

Count ME In Strategies For Success

Working together, we can cultivate a habit of good attendance beginning in kindergarten so all children have the opportunity to learn and succeed. These research based strategies connect to our core message-**Count ME In: Attending School, Preparing for Life.**

The website provides more ideas on how to implement each strategy.

- 1. Make attendance a priority** communicating attendance expectations to the entire community.
For example:
 - *Publicize attendance policies to ensure they are understood by all staff, families and students.*
 - *Promote school attendance through brochures and the school newsletter*
 - *Display posters stating importance of school attendance around the community*
 - *Post absenteeism rates so everyone is aware of school attendance*
- 2. Utilize opportunities to connect with students** to encourage a relationship between students and staff and a sense of belonging to the school.
 - *Ensure a personal welcome to each child by name every day*
 - *Encourage positive connections, notify parents when students are doing well*
 - *Establish a special group for those students who are chronically absent that meets daily before school and does fun activities*
 - *Connect chronically absent students with a “morning and afternoon check-in person” so they can connect and speak with someone about the school day, what they might need or have done well*
 - *Offer fun school activities before school for all students*
- 3. Take action as early as possible** when attendance problems are recognized, by following protocols that highlight early identification and intervention tailored to meet the individual child and families needs.
For example:
 - *Personalize call, text, e-mail or note to students and their families to tell them you missed the student and want them in school.*
- 4. Use school-wide attendance data** to identify students, assess targeted interventions and times of year when attendance poses particular problems.
For example:
 - *Establish attendance teams that meet at least monthly to review absenteeism data*
 - *Identify students who are absent more than 4 times in a month*
 - *Monitor regularly student absences and efficacy of interventions*

5. **Speak with families about attendance** and connect families to the community for any needed resources.

For example:

- *Call home to figure out with the family why the student is absent and what can help them return to school*
- *Involve families and community providers when developing student specific interventions*
- *Encourage mutual trust and communication for families and schools to work together to solve problems*
- *Establish a contact for family of chronically absent students at school and/or community*

6. **Reach out to parents, teachers, and students** to discuss ways of improving attendance for all students, including all populations.

For example:

- *Ask students in school and parents at meetings such as the PTO and community gatherings how to promote school attendance*
- *Verify phone numbers and contact information at open house nights and parent/teacher conferences*
- *Create planned absence packets for students who are out for extended periods particularly for health reasons.*

7. **Provide individualized and meaningful incentives** on a monthly, quarterly, and yearly basis to recognize students who are doing well with attendance or are improving their attendance.

For example:

- *Celebrate Good or Improved Attendance with certificates*
- *Create a photo wall of students with good attendance*
- *Randomly choose names from those with good or improved attendance for lunch with the Principal*

8. **Use existing resources in the school and community**, such as serving breakfast in the classroom, providing consistent recognition for good attendance and working with existing community agencies.

For example:

- *Work with community agencies or members to assist families in the morning*
- *Use mentor or community volunteers to call families in the morning and encourage getting to school*
- *Invite community members to recognize good or improved attendance*
- *Initiate discussions about community services that can assist the family and student or can make a home visit to the family about needed supports*

9. **Promote positive student and adult relationships** including meeting with individual students upon their return to school.

For example:

- *Create attendance cards and give stickers for morning and afternoon check-ins with staff*
- *If student has been absent for extended period utilize transition checklist to accommodate health or mental health needs*

