

Early Learning Scholarship Program Absent Day Exemption Policy

The department will consider exemptions to the 25 absent day policy if the child has or is at risk of exceeding 25 absent days in their scholarship year, for several circumstances that interfere with regular and consistent attendance.

- Child is the child of a teen parent, to allow for breaks in the parents school schedule
- Child has experienced homelessness in the last 24 months, and absences may be due to changes in living locations and schedules
- Children in foster care or child protective services that may have court or other assigned visitation or reunification efforts that could lead to a higher number of absences.

Families that are at risk of exceeding 25 absent days in a scholarship year due to issues that have prevented the child from attending the program regularly should request an *Absent Day Exemption Request Form* from their Area Administrator or Scholarship Administrator. Medical Exemptions are a different process and should be requested separately.

For children of teen parents, the exemption form must either be signed or accompanied by a signature or statement from an official from the teen parent's school or, if applicable, the county or tribal social worker that they are aware of the family's situation and the child's absentee rate.

For Pathway I scholarships, the Area Administrator (AA) provides the form as provided by Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to the family. The family must return the form to the Area Administrator within 30 days of the last day of the exemption period. The AA should note the dates of the exemption in the child's ELSA record and keep the *Absent Day Exemption Request Form* with the child's paper records.

For Pathway II scholarships in child care programs, the Scholarship Administrator (SA) informs the Pathway II Child Care Scholarship Administrator, Milestones, and requests the form to give to the family. The family must return the form to the child care program within 30 days of the last day of the exemption period. The child care program will inform Milestones as to the dates of the exemption and keep the *Absent Day Exemption Request Form* with the child's paper records. Milestones should note the dates of the exemption in the child's ELSA record.



Absent Day Exemption Request Form

Purpose:

This form is used to document the request for an exemption to the 25 absent day policy due to circumstances that may result in a child’s absence from the early learning program. Use this form if the child has been absent **more than 25 absent days in a scholarship year**. (*Scholarship Year definition is: within the twelve (12) months of a scholarship award date).

Parent/Guardian Instructions:

Regular attendance in a high-quality program is important for young children. Because of this, the Early Learning Scholarships do not pay for more than 25 absent days in one scholarship year. Some families have a situation that makes it hard to attend regularly. To help those families, there is an exception to the absent day rule for a child of a teen parent, a child whose family has experienced homelessness in the last 24 months, or children involved in foster care or child protection due to visitation or reunification efforts. Use this form if your child(ren) has been or potentially will be absent from the program more than 25 absent days in a scholarship year.

Fill out the form, sign it, and return form to the program your child is attending within 30 days. It will not be approved past the 30-day time period. If the exemption is because of an ongoing circumstance, it can be approved for up to 12 months.

Priority Status:

Child of a teen parent

Homelessness – check applicable situation:

Housing not stable

Housing found in different community

Transportation not stable

Other (please describe): _____

Foster care or child protection – check applicable situation:

Visitation

Reunification

Other (please describe): _____

Other exemption request (please describe) _____

Absent Child’s Name: _____

Absent Child’s Name: _____

Absent Child’s Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Name of Early Learning Program: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date (MM/DD/YYYY): _____

Teen Parent Authorized Signer Instructions:

For children of teen parents, the exemption form must either be signed by an official from the teen parent's school or if applicable, accompanied by a signature and statement from the county or tribal social worker that they are aware of the family's situation, the child's absentee rate; and the parent/guardian of the child has been in contact with you directly regarding circumstances that may prevent the child(ren) from regular attendance at the program.

In order to sign this form, you must represent one of the authorized positions from the list below:

- County or Tribal Social Worker
- School Nurse
- Other (title): _____
- School Counselor
- School Advisor

Authorized Signer's Name (*Print*): _____

Signature: _____ Date (MM/DD/YYYY): _____

Title of Authorized Signer: _____

Name of Clinic, School, or Early Learning Program: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Check one of the two options below:

Individual has circumstances that may prevent regular attendance for the following time period:

Start Date (MM/DD/YYYY): _____

End Date (MM/DD/YYYY): _____

Individual has ongoing conflicts or needs which may result in the child having frequent absences from the early learning program.

Start Date, if known (MM/DD/YYYY): _____

Agency Use Only

Exemption for absent days will begin on (MM/DD/YYYY): _____ and end on (MM/DD/YYYY): _____.

Exemption for absent days will begin on the start date of the situation, but no more than 30 days prior to the date the completed form was received by the program. The early learning program must keep the document on file with the child's records and provide a copy as documentation of the exemption upon the request of the Area Administrator or Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). If the exemption is because of an ongoing situation, it may be approved for up to 12 months.