Chronic Absenteeism

WHAT IS CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM?

Being chronically absent means a student is missing 10 percent or more of school, for both excused and unexcused reasons. This puts the student at a higher risk of not graduating high school and possibly becoming a high school dropout.

Are chronic absenteeism and truancy the same thing?

No. Chronic absenteeism considers both excused and unexcused absences. Any student missing 10 percent or more of the days that school has been in session at any point in the school year is considered chronically absent. Truancy occurs when a child is absent from school without a valid excuse.

Attendance rates tell how many students show up each day. Chronic Absenteeism rates tell which students don’t show up.

How are Attendance Rate and Chronic Absenteeism related?

The attendance rate is the Average Daily Attendance/Average Daily Membership of a school or district. The Chronic Absenteeism rate, which now must be reported, is the percentage of students in a school that miss more than 10 percent of the instructional time for any reason, excused or unexcused.
Myths about Chronic Absenteeism?

- Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused.
- Sporadic absences aren't a problem.
- Attendance only matters in the older grades.

FACT ...

Missing 10 percent or more of instructional days can translate into third-graders unable to master reading, sixth-graders failing subjects, and ninth-graders dropping out of high school.

Why are students chronically absent?

Identifying that a student is chronically absent is only the first step. After we know which students are missing school, we must find out the root cause of WHY they are missing school and put in place interventions to address that root cause. The focus must be on changing the behavior, not simply punishing the student for missing school.

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<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Aversion</th>
<th>Disengagement</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of access to health or</td>
<td>Struggling academically or socially</td>
<td>Lack of engaging and culturally relevant</td>
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<td>dental care</td>
<td>Bullying</td>
<td>instruction</td>
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<td>Chronic illness</td>
<td>Ineffective/exclusionary school discipline</td>
<td>No meaningful relationships with adults in</td>
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<td>Trauma</td>
<td>Parents had negative school experience</td>
<td>school</td>
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<td>No save path to school</td>
<td>Undiagnosed disability</td>
<td>Vulnerable to being with peers out of</td>
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<td>Poor transportation</td>
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<td>school vs. in school</td>
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<td>Housing instability</td>
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<td>Poor school climate</td>
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<td>High mobility</td>
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<td>Discouraged due to lack of credits</td>
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<td>Involvement with child</td>
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<td>welfare or juvenile justice</td>
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<td>system</td>
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Attendance Works Strategy 2: Consider Needed Supports (website)
What can schools do to improve attendance?

- Monitor data: Create a school team that regularly reviews attendance to identify trends in absences and possible barriers to attendance.
- Engage students and parents: Create a school climate that encourages students to come to school every day, create a welcoming culture of attendance and provide activities that engage students and families.
- Recognize good and improved attendance.
- Provide personalized early outreach: Make sure that every absence is accounted for and develop a multi-tiered approach to interventions.
- Identify and remove barriers to attendance: Work with staff, students, parents and community partners to help address barriers to attendance that are unique for your school and/or district.

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