

## **Better Start Portal FAQ's updated Jan 24**

### **Q. Why do we need to capture attendance data if it isn't a statutory requirement?**

**A.** Non-attendance is early indicator of child welfare issue's which can have a big impact on a child's life chances. Attendance is currently monitored for early years provision in schools and it is very important that we now include all childcare provision in our monitoring of children's attendance in Education across the city. This will help to inform our support services to ensure that children get the best start in life where possible.

### **Q. Is the attendance collection for all children?**

**A.** No. The attendance collection is for 2, 3 and 4 year old **funded children only**.

### **Q. Will I need to manually add all of my current funded children onto the Better Start Portal?**

**A.** No. Better Start can pull through all of your funded children from your current headcount on the provider portal. When you start the task you will be able to press the "Toggle" button which selects every child on the page and adds them to Better Start.

### **Q. What if I notice that a current funded child is missing from the list? Can I add them on?**

**A.** Please DO NOT add any additional children. If you notice a child missing that should be on your current headcount, please contact a member of the Early Years or Education Data team (contact details below). **Please Note:**

- Any child that has left your provision last term **won't be displayed**

### **Q. What if a funded child starts part way through the half term? Can I add them on?**

**A.** Please DO NOT add any additional children. Any **NEW** funded child that has started this term **WILL** be listed on the task. Please **DO NOT** record any data for these children until your next half terms task.

### **Q. What are 'possible' sessions**

**A.** The maximum number of AM and PM sessions that a child is booked to attend in the specific half term.

### **Q. What is a 'session'?**

**A.** A session is an AM or PM session, according to how you offer these. If a funded child also pays for some additional hours, it is fine to include these. For example, if a child has a mixture of funded and paying hours and they attend for 30 hours a week in total, please record your data in reference to how many AM and PM sessions they attend for/miss.

**It doesn't matter too much what makes up a session; it's the percentage of missed sessions compared to actual sessions that's the important thing.**

**Q. Should I include Bank holidays and weekends?**

**A.** No. Please DO NOT include Bank Holidays or Weekends.

**Q. What if a child hasn't missed any sessions?**

**A.** If a child has **NO missed sessions**, please record a '0' in the box ; please **DO NOT** leave this blank Please ensure that you record **MISSED SESSIONS** only in the missed sessions box and NOT 'sessions attended.'

**Q. What reasons for 'missed sessions' should I record?**

**A.** These are any usual funded sessions the child has missed due to:

- Unknown absence (not informed by parent)
- Sick absence (parent informed)
- Booked holidays (informed by parent)
- Hospital appointments etc

**Please record the reason for absence in the comments box if possible. Please record the reason as simple as possible. For example, 'holiday'; 'sickness'; 'bus strike'. We DO NOT require lots of detail.**

**Q. Should I include school holidays?**

**A.** Yes, if you offer all year round (stretched) funded sessions. If a child attends all year round, please include these as these would be their usual sessions.

**Q. What if a child goes home sick during their session?**

**A.** If they arrived for their usual session but were sent home, please record that they attended this session. If they are off sick for subsequent sessions, please record these as missed sessions.

**Q. If I am called away and am unable to complete the task all in one go, can I save the information I have recorded so far?**

A. Yes. Click on the Save box to save the information you have already recorded. Then you can log out. When you log back in again, the information you have previously recorded will be there.

**Q. Why do I have to run the report after submitting the task?**

A. Running the report will highlight any errors that may have been made during submission. For example, if you have recorded more sessions that the child has attended than possible in the half term. Or if they have missed more than their possible sessions.

**Q. Will I be able to log back in and amend the task if the report highlights any errors?**

A. You will be able to go back and amend any errors in the task and resubmit it BEFORE the deadline date.

**Q. What if I notice an error and the deadline date has passed?**

A. The task will no longer be available to you after the deadline date. Please contact a member of the Early Years or Education Data Team if you notice an error after the deadline date.

**Q. How will TFC use this attendance data?**

A. We want to ensure that all eligible children take full advantage of their funded entitlement in quality early years provision in Sunderland. We will analyse the data on a regular basis and where there is less than 80% attendance and will work with you and other support services to ensure that families are supported so children get the best start in life wherever possible.

**Please contact the Early Years or Education Data Team if you have any further questions.**

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