



BRINGING ATTENDANCE HOME

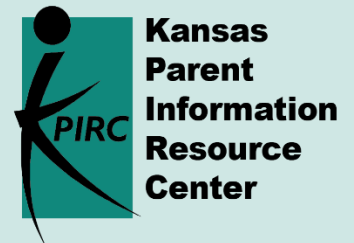
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Objective & Agenda

Objective: To provide information and strategies to support educators and families to decrease chronic absenteeism and increase attendance.

- Information for Educators
- Information for Families
 - Activities
 - Videos
- Time for Questions
- Survey

For Educators



Why are So Many Students Missing So Much School?

There are many reasons students are absent and they fit into 4 broad categories: **Barriers, Negative School Experiences, Lack of Engagement and Misconceptions.**

- ❖ **Barriers** are factors that impede a student from getting to school. While some barriers affect families in low-income communities more, others such as transportation cut across all income levels.
- ❖ **Negative School Experiences** include a range of challenges, such as bullying or unfair disciplinary practices, that cause a student or a student's family to avoid school.
- ❖ **Lack of Engagement** is the result of factors such as the absence of a relationship with at least one caring adult, or culturally relevant and engaging instruction, which results in a student feeling little or no connection to school.
- ❖ **Misconceptions** are common ideas about attendance that families or students believe to be true but are not. For example, too often missing class is only seen as a problem if absences are unexcused.

Attendance Works: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkits/teaching-attendance-2-0/use-data-for-intervention-and-support/strategy-2-consider-needed-supports/why-are-so-many-students-missing-so-much-school/>

Reasons for Absences

Barriers

- Chronic and acute illness
- Family responsibilities or home situation
- Trauma
- Poor transportation
- Housing and food insecurity
- Inequitable access to needed services
- System involvement
- Lack of predictable schedules for learning
- Lack of access to tech
- Community violence

Aversion

- Struggling academically and/or behaviorally
- Unwelcoming school climate
- Social and peer challenges
- Anxiety
- Biased disciplinary and suspension practices
- Undiagnosed disability and/or disability accommodations
- Caregivers had negative educational experiences

