

# ATTENDANCE

## in the early grades

Many of our youngest students miss 10 percent of the school year—about 18 days a year or just two days every month. Chronic absenteeism in kindergarten, and even preK, can predict lower test scores, poor attendance and retention in later grades, especially if the problem persists for more than a year. Do you know how many young children are chronically absent in your school or community?

## Who Is Affected

Kindergarten and 1st grade classes often have absenteeism rates as high as those in high school. Many of these absences are excused, but they still add up to lost time in the classroom.

1 in 10 kids

in kindergarten and 1st grade are chronically absent. In some schools, it's as high as 1 in 4.<sup>1</sup>



2 in 10  
low-income kids

miss too much school. They're also more likely to suffer academically.<sup>1</sup>



2.5 in 10  
homeless kids

are chronically absent.<sup>2</sup>



4 in 10  
transient kids

miss too much school when families move.<sup>2</sup>



## Why It Matters

If children don't show up for school regularly, they miss out on fundamental reading and math skills and the chance to build a habit of good attendance that will carry them into college and careers.

Preliminary data from a California study found that children who were chronically absent in kindergarten and 1st grade were far less likely to read proficiently at the end of 3rd grade.

Who Can Read on Grade Level After 3rd Grade?<sup>3</sup>



64%

of kids with good attendance in K and 1st (missed 9 or fewer days both years)



43%

of kids with at-risk attendance (missed more than 9 days both years)



41%

of kids chronically absent in K or 1st (missed 18 or more days one year)



17%

of kids chronically absent in K and 1st (missed 18 or more days both years)

## What We Can Do



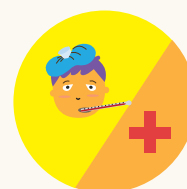
### Engage Families

Many parents and students don't realize how quickly early absences can add up to academic trouble. Community members and teachers can educate families and build a culture of attendance through early outreach, incentives and attention to data.



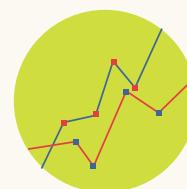
### Fix Transportation

The lack of a reliable car, or simply missing the school bus, can mean some students don't make it to class. Schools, transit agencies and community partners can organize car pools, supply bus passes or find other ways to get kids to school.



### Address Health Needs

Health concerns, particularly asthma and dental problems, are among the leading reasons students miss school in the early grades. Schools and medical professionals can work together to give children and families health care and advice.



### Track the Right Data

Schools too often overlook chronic absence because they track average attendance or unexcused absences, not how many kids miss too many days for any reason. Attendance Works has free data-tracking tools.

These are a few steps that communities and schools can take. How do you think you can help?

<sup>1</sup> Chang, Hedy; Romero, Mariajose, *Present, Engaged and Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in the Early Grades*, National Center for Children in Poverty: NY: NY, September 2008.

<sup>2</sup> *Chronic Absence in Utah*, Utah Education Policy Center at the University of Utah, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> *Attendance in Early Elementary Grades: Association with Student Characteristics, School Readiness and Third Grade Outcomes*, Applied Survey Research, May 2011.



## What Schools and Communities Can Do to Reduce Chronic Absence in the Early Grades

**Calculate your data:** Most school districts keep attendance information on an electronic data system, which they already use to calculate average daily attendance and truancy rates. Ask your data team to also look at chronic absence — the percentage of students who miss 10 percent or more of the school year in excused and unexcused absences. If you need help, you'll find data tools at [www.attendanceworks.org/tools/tools-for-calculating-chronic-absence/](http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/tools-for-calculating-chronic-absence/)

**Sign up for the Call to Action:** Superintendents are essential to efforts to reduce the number of chronically absent students. By signing on to a nationwide Call to Action, superintendents will join a growing national movement of school leaders looking beyond average daily attendance and truancy numbers to monitor and address chronic absence. Superintendents commit to: 1) prioritize attendance, 2) mobilize the community to reduce chronic absence and 3) use chronic absence data to identify at-risk students and develop solutions that improve attendance. Learn more here: [www.attendanceworks.org/superintendents-call-to-action](http://www.attendanceworks.org/superintendents-call-to-action)

**Celebrate Attendance Awareness Month:** More than 50 national organizations and 300+ communities host events and activities in September calling attention to the connection between attendance and achievement. Find tools and templates at [www.awareness.attendanceworks.org](http://www.awareness.attendanceworks.org)



**Visit the Attendance Works website:** Attendance Works is a national nonprofit dedicated to improving the policy, practice and research on school attendance. Its website offers a number of free tools for promoting good attendance, calculating data, engaging parents and training staff members. Go to [www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)

# THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

The achievement gap between children from high- and low-income families is roughly **30 TO 40 PERCENT LARGER** among children born in 2001 than among those born twenty-five years earlier.<sup>1</sup>



"...EDUCATION IS A WAY OUT OF POVERTY — BUT POVERTY IS ALSO A HINDRANCE TO EDUCATION."<sup>2</sup>



Parents with the means invest more time and money than ever before in their children while lower-income families, which are now more likely to be headed by a single parent, are increasingly stretched for time and resources.<sup>3</sup>

LOW-INCOME YOUTH LACK OPTIONS IN THE SUMMER, and sometimes come to the library because it's air conditioned.<sup>4</sup>



FOR EVERY ONE LINE OF PRINT READ BY LOW-INCOME CHILDREN, MIDDLE-INCOME CHILDREN READ THREE.<sup>5</sup>

## What Happens to Children DURING THE SUMMER?



During the summer months, disadvantaged children tread water at best or even fall behind. It's what we call

### "SUMMER SLIDE"

while better off children build their skills steadily over the summer months.



### SUMMER LEARNING LOSS

accounts for about two-thirds of the ninth grade achievement gap in reading.<sup>7</sup>

## How Summer Learning Can Help CLOSE the Achievement Gap.

### SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAMS TARGETED TO LOW-INCOME STUDENTS

can help close the achievement gap that has been attributed, at least in part, to cumulative learning loss during the summers and that has been shown to be steeper for low-income students than for others.



Longitudinal studies indicate that **the effects of summer learning programs endure for at least two years after participation.**<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1,3</sup> New York Times, Feb 9, 2012, Education Gap Grows Between Rich and Poor, Studies Say. Sean F. Reardon, Stanford University, Whither Opportunity? Rising Inequality and the Uncertain Life Chances of Low-Income Children. <sup>2</sup> Peter Edelman, Professor of Law, Georgetown Law Center, Huffington Post, *Reinvigorating the American Dream: A Broader Bold Approach to Tackling the Achievement Gap*. <sup>4,5</sup> Gains and Gaps: Changing Inequality in U.S. College Entry and Completion, Martha J. Bailey, Susan M. Dynarski. <sup>6</sup> *Making Summer Count: How Summer Programs Can Boost Children's Learning*, RAND Corporation 2011. <sup>7</sup> *Lasting Consequences of the Summer Learning Gap*, Karl L. Alexander, Doris R. Entwisle, and Linda Steffel Olson, American Sociological Review 2007. Additional Sources: The Achievement Gap, Education Week, Aug 3, 2004. Annie E. Casey Foundation 2011.



## Campaign for Grade-Level Reading Communities Leading the Way in Summer Learning

Campaign for Grade-Level Reading Pacesetter Communities are recognized for demonstrating measurable progress on student outcomes. The following communities received 2015 Pacesetter Honors for their work in summer learning.

- Marvell, AR
- Phoenix, AZ
- Fresno, CA
- Tahoe Truckee Community, CA
- Hartford, CT
- New Britain, CT
- Indian River County, FL
- Sarasota County, FL
- Ames, IA
- Council Bluffs, IA
- Des Moines, IA
- Dubuque, IA
- Marshalltown, IA
- Quad Cities (Davenport), IA
- Waukegan, IL
- Springfield, MA
- Kansas City, MO
- Moore County, NC
- New York City, NY
- Rochester, NY
- Montgomery County/Dayton, OH
- Philadelphia, PA
- Clearfield, Kearns, Park City and South Salt Lake, UT
- Richmond, VA
- Roanoke, VA
- Virginia Beach, VA
- Tacoma, WA

GLR Bright Spots showcase the most inspiring and promising work underway in more than 200 Grade-Level Reading communities in the network. The Bright Spot communities of Arkansas; Seattle, WA; Southern Pines, NC; Tahoe Truckee, CA; Georgia; Fresno, CA; Austin, TX; and Oakland, CA, exhibited innovative work aligned within the following four strategies for summer learning success:

- 1. Community-wide messaging** to raise awareness about the importance of summer learning; to encourage parents, caregivers and services; and to support families in reading to and with children over the summer months.
- 2. Practices, programs and policies** that expand access to books and integrate literacy skills development in order to help children continue reading and learning over the summer months.
- 3. Expanding access to summer meals, physical activity and health and nutrition information** in a variety of settings and programs over the summer months.
- 4. Cross-sector coordination and partnerships** around data sharing, collection and analysis that result in joint commitment and accountability for making measurable progress on student outcomes.

