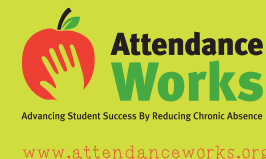


ATTENDANCE

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 4.¹



2 in 10
low-income kids

miss too much school. They're also more likely to suffer academically.¹



2.5 in 10
homeless kids

are chronically absent.²



4 in 10
transient kids

miss too much school when families move.²



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?³



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



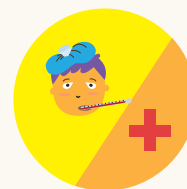
Engage Families

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.



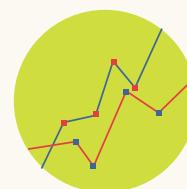
Fix Transportation

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?

¹ 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.

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

³ *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/

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

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



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

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

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

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

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.

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