

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE MYTH BUSTERS

“Attendance only matters in the older grades”

Not true! Recent research shows that chronic absence (missing 10% or more of school days) in kindergarten is associated with lower academic performance in Grade 1. For underprivileged children, the lower performance lasted through Grade 5. By Grade 6, chronic absence is a clear predictor of dropping out. By Grade 9, missing 20% of the school year is a better predictor of dropping out than test scores.

Chronic absence in the early grades and beyond can affect all students when teachers must spend time reviewing concepts for children who missed the lesson. Chronic absence can be an early warning that a child or a school is headed off track. It can also reflect unhealthy economic and social conditions. Improving school attendance is possible! To solve the problem, the whole community, including parents, schools and governing bodies, need to get involved.

What Can Parents do?

- Make attendance a priority for the school
- Ask for and monitor school attendance data.
- Demand action to address barriers that may be causing large numbers of students to miss too much school.
- Alert schools and community agencies to barriers that keep kids from attending class.
- Make it a regular topic at your Parents Club meetings.

Make attendance a priority for your family

- Establish and stick to the basic routines (going to bed early, waking up on time, etc.) to help your child develop the habit of on-time attendance.
- Talk to your child about why going to school every day is critical and important unless they are sick.
- If your child seems reluctant to go to school, find out why and work with the teacher, administrator or afterschool provider to get them excited about going to school.
- Come up with back up plans for those who to turn to (another family member, a neighbor or fellow parents) to help you get your child to school if something comes up.
- Reach out for help if you are experiencing tough times (e.g. transportation, unstable housing, loss of a job, health problems) that make it difficult to get your child to school. Other parents, your child’s teacher, principal, social worker, school nurse, afterschool providers or community agencies can help you problem solve or connect you to a needed resource.
- If your child is absent, work with the teacher to make sure she or he has an opportunity to learn and make up for the school work missed.

Source: www.attendanceworks