require the Meck Pre-K site to close due to damages such as a fire. These requests should be sent in writing to Smart Start of Mecklenburg County who will determine whether the exception is approved for the child's absence.

Providers need to keep supporting documentation on file for the attendance exception detailing the circumstance for the reason(s) why the child was absent (e.g., written justification from a medical

professional, email communications with the family regarding a family emergency, etc.). Documentation will be used for monitoring purposes by the county.

An education service that goes beyond a phone call must be provided to the child in these circumstances and may include a hospital visit, home visit, etc.

Providers and Smart Start of Mecklenburg County will work with families to support a child's attendance and participation in the Meck Pre-K Program. Every effort will be made to maintain the child's placement and participation in Meck Pre-K.

Inclement Weather

Meck Pre-k sites should follow the local school system's policy for inclement weather make-up days. Options should include adding other days or hours to meet the Meck Pre-K minimum 6.5 hours per day for 10 months (36 weeks) of instructional days per school calendar year. The written policy for inclement weather make-up days should provide guidance to sites in finding a scheduling solution that will provide the Meck Pre-K children equivalent instructional time in all Meck Pre-K classrooms, as well as meeting the needs of public schools, private sites and Head Start programs.