



CRITICAL DECISION POINTS

KEYS TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS: REGULAR ATTENDANCE

Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school—and themselves. If you build this habit early in preschool, your child will learn right away that going to school on time every day is important. Good attendance will help children do well in high school, college, and at work.

A child is considered chronically absent if he/she misses only two days of school per month (18 days in a year), whether the absences are excused or unexcused. Even one year of chronic absence can cause children to fall behind academically and decrease their chances of graduating from high school, which can have long-term consequences on their financial independence, physical well-being, and mental health. Attending school every day increases a child's chances of success in school and in life.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Beginning in kindergarten, too many absences can cause children to fall behind in school.
- Children can still fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks.
- That by sixth grade, high absences are one of three signs that a child may drop out of high school.
- Attendance is an important life skill that will help your child graduate from college and/or keep a job.

HERE ARE SOME HELPFUL TIPS TO SUPPORT GOOD ATTENDANCE AND YOUR CHILD'S SUCCESS:

- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Introduce your child to teachers and classmates before school starts to help with the transition.
- If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, school counselors, or other parents for advice on how to make him/her feel comfortable and excited about learning.
- Develop back-up plans for getting your child to school if something comes up.
- Avoid medical appointments and extended trips, if possible, when school is in session.
- Encourage meaningful afterschool activities, including sports and clubs.

Attendance habits influence grades and participation in school and community-related programs (i.e., teams, clubs, Career and Technical Education (CTE), employment). Developing good attendance also impacts critical workplace skills well into the future.

Visit the [Virginia Department of Education's \(VDOE's\) Attendance & Truancy webpage](#) and the [VDOE's Attendance & Truancy Training Module webpage](#) for more information.