



Attendance Matters

Richland School District Two
Elementary School

Good attendance is a habit that children need to learn early. Attendance is related to a child's ability to be successful in all areas of school: academics, behavioral and social. Any time a child misses a day of school, it is a missed opportunity to learn. Regardless of the reason a child is out of school, they are missing instruction.

Your child's attendance is critical to their success. There are two attendance issues that you must be mindful of at all times: truancy and chronic absenteeism.

- Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10 percent of school days. Students can accumulate excessive absences and be considered chronically absent by only missing a few days of school per month. Research has shown chronic absenteeism can have a negative impact on a student's ability to be successful. Regardless of the reason why a child missing school, they are still missing instruction and opportunities to learn.
- South Carolina truancy is defined as an accumulation three consecutive unlawful absences or a total of five unlawful absences. Written excuses for all absences must be provided within 5 days of the absence. Failure to provide written excuses (medical or parent excuse) for absences could result in student being considered truant.

Research:

- Absenteeism in the first month of school can predict poor attendance throughout the school year. Half the students who miss 2-4 days in September go on to miss nearly a month of school. (Olson, 2014) One-half of students found to be chronic absent in kindergarten were chronic absent the following year. (Connolly & Olson, 2012)
- "Students who are chronically absent in preschool are five times more likely to be chronically absent in second grade." (Haywoode, 2013)
- "Students chronically absent in kindergarten and 1st grade are much less likely to read proficiently in 3rd grade." (Applied Survey Research & Attendance Works, April 2011)
- One quarter of students who were found to be chronically absent in preschool and kindergartens were retained by 3rd grade. (Connolly & Olson, 2012)
- Each year of chronic absence in elementary school is associated with a substantially higher probability of chronic absence in 6th grade. (Oakland Unified District SY 2006-2012)
- "Chronic absence in 1st grade is associated with lower 6th grade test scores and higher levels of suspensions." (Applied Survey Research & Attendance Works, April 2011)
- "With every year of chronic absenteeism, a higher percentage of students dropped out of school." (Utah Education Policy Center, 2012)
- Chronic absenteeism can reduce the likelihood of post-secondary enrollment. (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012)

Resources:

Alyssa Haywoode, October 2, 2013; "More than One-third of Preschoolers "Chronically Absent", Chicago Study Finds" <http://eyeonearlyeducation.com/2013/10/02/more-than-one-third-of-preschoolers-chronically-absent-chicago-study-finds/>

Faith Connolly and Linda S. Olson, March 2012, "Early Elementary Performance and Attendance in Baltimore City Schools' Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten" <http://www.baltimore-berc.org/pdfs/PreKKAttendanceFullReport.pdf>

The University of Utah, Utah Education Policy Center "Research Brief: Chronic Absenteeism", July 2012, <http://www.utahdataalliance.org/downloads/ChronicAbsenteeismResearchBrief.pdf>

Robert Balfanz & Vaughn Byrnes, May 2012, "The Importance of Being in School: A Report on Absenteeism in the Nations' Public Schools" http://new.every1graduates.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/FINALChronicAbsenteeismReport_May16.pdf

Olson, Linda (July 2014). "Why September Matters: Improving Student Attendance" <http://baltimore-berc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/SeptemberAttendanceBriefJuly2014.pdf>