

# *John Marshall School Attendance Newsletter*

*December 2022*

Attendance is very important at John Marshall School. This year we formed an Attendance Committee at John Marshall to review chronic absenteeism and to reach out to families. Absenteeism is considered *chronic* when absences reach 10% or more versus the number of days of school. For example, if your child is absent 7 days out of 66 school days, that is 11%. It is important to communicate with the school when your child is ill and to call in his/her absence. Making school attendance a priority is key to your child's education and future.

## **Did you know?**

- Starting in kindergarten, missing 10% or just two days each month over the course of the school year can make it harder to learn to read.
- Students can still fall behind if they miss just one or two days every few weeks.
- Being late to school may lead to poor attendance.

Source: [www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)

Dr. Rebecca Schulman of Behavior Therapy Associates recently held several parent workshops at John Marshall which can be found on our website, <https://mar.edison.k12.nj.us/parents/parent-universities-and-workshops>. Dr. Schulman has provided the following tips.

### Tips for Helping Your Kids Consistently Get to School On Time

- Set the stage the night before!
  - Routines the night before can also lead to smoother mornings.
  - Think about what you can do the night before: lay out clothes, prep lunches and pack backpacks, have your children pick what they want for breakfast, make sure all homework is complete and any forms that need to be reviewed or signed are completed.
- Create a morning routine
  - Consider what time each person should wake up, what tasks need to be completed in the morning, and how long each task will take.

- Always leave 5-10 minutes extra because things always take longer to complete than you would think!
- Use visual supports to keep everyone on track!
  - Visual schedules, visual reminders, and visual timers
- Rewards can help increase motivation
  - Notice what your kids are motivated to do, such as watch TV, play with toys, or play video games.
  - Use that motivation to reward follow through!
    - For example, set the expectation, **First** complete your morning routine, **Then** you can watch TV until it is time to leave for school.
  - Provide behavior specific praise to increase motivation: “I love the way you got ready this morning!”
- Reduce excessive screen time
  - Help your children practice good sleep hygiene by stopping screen time at least one hour before bed. Use parental controls to help set limits!
  - Create opportunities for children to earn the screen time rather than taking away screens as a result of negative behavior. Reward the behavior you want to see! Don’t have children use electronics “for free.”
- Teach kids to regulate their emotions when they feel angry, frustrated, sad, bored, annoyed, etc.
  - Sometimes “down feelings” make it hard for students to get to school. Help them get to school by using effective coping skills.
  - Help kids identify how they are feeling by noticing the physical signs in their body and labeling how they feel.
  - Check in with your children to see how they are feeling.
  - Teach kids to express how they feel, such as “I feel....when...”
  - Example regulation strategies: take deep breaths, progressive muscle relaxation, set up a calming corner in the home, talk about your feelings, etc.
    - Practice when your kids are calm!