

Principally Speaking for Parents

Fall 2019

Attendance Matters: The Power of Being Present

Success at school, particularly in elementary is thought to be linked to your child's knowledge of letters, sounds, and numbers upon their entrance into school, and as they progress, how well they read, comprehend, compute and problem solve. All of that is true, however, there is another factor that greatly impacts our students' opportunities for success, yet has very little to do with their innate academic abilities. Attending school every day and arriving on time is influential, and determines how quickly children adjust to the daily schedule and routine, not to mention, increases their exposure to learning opportunities, which likely are building blocks for more difficult concepts as they progress in school. Did you know that 1 in 10 students is chronically absent from school? Missing only two days per month can add up to 20 days of missed school per year, which is almost a month of instructional time lost. If this happens multiple years, imagine the gaps in learning that can accumulate over time.

Children who attend school on a regular basis become an integral part of their classroom families and the school community. When students miss school, they often miss common learning and social experiences which builds their bonds as a community of learners in the classroom. You may hear comments, like, "We were only a few minutes late," or "He/She is just in elementary school." What's important to note is that patterns of poor attendance over time have a cumulative effect and can negatively impact academic gains. On the contrary, when students attend school regularly, and gain basic numeracy, literacy and comprehension skills, they are better prepared for the transition from lower elementary where they are learning to read to upper elementary and beyond where they begin reading to learn and comprehend more complex concepts and text. The social and emotional benefits of regular attendance support

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students' acquisition of cooperation skills and their capacity to problem solve in teams, which are critical to be college and career ready.

If your child is struggling with attending school regularly, communicate with the staff and seek help to determine if there are ongoing medical issues or if there is something either social and/or emotional that prevents them from coming. Schools have a variety of resources and want to work with families to increase and improve regularly attendance and promptness. It is also understandable that families will have unique learning opportunities outside of school, and most schools support students taking advantage of these experiences. When possible, try to plan these trips around scheduled breaks that are on the school calendar, so that children can experience the best of both worlds, regular school attendance as well as cultural and enriching excursions that can support connections and enhance what's being learned in the classroom. Here's a quick video for families about attendance: [Bringing Attendance Home](#) Some quick tips that can assist families with ensuring that children are in school as much as possible.

1. Regular Bedtime and Routines
2. Medical and Dental Appointments After School and on Breaks
3. Scheduling Vacations During Breaks
4. Attend School Daily unless Kids are Truly Sick
5. Have a Back-up Plan to Get Kids to School

For more information go to attendancesworks.org