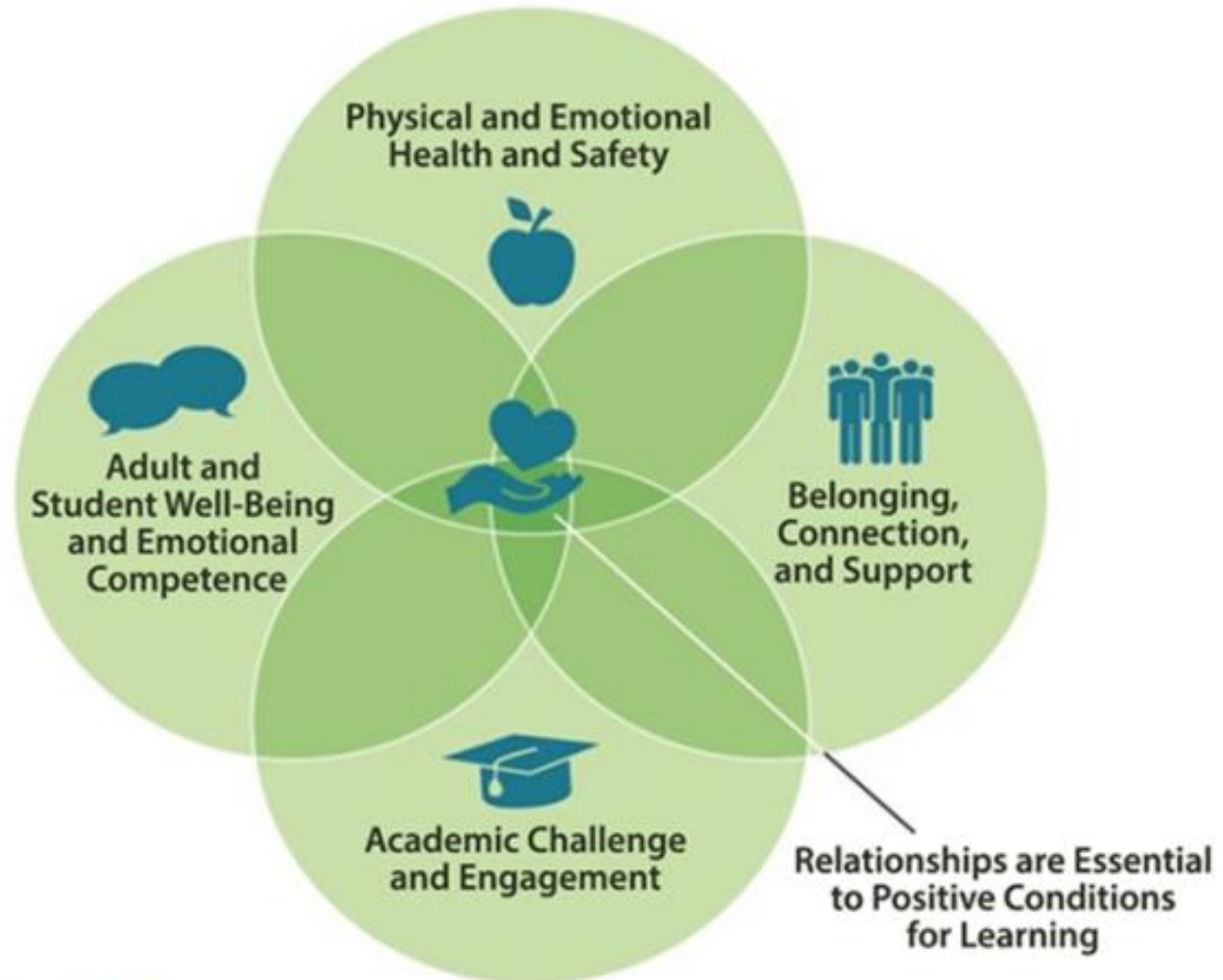
Disengagement

- Lack of challenging, culturally responsive instruction
- Bored
- No meaningful relationships to adults in the school (especially given staff shortages)
- Lack of enrichment opportunities
- Lack of academic and behavioral support
- Failure to earn credits
- Need to work conflicts with being in high school

