These are a few steps that communities and schools can take. How do you think you can help?

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.

**Why It Matters**

- **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.

- **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.

- **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.

**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.

- **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

**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)


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


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