

# School Success Starts With Regular Attendance

When students miss too many days of school, they fall behind and struggle to keep up with their classmates. Regardless of the reason days are missed, the end result is the same- learning time is lost.

Just a few missed days every month add up. When do absences become a problem?

**Chronic Absence: 18 or more days absent**

**Warning Signs: 10-17 days absent**

**Satisfactory: 9 or fewer days absent**

(Note: These numbers are based on a 180 day school year)

Frequent absences from school can be devastating to a child's future. The effects start early and spiral over time.

- Children who are chronically absent in preschool, kindergarten and first grade are much less likely to read on grade level by the third grade.
- Students who can't read at grade level by the third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school.
- By high school, regular attendance is a better dropout indicator than test scores.<sup>1</sup>
- A student who is chronically absent in any year between the eighth grade and twelfth grade is seven times more likely to drop out of school.<sup>2</sup>

Build the habit of good attendance early by:

- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine. Prepare the night before. Lay out clothing and pack backpacks.
- Attend school orientation sessions and open houses to assist with the transition to school.
- Don't let your child stay home unless he or she is truly sick. Mild complaints of a headache or stomach ache may be signs of anxiety and not a reason to stay home.
- If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to your child's teacher or school counselor for advice.
- Develop back up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Have a neighbor, relative or another parent on stand by for these occasions.
- Avoid medical appointments, extended trips or vacations when school is in session. Make school a priority.

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<sup>1</sup> Attendance in Early Elementary Grades: Association with Student Characteristics, School Readiness and the Third Grade Outcomes, Applied Survey Research, May 2011

<sup>2</sup> Every Student, Every Day: Obama Administration Launches First-ever National, Cross-Sector Initiative to Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism in our Nation's Schools. US Department of Education Oct. 7, 2015 press release