



Let's Talk Everyday Attendance:

Sample Questions Parents and Families Can Ask to Partner with Your Child's Teachers and School

Dear parents, families, and caregivers!

Setting a strong foundation for school attendance is critical to your child's school success. *Did you know that chronic absence, or chronic absenteeism, is typically defined as missing 10% of the academic school year?* This means that your child can be considered chronically absent if they miss school 2 days a month (which totals about 18 days absent for the school year). Being chronically absent can impact your child's academic readiness, social-emotional health, and workforce development participation. This is why the Biden-Harris Administration announced a commitment to a "culture of attendance" during the Every Day Counts Summit. Everyday school attendance positively impacts your child and their peers. However, chronic absenteeism has more than doubled from 13% in 2017 to nearly 30% in 2022.

Chronic absenteeism remained high in 2023 prompting getting children to school everyday becoming a top priority for the U.S. Department of Education and education leaders nationwide. The good news is strong partnership with your child's school and community resources is a key lever for everyday attendance. The sample questions below can serve as conversation starters to support a culture of everyday attendance in your school community, which will help all students succeed.



Sample Questions For Parents and Families to Partner for Everyday Attendance

TOPICS	PARENT QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATORS
Getting on the Same Page about Attendance.	<p>How will we set shared expectations for my child's attendance?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does our school have an attendance policy? How is it shared with parents, families, and caregivers?• Who do we need to talk with if our child will be absent?• Who should we talk with if our child is missing 1-2 days of school a month?• When our child misses school for a doctor or dentist appointment, does that still count as an absence?
Enrollment and Back to School.	<p>How will our family start the school year prepared for our child's everyday attendance?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does our child have all their required enrollment forms and vaccinations to attend school?• How can we make sure we have the most current school calendar, holidays, and school day start and end times?• Where can I find information on bus routes and bus stops? How can I find out if the bus is late?• If we are not on a school bus route, how do we find school transportation options for our child?• Does the school offer school meals? How do we find out if our child's meals can be free or reduced-price?

Let's Talk Everyday Attendance, *continued*

TOPICS	PARENT QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATORS
Ongoing School Communication about Attendance.	<p>How will we build and maintain open communication about attendance throughout the school year?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can our family find out what our child will learn this school year? • How will we receive information about our child's academic progress in school? • How will we work together to set academic goals for our child? • What are your recommendations for how we can support our child's learning at home? • We know that most students' learning was impacted by the pandemic. How are you working to understand and support where our child may need extra help? (For example, through tutoring, small group instruction, or other supports?) • Are there resources outside of the regular school day to support our child's learning? (For example, afterschool programs, summer learning opportunities, or mentoring programs?) • How can we partner to make sure our child has a relationship with trusted adults at school? • How can we make sure our child is engaged in electives and extracurricular activities?
Out-of-School Time and Community Partners.	<p>What additional resources are available outside of school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the school have before- and after-school care for our child, and how can we enroll my child in these activities? • Are there other places our child can go for safe and healthy activities before and after school? (For example: community center, library, faith-based programs/activities)? If there is a fee, can we get help if we can't afford it? • Does the school have community partnerships to help us find support for some of the barriers that may impact our child's attendance (for example: transportation, housing, health and wellbeing)? • Who are some of the school staff members that we can connect with in addition to my child's teacher (for example, counselor, school nurse, family liaison)? • Are there age-appropriate evening and morning routines that support everyday attendance?
Building a School Culture for Everyday Attendance.	<p>How can parents help build an everyday attendance school culture?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We would like to help. How can families partner with our school to support a school culture of everyday attendance? • How is the school collecting data and feedback from families about attendance barriers and opportunities for a building a strong attendance culture schoolwide? • How can we work together so that all families understand our school attendance data? And are part of solutions? • Sometimes school safety concerns affect attendance. How is our school directly addressing student and family school safety concerns? And how can families help? • We worry about our child's safe passage to school. What supports exist from the school, community and other parents?



The U.S. Department of Education is committed to supporting State Education Agencies and school districts in implementing resources to promote safe school operations and equity-driven, sustainable, evidence-based programs to serve students and to continue to strengthen teaching and learning.

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