To read more about the contributions these communities made, visit <http://gradelevelreading.net>

# GLR FRAMEWORK ON SUPPORTING PARENT SUCCESS

## School Readiness

Engage in nurturing and affirming “back and forth” interactions

Enrich their children’s vocabulary and promote a love for reading

## School Attendance

Recognize and address health needs and environmental hazards in the home

Monitor absences and seek support at the earliest signs of attendance issues

## Summer Learning

Engage children in enriching summer activities at home or in the community



First teacher and brain builder

Best advocate and coach

High-touch and high-tech manager

Most important role model

# Los Angeles Times

## Why Third Grade Matters

The end of third grade marks the shift toward reading to learn, and a child's future hinges on being able to meet this milestone.

Communities across the country are mobilizing around a key predictor of school success and high-school graduation: students reading at grade level by the end of third grade. Successive reports have confirmed that the majority of the nation's school children miss this critical milestone.

That is why civic leaders, public officials and engaged citizens in over 150 communities have joined the movement led by the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading. With LAUSD, the Chamber of Commerce, First Five L.A. and Families in Schools leading the way, Los Angeles is among them. So are 17 other communities in California.

In California, as elsewhere, the tough insistence of accountability does not change the fact that schools will not succeed in turning the tide without an "all hands" commitment from the whole community.

This is especially true in addressing three reasons why so many children miss the mark of third-grade reading: Too many children start school so far behind that it is difficult to catch up. Too many children miss so many days of school that they fall further behind during the school year. And too many children lose ground over the summer. Finding solutions to these challenges is a top priority.

Parents are the secret sauce. An engaged parent is a child's first teacher, best coach, most important role model and most effective advocate. Research confirms that, especially in the critical early years, parents have an additional role: brain builders. This important insight is leading many communities to explore a plethora of high tech efforts to deliver the information, tools and support parents and caregivers need to help their children succeed in school, to attend school regularly and to avoid the "summer slide."

As it turns out, the communities focusing on third-grade reading already may be seeing a payoff. They are closing the gap between what we know and what we do. And what we know is that parents matter — a lot.

### L.A. Success Stories

The Little by Little program makes early literacy a core part of WIC services, which serve low-income women and children under age 5.

[www.first5la.org/One-Step-Ahead-Little-by-Little](http://www.first5la.org/One-Step-Ahead-Little-by-Little)

LAUSD's Attendance Improvement Plan has helped boost school attendance by more than 20 percent in kindergarten.

[www.achieve.lausd.net/pupilservices](http://www.achieve.lausd.net/pupilservices)

Passport to Success is tackling the "summer slide" with a free reading and learning program for 20,000 LAUSD families.

[www.familiesinschools.org](http://www.familiesinschools.org)

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading is a collaborative effort by nonprofits, businesses and federal, state and community groups across the U.S. to ensure that children succeed in school — and are reading at grade-level by the end of third grade. For more information, visit [gradelevelreading.net](http://gradelevelreading.net).

## Reading Success by the End of Third Grade

More children  
**LEARNING**  
in the summer

Summer food programs keep kids  
**healthy** when school is out

Physical activity helps children  
pay attention and learn



More children  
**ATTENDING**  
school regularly

Managing children's asthma  
helps them **reduce absences**

**Breakfast** in the classroom  
improves attendance and learning

Regular **oral health care**  
prevents lost learning time



More children  
**READY** for  
kindergarten

**Screenings** catch developmental,  
hearing, vision and lead problems  
before they interfere with learning

Social and emotional **development**  
builds curiosity and supports learning

**Prenatal care** supports early  
brain development



## The Health Determinants of Early School Success



## The Health Determinants of Early School Success

Healthy development from birth onward greatly affects children's ability to learn: Children who are on track in their physical and social and emotional development are more successful learners from their earliest years and more likely to become proficient readers. This is why the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading promotes the important connections between health and learning — which it calls “the health determinants of early school success” — on two fronts: working to broaden public awareness and understanding; and encouraging GLR communities nationwide to move from talk to action.

**Read more:** Healthy Readers Innovation Brief at <http://gradelevelreading.net/our-work/healthyreaders>.

To encourage community coalitions to take action on the health determinants of early school success, the Campaign has prepared a series of Resource Briefs, which can be downloaded from the website. <http://gradelevelreading.net/healthy-readers-resources-guides>

**GUIDE 1:** Supporting Healthy Births and Infancy

**GUIDE 2:** Ensuring Early and Appropriate Screenings and Intervention

**GUIDE 3:** Supporting Children's Healthy Social-Emotional Development

**GUIDE 4:** Ensuring Oral Health

**GUIDE 5:** Controlling Environments and Managing Asthma

**GUIDE 6:** Promoting Healthy Food Choices

**GUIDE 7:** Increasing Physical Activity

For more information about Healthy Readers and the Health Determinants of Early School Success, please contact Jeanne Jehl, [jeanne.jehl@verizon.net](mailto:jeanne.jehl@verizon.net) or Ann Rosewater, [annrosewater@comcast.net](mailto:annrosewater@comcast.net).