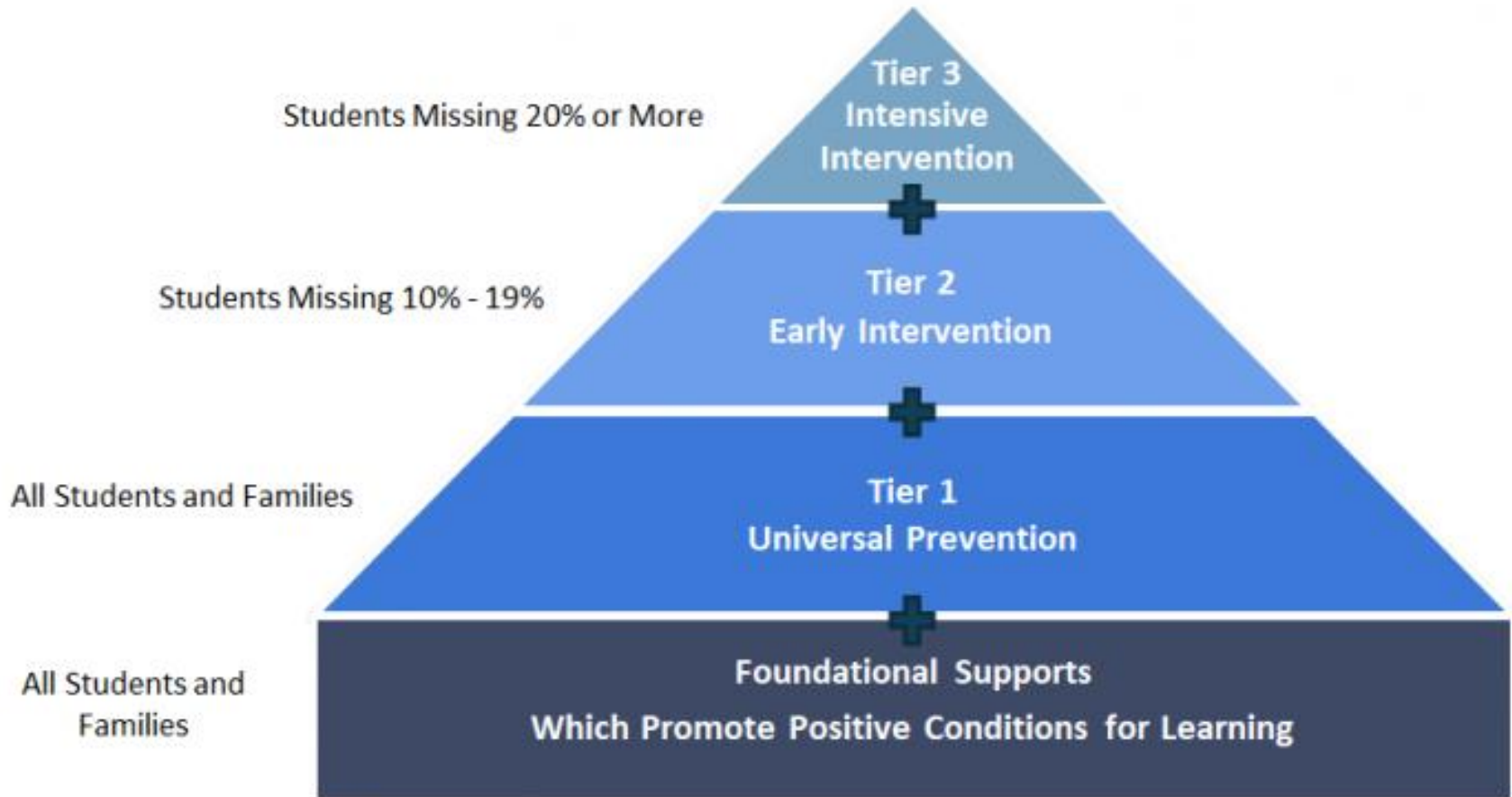
Misconceptions

- Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused
- Missing 2 days per month doesn't affect learning
- Lose track and underestimate TOTAL absences
- Assume students must stay home for any symptom of illness
- Attendance only matters in the older grades
- Suspensions don't count as absence

Positive Conditions for Learning Lead to Students Being Engaged and Attending Regularly



MTSS and Attendance



3 Tiers of Intervention

- **Tier 1** strategies are aimed at encouraging better attendance for all students and at preventing absenteeism before it affects achievement.
- **Tier 2** interventions are designed to remove barriers to attendance for students at greater risk of chronic absenteeism, such as those who missed 10% of the school year, the standard definition of chronic absenteeism. These students and families should receive personalized attention as part of the engagement strategy.
- **Tier 3** interventions provide intensive support to students missing the most school, often involving not just schools but other agencies such as health, housing and social services, and typically requiring case management customized to individual students' challenges. Students missing 20% or more of the school year benefit from the addition of this intensive level of support.

Tier 1 Universal Supports

- **Clear, concise and consistent communication about schedules and expectations**
- Routines, rituals and celebrations related to attendance and engagement
- Personalized communication to families when students are absent
- Recognition of good and improved attendance
- Impact of attendance on whole child widely understood
- **Connection to a caring adult in the school**
- Every child and their family encouraged to develop a success plan that includes attention to attendance

Tier 2 Early Intervention

- **Common community and school barriers identified and addressed**
- Individualized student success plan that includes attention to attendance
- Attendance strategies added to IEP
- Family visit
- Mentors
- Intensive tutoring
- Check in, check out
- Expanded learning opportunities
- Small group interventions and supports for students
- **Restorative alternatives to discipline and suspension**

Tier 3 Intensive Intervention

- **Educational support champions / advocates**
- Interagency case management
- Housing stability supports
- Student attendance review board
- Community-based, non-criminal truancy court
- **Individualized learning and success plan leading to graduation**
- Legal Intervention (as a last resort)

