



January & February Have the Lowest School Attendance Rates

Most parents believe their children have good-to-average attendance habits. However, poor attendance can sneak up on you: in a 180-day school year, a student who misses just 2 school days a month will miss 10% of the school year, and their education will suffer.

In early grades, it is easier for parents to downplay letting their child stay home from school. "Oh, they'll just miss finger-painting and sing-a-long time."

In reality, the opposite is true. The early grades are where students build the foundation of their entire academic careers. Early-grade chronic absentees not only hurt their school performance, but they also form a life-long habit of poor attendance.

National data shows that students who miss 2 days of school per month:

- * are less likely to be on grade level in reading by third grade
- * are more likely to drop out of school
- * are less likely to graduate high school
- * score lower on standardized tests
- * are more likely to continue having attendance problems when they enter the workforce.

As a community, it is our responsibility to ensure our children receive a quality education. Academic success begins with being in the classroom. Here are simple things we can do to help our students get to, and stay in, the classroom:

1. Offer to drive your neighbors' kids to school.
2. Form a neighborhood carpool.
3. Thank a child for going to school. Each day.
4. Know when school is in session.
5. In winter, shovel your sidewalks.
6. Chat with kids about their school day.
7. Volunteer at your local school.
8. When hiring a teenager, ask to see his or her school attendance record.