

# What Parents Can Do

1. **Send your children to school every day**, starting in kindergarten, to teach your children that attendance counts. Continue to monitor their attendance through high school

2. **Don't let your child miss school without a good reason**. Try to avoid medical appointments during the school day or vacations when school is in session.

3. **Create routines and stick to them**. Set a regular bed time and morning routine to get ready for school. For older students, be sure they get enough sleep.

4. **Keep an eye on what's happening with your children's education**. Look for signs that they are bored, struggling with school work or having trouble with friends. Seek out tutoring, talk with teachers and encourage sports and other activities.

5. **Learn about the school's policies**. What incentives do teachers offer for good attendance? What counts as an excused or unexcused absence? What are the penalties?

6. **Find your own ways to reward good attendance**. You know best what motivates your child.

7. **Be open and honest with school officials**. Make sure the school has your up-to-date contact information. Work with the teacher, counselor and principal on problems your children are experiencing.

8. **Seek medical help when absences pile up**. Anything from asthma to a bad bout of head lice can keep kids out of school. Work with your doctor or school nurse.

9. **Turn to other families who can help you** with dropping off or picking up children and with babysitting.

10. **Seek help when you have a problem**. If absences result from family issue—a sudden illness, a lost job, foreclosure or a broken-down car—the school can connect you to other families or to social service providers.

## When do absences become a problem?

### Chronic Absence

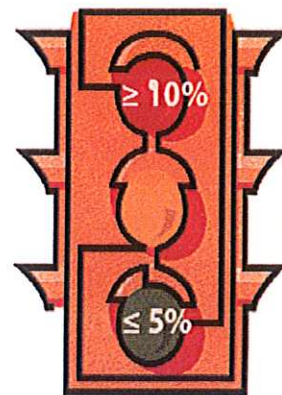
18 or more days

### Warning Signs

10 to 17 days

### Satisfactory Attendance

9 or fewer days absent



*Note: These numbers assume an 180 day school year*

Attendance Works helps schools, communities and districts track and reduce chronic absence.

Go to [www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)



Advancing Student Success By Reducing Chronic Absence

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## 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.

