

# September is Attendance Awareness Month!

*Are you participating?*



Chronic absenteeism is missing 10 percent of school days for any reason – excused and unexcused, including in-school suspensions. Based upon research, it marks the point when students start to fall behind academically because they have missed too many school days.



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
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**FACT:**

As many as **7.5 million** students nationwide miss 10 percent of the school year in excused and unexcused absences every year. That's **135 million** days of school.



Good attendance matters for school success, starting as early as prekindergarten and throughout elementary school. By middle and high school, poor attendance is a leading indicator of dropout. Developing the habit of attendance prepares students for success on the job and in life.

All of us can make a difference by helping students and families feel engaged in learning and their schools, setting the expectation that school attendance matters and working together to identify and help families overcome barriers to getting to school.

Community partners are especially important for helping schools and families address and overcome tough barriers, such as limited access to health care, unstable housing, poor transportation or neighborhood violence.

## FOR TEACHERS:

Emphasize attendance from Day One!

- Always offer positive reinforcement to those students and families with satisfactory or better attendance.
- Promote a culture of attendance all year long.
- It is important to discover reasons for absences; therefore, use the available resources to provide external support to families.



## FOR PARENTS:

Any absence is a missed chance to learn!

- Excused or not, an absence creates a lost opportunity.
- Missing two days a month creates chronic absenteeism. “Make-up work” is not the same as being in school and can never replace the missed opportunities to learn.
- Giving a child permission to miss school today gives them permission to ditch school later.
- Attendance is an important life skill that will help your child graduate from college and keep a job.

## FOR STUDENTS:

School is your first and most important job!

- You're learning more than math and reading.
- You're learning the importance of being on time every day, so that when you graduate and go to work or college, you'll already know to be on time every day.
- A student who misses 10 days or more during a school year is 20 percent less likely to graduate from high school and 25 percent less likely to ever enroll in college.
- You will get sick sometimes and need to stay home. The important thing is to get to school as often as possible to help stay on track with assignments.
- Students who attend school regularly are more likely to graduate and find good jobs. In fact, a high school graduate makes, on average, \$1 million more than a dropout over a lifetime.

# Attendance

in the early grades

Many of our youngest students miss 10 percent of the school year—about 18 days a year or just two days every month. Chronic absenteeism in kindergarten, and even preK, can predict lower test scores, poor attendance and retention in later grades, especially if the problem persists for more than a year. Do you know how many young children are chronically absent in your school or community?



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