Urgent Need to Avoid Punitive Responses to Poor Attendance

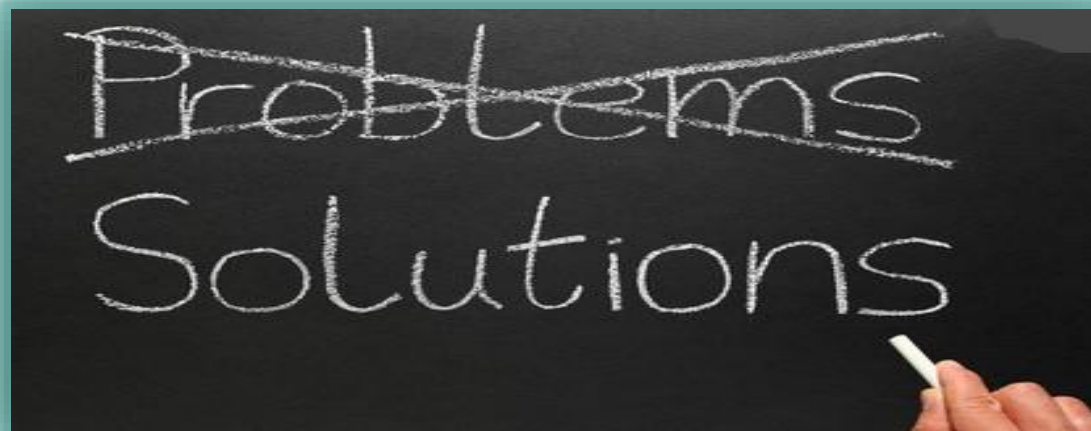
- Punitive practices have not shown to improve attendance.
- When absences start to add up, often the initial reaction to missing school is to blame the child or their family for not caring enough to make school a priority.
- This response can make it even more difficult to find a solution because it causes the student and family to feel alienated, distrustful and angry.
- What improves attendance is partnering with students and families to identify and address the [root causes](#) that lead to students to miss school in the first place, whether absences are connected to barriers to showing up for school, negative experiences in school or a lack of engagement.

www.attendanceworks.org



Positive Problem-Solving Approach is More Effective

- A study conducted in California, for example, found that rewriting traditional truancy notifications could increase their effectiveness by 40%.
- The key was making sure the notices did not begin with the state mandated legalistic language.
- The most effective letter offered clear, actionable data about which days a student missed, shared the potential consequence of chronic absence on learning outcomes, and reassured parents and guardians that they could help their children get to school.



Condition A (Control)
Standard Notice

School Name
Address
City, State Zip

Date

Parent Name
Parent Address
RE: Student Name
City, State Zip

Student ID #: XXXXXX

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Good attendance is required for academic excellence. [STATE] Education Code determines what types of absences are excused or unexcused. When a child is absent from school and/or tardy in excess of 30 minutes on three (3) occasions in one school year without a valid excuse, the law considers that child to be truant. The law and district policy requires all schools to notify parents when this occurs. The [district name] central office automatically sends these letters based on school records so that parents are aware of absences and can address these concerns.

School records indicate that your child was absent from school without a valid excuse on occasions, beginning with the following dates:

Thursday, September 12, 2015
Thursday, September 19, 2015
Thursday, September 27, 2015

Our goal is to partner with families to ensure that students are attending school every day. Although the following consequences may appear harsh we are mandated by Education Code Article 48260.5 to inform you of the following:

- That the parent or guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the pupil at school.
- That parents or guardians who fail to meet these obligation may be guilty of an infraction and subject to prosecution pursuant to Article 6 (commencing with Section 48290) of Chapter 2 or Part 27.
- That alternative education programs are available in the district.
- That the parent or guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the pupil's truancy.
- That the pupil may be subject to prosecution under Education Code Section 48264.
- That the pupil may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of the pupil's driving privilege pursuant to Section 13202.7 of the Vehicle Code.
- That it is recommended that the parent or guardian accompany the pupil to school and attend classes with the pupil for one day.

Please recognize that we are required to monitor attendance and notify parents of potential problems with student attendance. If you have concerns about your child's attendance, or if you believe there is an error in this notice, contact the school at «SCHOOL_PHONE_NUMBER». The designated attendance personnel will work with you to resolve this issue. We look forward to assisting you.

