

Board FYI –

Reasons for Absence

Head Start Summer Bridge

2/9/2026

During the December 9, 2025 Board meeting staff delivered an evaluation presentation on the Head Start Summer Bridge program. Board members made inquiries as to why some children were not meeting program attendance expectations. Staff agreed to look further into this and bring back information. This FYI item responds to this inquiry.

Regular attendance is essential for children to fully benefit from the program. Evaluation results demonstrate significant learning gains occurring among Head Start Summer Bridge children which in turn will prepare them for success in kindergarten. Children attending every day will maximize positive outcomes from the high-quality learning opportunities provided in the program. We wanted to learn more about the reasons why children were absent to determine potential solutions.

Head Start Summer Bridge offered 34 days of programming. On average children attended 25.5 days. Most parents planned for their child to attend all days offered. Relative to their anticipated attendance, on average, children attended 75% of expected days.

In summer 2025, 94 children were served with attendance ranging from one to 34 days. There were 29 children who missed more than ten days and participated in less than 70% of programming. Program staff added additional information detailing reasons for absence for the children who missed more than ten days. In some cases, there are multiple reasons and in others, children stopped attending and there was limited or no response from the family to determine why.

Among the known reasons for absence, transportation was the most common. It is also worthy to note that attendance at rural sites – Hawthorne and Archer particularly – is markedly lower than at other locations.

Reasons for Absence	Frequency
No Response from Family	10
Transportation	8
Family Emergency	6
Family Event Birth	5
Health Appointments	4
Illness/Health Issues	3
Death in Family	2
Had Different Care Options	1
Overslept	1
Inclement Weather	1

ECS4Kids and CTAC have a planning session scheduled for early February 2026 and will prioritize strengthening efforts for improving attendance in summer 2026.