
Attendance

Successful programs to help students attendⁱ school are more likely to:

- be family-focused, and
- involve intensive case management, and
- consist of both **rewards** for improved attendance and sanctions for persistent truancy.ⁱⁱ

Family engagement is supported when:

- parents are **invited** to join in re-entry plans for their kids,
- families are asked to consider lots of **strategies** such as getting alarm clocks, accessing school transport, or changing family routines, and
- transport **support** is provided for parents to attend meetings with the school support team to talk about how those plans are going.ⁱⁱⁱ

Not attending school can be about hardship, health issues, under-estimating the chances school provides, transport issues, and support from others in family or community.^{iv}

Broad-based partnerships that involve the family, the school's support team, and help from agencies can really **improve** attendance.^v

How about organising a blitz on attending every day for a month?

Send a postcard to your families promoting "Attendance Awareness Month"

What's the message?

Better school attendance is linked to short and long-term **positive** outcomes for students including better chances for employment, better health, and more choices to study throughout life as interests and priorities change.

Studies show that school attendance is a strong predictor of course **performance** and the strongest predictor of **completing** school.^{vi}

To **benefit** from instruction, students must attend school regularly.^{vii}

A single postcard sent to parents in a Philadelphia school district to encourage them to improve their student's attendance did reduce absences.

Things you can do to connect

- Create and **celebrate** attendance improvement plans and appraisals
- Increase parental involvement by working with translators, **inviting** parents to class, or doing home visits
- **Integrate** and **coordinate** school and community services for students and families
- Provide counselling, mentoring, and case management **support**
- Help families make **contact** with community services for support
- Use social media to **share** the benefits of consistent school attendance
- Develop data taxonomies to better **understand** attendance patterns
- Computerise attendance registration systems
- Help students share why they are absent; develop attendance contracts for them
- **Acknowledge** sound and improving attendance
- Provide students with choice to **recognise** attending
- Use the Education Act for conferencing, conciliation and, if needed, sanction

Resources/Brochures/Videos

Department of Education Queensland—Every Day counts

<http://education.qld.gov.au/everydaycounts/resources.html>

Department of Education Victoria—Every Day Counts

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/behaviour/Pages/studentattendance.aspx>

UK based website: <https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-23/edition-6/raising-school-attendance>

USA based website with some ideas and suggestions:

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/>

<http://schoolengagement.org/>

ⁱ Extract adapted from Department of Education, Training and Employment Queensland (2013). *Performance Insights: Attendance*. Brisbane: Government of Queensland. <https://goo.gl/TRF6x3>.

ⁱⁱ Mann-Erickson, G & Martinez, J. (2007). "21 Ways to Engage Students in School". National Centre for School Engagement. <https://goo.gl/qxqp7K>.

ⁱⁱⁱ DeSocio, J., VanCura, M., Nelson, L.A., Hewitt, G., Kitzman, H. & Cole, R. (2007). Engaging truant adolescents: Results from a multifaceted intervention pilot. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, 51(3), pp.3–9.

^{iv} Baker, J.A., Derrer, R.D., Davis, S.M. & Dinklage-Travis, H.E. (2001). The flip side of the coin: Understanding the school's contribution to dropout and completion. *School Psychology Quarterly* 16(4), pp. 406–26.

^v Hendricks, M.A., Sale, E.W., Evans, C.J., McKinley, L. & DeLozier Carter, S., 2010. Evaluation of a truancy court intervention in four middle schools. *Psychology in the Schools* 47(2), pp.173–83.

^{vi} Allensworth, E.M.; Easton, J.Q. (2007) What Matters for Staying On-Track and Graduating in Chicago Public High Schools: A Close Look at Course Grades, Failures, and Attendance in the Freshman Year. Chicago: Research Report, Consortium on Chicago School Research. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED498350>.

Balfanz, R. & Byrnes, V. (2012). The importance of being in school: A report on absenteeism in the nation's public schools. *The Education Digest*, 78(2), pp.4–9.

^{vii} Rogers, T., Duncan, T., Wolford, T., Ternovski, J., Subramanyam, S. & Reitano, A. (2017). A randomized experiment using absenteeism information to "nudge" attendance (REL 2017–252). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Mid-Atlantic. <https://goo.gl/GdSKEh>.