Sincerely,

Principal Signature

Principal Name

- That the parent or guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the pupil at school.
- That parents or guardians who fail to meet these obligations may be guilty of an infraction and subject to prosecution pursuant to Article 6 (commencing with Section 48290) of chapter 2 or part 27

Condition D
Add-up Notice

We need your help. [STUDENT NAME]'s absences from school are concerning, and your partnership is critical. Students who miss just one or two days of school each month can fall seriously behind.

[STUDENT NAME] is now "truant" because [SHE/HE] missed school (or was more than 30 minutes late) without a valid excuse on:

Thursday, September 12, 2015

Thursday, September 19, 2015

Thursday, September 27, 2015

Being absent can lead to doing poorly in school. Students who miss many days of school are more likely to:

- Fail their classes
- Drop out from high school
- Have poor relationships with parents and teachers

We are required by [STATE] law to send you this letter and to warn you of the consequences of additional unexcused absences (see sidebar).

Please remember that every absence matters and just a couple days each month adds up. You are key to improving [STUDENT NAME]'s attendance.

Sincerely,
Principal X

Truancy- [STATE] Education Code School administrators determine what types of absences are excused or unexcused based on state law and on the facts of the pupil's circumstances. When a child is absent from school and/or tardy in excess of 30 minutes on three (3) occasions in one school year without a valid excuse, the law considers that child to be truant.

Education Code Section 48260.5 requires us to inform you of the following:

- That the parent or guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the pupil at school.
- That parents or guardians who fail to meet these obligations may be guilty of an infraction and subject to prosecution pursuant to Article 6 (commencing with Section 48290) of Chapter 2 or Part 27.
- That alternative education programs are available in the district.
- That the parent or guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the pupil's truancy.
- That the pupil may be subject to prosecution under Education Code Section 48264.
- That the pupil may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of the pupil's driving privilege pursuant to Section 13202.7 of the Vehicle Code.
- That it is recommended that the parent or guardian accompany the pupil to school and attend classes with the pupil for one day.

If you have concerns about your child's attendance or if you believe our records are inaccurate contact the school at «SCHOOL_PHONE_NUMBER».

We need your help. [STUDENT NAME]'s absences from school are concerning, and your partnership is critical. Students who miss just one or two days of each month can fall seriously behind.

Being absent can lead to doing poorly in school. Students who miss many days of school are more likely to:

- Fail their classes
- Drop out from high school
- Have poor relationships with parents and teachers

Attendance and Trauma

- [Research](#) also shows that chronic absence is highly correlated with trauma.
- **The more a child has had adverse childhood experiences, the more likely they are to miss school.**
- The most effective response to trauma is asking “what happened to you, how can I help,” not saying “what’s wrong with you.”
- **Most often, an empathic, [restorative response aimed at addressing the underlying barriers](#) yields better attendance**

