

Absent Day and Prepayment Policy Change

What you need to know

The Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) and the Early Learning Division (ELD) have made changes to billing policies. Effective August 1, 2021 and beyond, providers may now bill for any day a child is enrolled and scheduled to be in care but does not attend (absent days). This does not cover:

- Days a child is not regularly scheduled to be in care, or
- Provider-initiated absences.

This policy only applies to providers who bill all families (subsidy and private pay) for absent days.

Frequently asked questions

What does “enrolled and scheduled to be in care” mean?

A child is enrolled and scheduled to be in care based on an agreement between the caregiver and the provider about how much care they will provide each month.

Any time a child is gone for one full calendar month, the care is considered abandoned. If this happens, the provider cannot bill for any more time for that child until the child physically attends again. Providers may not bill to hold a slot if the child is not scheduled to attend for more than one calendar month. If the provider expects the child will return, they can submit billing forms for zero hours and mark the line stating they expect the family to return. This will keep the connection open between the family and provider.

Can the provider submit a billing form for payment if the caregiver decided not to use the provider and the child never attended?

If the caregiver tells the provider at the beginning of the month that the child will not attend, the provider may submit a billing form for that month. No other months will be paid. This also applies if the caregiver does not contact the provider in a timely manner.

Does the absent day policy allow providers to bill for hours when they can't provide care?

The provider may only bill for absent days when a child doesn't attend scheduled care. They may not bill for days when there is a planned closure and the provider can't provide care, such as planned holidays, vacations etc.

If the provider was paid for a planned closure, this would be an overpayment. The provider must notify ODHS Direct Pay Unit so they can determine if it must be referred to the Overpayment Writing Unit. Call the Direct Pay Unit at 1-800-699-9074 or email customerservice.dpu@dhsosha.state.or.us.

Providers may bill for days there was an emergency closure such as an illness in the home or facility, a pipe burst, a fire, etc.

What if a child's absence is known in advance?

An absence known in advance is when the caregiver tells the provider ahead of time that the child will not attend on a regularly scheduled day. In this instance, since the child was enrolled and scheduled to be in care, the provider can bill for these absent days. Absences must be included on the attendance log.

What if the child attends on a drop-in basis only?

This family would not have any days the child is scheduled to be in care. The provider would bill for actual care provided and submit the billing at the end of the month.

What if the provider doesn't normally bill for absent days?

A provider may not charge ODHS for absent days if they do not already charge private pay families for absent days. The provider would bill for actual care provided and submit the billing at the end of the month.

Can a provider pre-bill for ODHS families if they do not pre-bill for private pay?

No. The provider must bill for ODHS families the same way they bill for private pay families.

What if the child attends fewer hours than originally scheduled?

If a child attends fewer hours than originally billed, the provider will not have to pay any money back.

What if a child attends more hours than originally scheduled?

If a child attends more hours than originally scheduled, the provider must contact DPU to see if they can make an adjustment for the additional hours. If the hours are more than the authorized hours, the family will need to contact ODHS to have their eligibility reviewed. The provider will need to submit attendance logs with the child's in and out times, including scheduled days the child was absent.

If the caregiver ends care with the provider mid-month and the provider was already paid, will the provider have to repay the money they received?

No. The provider does not need to repay the money they received since the child was scheduled to be in care for the month.

If the provider ends care with the family mid-month and was already paid, will the provider have to repay part of the money received?

Yes. The provider may need to repay part of the money received because provider-initiated absences are not covered. The provider would need to notify ODHS Direct Pay Unit so they could determine if it must be referred to the Overpayment Writing Unit. Call the Direct Pay Unit at 1-800-699-9074 or email customerservice.dpu@dhsosha.state.or.us.

If the caregiver ends care at the end of the month and the next month's billing form was already issued, can the provider bill for the next month?

The provider can bill for the next month if:

- The provider received the billing form, and
- The child was scheduled to be in care.

If the billing form was not yet issued, the provider could not bill for absent days.

What happens when a family no longer qualifies for ERDC?

Providers will receive a notice if a billing form can't be issued for the family they are caring for. These notices are sent when the billings are issued. If the family's ERDC is closing, a notice will be issued to the provider no later than the 17th of the month. A billing form is not issued when a family loses eligibility. ODHS can only cover child care for families who are eligible for child care benefits.

Can a provider bill for absent days if the billing form was not issued timely?

Once they receive the billing form, the provider can bill for absent days if:

- The child was enrolled and scheduled to be in care, and
- The absences are noted on the attendance log.

If a provider receives a notice that a family is no longer eligible for child care benefits, can they bill for next month?

No. Providers will only receive a billing form when the family is eligible for child care. ODHS cannot pay for care provided after a family's child care benefits end.

Is the caregiver's signature required on the billing form?

The caregiver's signature is not required on the billing form the provider sends to ODHS Direct Pay Unit. It is recommended, but not required, that caregivers check the billing form for accuracy. It is the provider's responsibility to collect a caregiver signature if they need it for their own records.