## WHO WE ARE

*A nationwide collaborative effort working to ensure that more children in low-income families succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career and active citizenship:*

~~167~~ **285+** communities in 42 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands; up from 242 in May.

**2,300+** local organizations including libraries, museums, universities, public housing agencies and YMCAs.

**60** sector-leading organizations and networks that extend our reach and amplify our message.

**16** GLR Enterprise investors — including two new investors as of 2015, Buffett Early Childhood Fund and J.F. Maddox Foundation, as well as increased investment from The Patterson Foundation — are providing their voice, expertise and connections, in addition to funding, to support the GLR “backbone operations.” The Carnegie Corporation of New York and Wells Fargo also rejoined as co-investors in 2015, having previously invested in the early years of the GLR Campaign.

**250+** family foundations, community foundations, United Ways, corporate giving programs and individual donors are supporting grade-level reading in Network communities including substantial investments in several communities: \$10.5 million in Charlotte; \$1.6 million in Atlanta; and \$1.2 million in Florida.

~~118~~ **136** United Ways actively supporting 145 communities.

## OUR GOAL

*By 2020, increase by at least 100 percent the number of children from low-income families reading proficiently in 12 states or more.*

## PROGRESS SO FAR

*Since the GLR Campaign's launch in 2010, activities and accomplishments from engaged constituents and our communities across the nation include:*

**35** states have governors, chief state school officers and other policy leaders who put a “stake in the ground” around third-grade reading.

**32** incumbent and former governors (20 Republicans and 12 Democrats) have embraced grade-level reading by the end of third grade as an important state policy objective.

~~104~~ **226** superintendents signed the Attendance Works Call to Action, representing 37 states plus the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

**76%** of state-based advocates are advancing Birth-through-Third policy priorities.

**142** Network communities are using the Results Scorecard or other independent data systems to track progress and promote shared accountability for results.

**136** GLR communities participated in a self-assessment process designed to identify where the needle is moving and why.

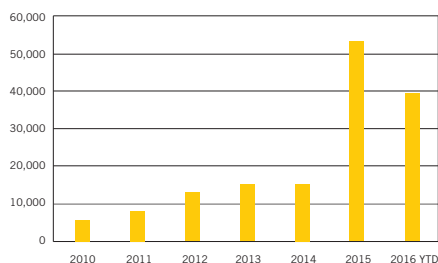
**130** GLR communities are adopting, expanding or replicating promising and proven programs.

## **PROGRESS SO FAR (CONT'D.)**

- 94** GLR communities in 28 states report **measurable progress in at least one solutions area** (readiness, attendance, summer learning) and/or grade-level reading.
- 31** GLR communities in 17 states report **measurable progress in at least two solutions areas**.
- 9** GLR communities in 6 states report **measurable progress in all three solutions areas**.
- 134** GLR communities have strategies for engaging parents and caregivers to improve reading success.
- 38** communities in 20 states were recognized as 2015 Pacesetters for making measurable progress on school readiness, school attendance, summer learning, funder coalitions and policy reforms.

## **STRONG AND POSITIVE MEDIA COVERAGE**

Stories\* on the GLR Campaign and School Readiness, Attendance and Summer Learning



\*Stories captured by The Hatcher Group using Vocus media services.

## **OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT**

*GLR Campaign's efforts have resulted in:*

- 79** events in 25 states and one province and 45 cities from January through June 2016 allowed GLR leadership to reach, hear from and crowdsource 9,656 active and engaged leaders through organizations they join and gatherings they attend. In 2015, we reached more than 25,000 people and in 2014, we reached 18,000.
- ~~1,290~~ **1,679** members of the Huddle, the GLR Campaign's online peer networking platform, representing 268 Network communities.
- 300** funders reached via annual Funder-to-Funder Huddles and/or events at philanthropic gatherings since 2014. The Huddles provide funders with an opportunity to share ideas, strategies, resources and lessons learned.
- 39,000** media stories on the GLR Campaign and school readiness, summer learning loss and attendance in 2016, year-to-date, up from 16,000 in 2014.