

## Every Student, Every Day:

*A National Initiative to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism*

*Community Action Guide to Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism for*

### **PARENTS AND FAMILIES**

#### **Why Chronic Absenteeism Matters for Parents and Families**

Your child's daily, on-time attendance in school is critical to his or her success in school and in life. It's understandable that some challenges to your child's school attendance are unavoidable, such as an illness or a family emergency. However, it's important to understand the impact of absences from school, especially if they become frequent. *Chronic absenteeism*, typically defined as missing 10 percent (18 days) or more of a school year – as few as a couple of days per month – can cause your child to fall behind in school. Absences can add up and impact your child's reading, writing, and math skills, which will have a negative effect on his or her future.

#### **Did You Know?**

- Chronic absenteeism means missing 10% or more of school days in a year.
- 5 to 7.5 million students are chronically absent each year.
- Students who are chronically absent are less likely to succeed academically and more likely to drop out of school.
- Attending school everyday increases a child's chances of success in school and in life.

While chronic absenteeism can be especially harmful to children in preschool and kindergarten, you also should know that any student who is chronically absent at any grade level is less likely to graduate high school or go on to succeed in college.

Families are their children's first, most important, and longest lasting teachers, advocates, and nurturers. Take the following action steps so that your children can develop a more positive attitude toward school, stay in school longer, have better attendance, and an overall rewarding school experience.

#### **Did You Know?**

A student is chronically absent if he or she misses as few as two days of school a month.

**2 DAYS A MONTH x 9 MONTHS = CHRONIC ABSENCE**



### ***Take Action to Help Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism***

Parents and Families Should:

1. Make getting to school on time everyday a high priority in your family.
2. Talk with your child about the important of school attendance from an early age and the negative effects of too many absences.
3. When necessary, create a safe space for your child to share what's keeping them from participating in school on a regular basis.
4. Have a back-up plan for getting your child to school when there are difficulties with transportation, family illness, or other challenges.
5. Schedule doctor and other appointments for after-school hours whenever possible.
6. Monitor students' school attendance to make sure your child is in class every day.
7. Contact your child's school to discuss supports and services that can help your child maintain regular school attendance.

### **Resources to Support Parents and Families to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism**

- **Attendance Works** is a national nonprofit organization that works to raise awareness about chronic absenteeism, provides resources and handouts for parents and families. See more at: <http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/for-parents/>.
- Raising the next generation is a shared responsibility. When families, communities and schools work together, students are more successful and the entire community benefits. Visit the **U.S. Department of Education's Family & Community Engagement Webpage** for more information at: <http://www.ed.gov/family-and-community-engagement>.
- The **US Department of Education** provides links and resources to support parents and families to encourage their children to attend and succeed in school every day. See more at: <http://www2.ed.gov/parents/landing.jhtml>.
- **Youth.gov**. Learn more about the information, strategies, tools, and resources for youth, families, schools, youth-serving organizations, and community partnerships related to a variety of cross-cutting topics that affect youth. See more at: <http://youth.gov> and <http://engage.youth.gov/>.
- **StopBullying.gov** provides information from various government agencies on [what bullying is](#), [what cyberbullying is](#), [who is at risk](#), and how you can [prevent](#) and [respond to bullying](#). See more at: [www.StopBullying.gov](http://www.StopBullying.gov).

- **Resources for Homeless Youth:** This page is a one-stop spot for youth, and those who help youth, to find housing. This page lists all HUD homeless programs and initiatives that can be used by youth and youth serving providers to help prevent and end youth homelessness, as well as resources, publications, and relevant links to other agencies and organizations. Additionally, this page provides an explanation of how HUD programs currently serve homeless youth and how HUD works together with other agencies to combat homelessness. See more at: [www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/resources-for-homeless-youth/](http://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/resources-for-homeless-youth/)
- For more information on **preventing youth violence**, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Violence Prevention for more information and resources to support youth violence prevention activities in your community. See more at: <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/index.html>.
- Visit the Centers for Disease control and Prevention's **Division of Adolescent and School Health** for more information and resources for parents and families, teachers and other school staff, and school districts and administrators to implement to increase the extent to which students feel connected to school at [http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health\\_and\\_academics/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health_and_academics/index.htm).
- **Additional Resources from the Family and Youth Services Bureau can be found here:** <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/programs/runaway-homeless-youth/about>.