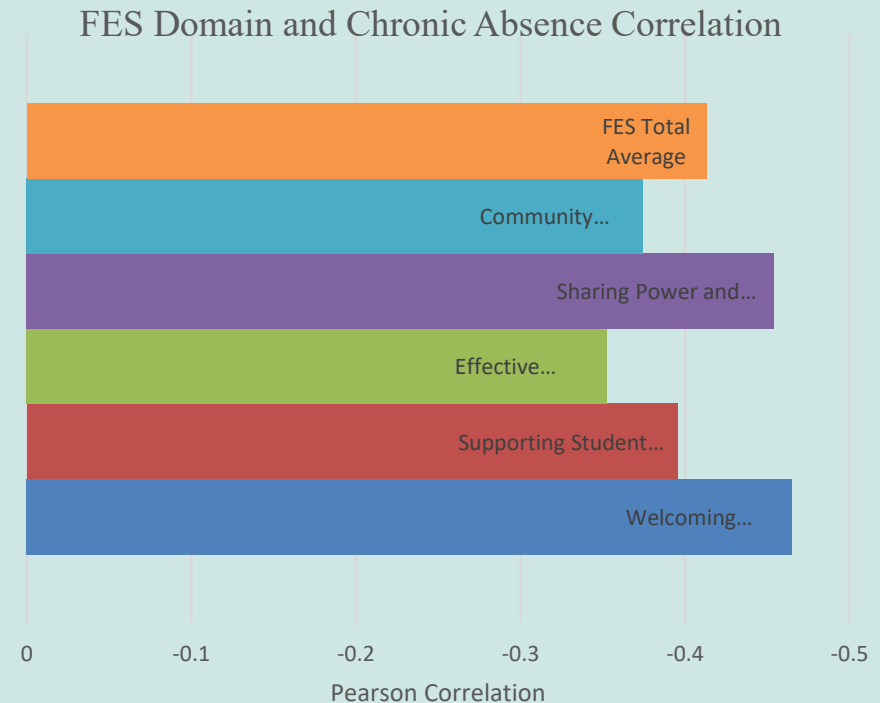


Family Engagement and Attendance

www.districttools.org

- As family engagement increases (**average FES rating**), chronic absenteeism decreases
 - Moderate significant correlation
- Two domains of family engagement are significantly correlated to lower chronic absenteeism:
 - **Welcoming Environment**
 - **Sharing Power and Advocacy**

In this instance, negative correlations are good (lower percentage of students who are chronically absent)





Help Your Child Succeed in Preschool and Kindergarten Build the Habit of Good Attendance

DID YOU KNOW...

Showing up on time every day is important to your child's success and learning from preschool forward.

Missing 10% of school (one or two days every few weeks) can make it harder to:

- Gain early reading and math skills.
- Build relationships.
- Develop good attendance habits.

High quality preschool and kindergarten has many benefits!

- The routines your child develops will continue throughout school.
- Make the most of early grades by encouraging your child to attend every day.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Work with your child and his/her teacher to develop your child's strong attendance.

Talk about it – sing about it – make it an adventure!

- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Share ideas with other parents for getting to school on time.

Before the school year starts

- Find out what day school starts and begin a countdown!
- Make sure your child has the required shots.
- Attend orientation with your child to meet teachers and classmates and find out about health and safety procedures.

Ready, Set, GO!

- Ask family members or neighbors for assistance if you need help dropping off or picking up your child.
- Try to schedule medical appointments and extended trips when preschool is not in session.
- If your child seems anxious about going to preschool, talk to the program director, teacher, your doctor or other parents for advice. Make sure the program is a good fit for your child.



Visit Attendance Works at www.attendanceworks.org for free downloadable resources and tools!



Help Your Child Succeed in School: Build the Habit of Good Attendance Early

School success goes hand in hand with good attendance!

DID YOU KNOW?

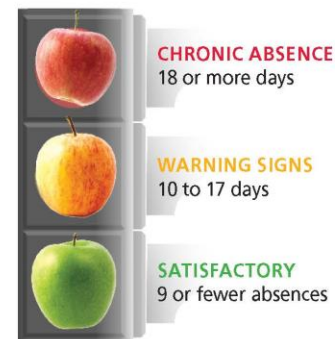
- Starting in kindergarten, too many absences can cause children to fall behind in school.
- Missing 10 percent (or about 18 days) can make it harder to learn to read.
- Students can still fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks.
- Being late to school may lead to poor attendance.
- Absences can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up.

Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school—and themselves. Start building this habit in preschool so they learn right away that going to school on time, every day is important. Good attendance will help children do well in high school, college, and at work.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Set a regular bed time and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Find out what day school starts and make sure your child has the required shots.
- Introduce your child to her teachers and classmates before school starts to help her transition.
- Don't let your child stay home unless she is truly sick. Keep in mind complaints of a stomach ache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home.
- If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, school counselors, or other parents for advice on how to make her feel comfortable and excited about learning.
- Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.
- Avoid medical appointments and extended trips when school is in session.

When Do Absences Become a Problem?



Note: These numbers assume a 180-day school year.



