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

Adapted with permission from materials provided by Attendance Works (www.attendanceworks.org)