For more on school readiness, visit attendanceworks.org and reachoutandread.org



Pay Attention to Attendance: Keep Your Child On Track in Middle and High School

Showing up for school has a huge impact on a student's academic success starting in kindergarten and continuing through high school. Even as children grow older and more independent, families play a key role in making sure students get to school safely every day and understand why attendance is so important for success in school and on the job.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Students should miss no more than 9 days of school each year to stay engaged, successful and on track to graduation.
- Absences can be a sign that a student is losing interest in school, struggling with school work, dealing with a bully or facing some other potentially serious difficulty.
- By 6th grade, absenteeism is one of three signs that a student may drop out of high school.
- By 9th grade, regular and high attendance is a better predictor of graduation rates than 8th grade test scores.
- Missing 10 percent, or about 18 days, of the school year can drastically affect a student's academic success.
- Students can be chronically absent even if they only miss a day or two every few weeks.
- Attendance is an important life skill that will help your child graduate from college and keep a job.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Make school attendance a priority

- Talk about the importance of showing up to school everyday, make that the expectation.
- Help your child maintain daily routines, such as finishing homework and getting a good night's sleep.
- Try not to schedule dental and medical appointments during the school day.
- Don't let your child stay home unless truly sick. Complaints of headaches or stomach aches may be signs of anxiety.

Help your teen stay engaged

- Find out if your child feels engaged by his classes and feels safe from bullies and other threats. Make sure he/she is not missing class because of behavioral issues and school discipline policies. If any of these are problems, work with your school.
- Stay on top of academic progress and seek help from teachers or tutors if necessary. Make sure teachers know how to contact you.
- Stay on top of your child's social contacts. Peer pressure can lead to skipping school, while students without many friends can feel isolated.
- Encourage meaningful afterschool activities, including sports and clubs.

Communicate with the school

- Know the school's attendance policy – incentives and penalties
- Talk to teachers if you notice sudden changes in behavior. These could be tied to something going on at school.
- Check on your child's attendance to be sure absences are not piling up.
- Ask for help from school officials, afterschool programs, other parents or community agencies if you're having trouble getting your child to school.



Is your child missing school due to anxiety?



Definition of anxiety: feeling of fear and uneasiness about everyday situations.

If your child is suffering from anxiety, you are not alone. The good news is that in most situations, anxiety is normal and temporary. Anxiety becomes a concern if it persists — it can affect relationships with family, peers and teachers, contribute to academic challenges, and lead to school avoidance/refusal. Addressing anxiety is important for a child's overall well-being, not just attendance.

In addition, if your child starts to complain of symptoms like a headache or stomachache, it is important to **quickly determine** whether this is related to anxiety or a physical illness that might require missing school. If the challenge is anxiety, staying home may worsen the situation.



What are the symptoms of anxiety?

Persistent anxiety can present in many ways, making it difficult to recognize.

Symptoms may vary depending on the age of the child, and some children may keep worries to themselves or have difficulty explaining their feelings making it hard to identify symptoms. Anxiety symptoms can include, but aren't limited to, the following:

- Feeling tired, irritable or easily tearful
- Having trouble separating from parents
- Experiencing difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Having trouble getting out of bed or dressed for school
- Lacking appetite
- Having trouble concentrating, which may lead to difficulty starting tasks, problems with homework and falling behind in school
- Experiencing physical symptoms, including stomachaches and headaches
- Avoiding activities they previously enjoyed
- Having negative or continuous thoughts that something bad is going to happen

Keep Your Child Healthy and in School!

A regular attendance routine is important for your child's well-being, learning and long-term success. Below are tips to keep your child healthy and avoid unnecessary absences from school.

Nutrition, Sleep and Exercise

- Ensure your child eats a good breakfast every morning or check if your school serves breakfast.
- Maintain a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Keep screens out of the bedroom and limit use prior to bedtime.
- Encourage your child to stay active for at least 60 minutes a day.



Hygiene

- Stress hand washing, particularly before eating, and after using the restroom.
- Remind your child to brush their teeth twice a day.
- Avoid close contact with individuals who are sick. Don't share cups, utensils, hair brushes or combs.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or cough/sneeze into an elbow.



Safety

- Make sure your child wears a seatbelt and/or appropriate car seats during car rides, and a helmet when using a bike, skateboard or scooter.
- If your child walks to school, help them find a safe route to school and to travel with at least one friend. Have a backup plan in case of bad weather.



Survey

English



Spanish



Attendance Works Resources

- www.attendanceworks.org
- <https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkits/early-education-toolkit/>
- <https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkits/bringing-attendance-home/>
- <https://www.ksdetasn.org/kpirc/kpirc-resources>

Free Resources From KPIRC

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