



## ATTENDANCE EVERY DAY WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

### WHY SHOULD WE FOCUS ON ATTENDANCE?

- Children can't learn if they aren't present in school, so attendance is a must.
- We can influence attendance and poor attendance can be prevented.
- Parents - especially in the early years - are best positioned to ensure children attend school and build the expectation around attendance.

### HOW IS ATTENDANCE FOCUSED ON SCHOOL SUCCESS?

- Chronic absence in Kindergarten is associated with lower academic performance in 1st grade among all children and, for children from low income families, predicts the lowest levels of educational achievement at the end of fifth grade.
- By 6th grade, missing 20% (or two months of school) is a critical warning sign of school drop-out.
- By 9th grade, missing 20% of school can be a better predictor of drop-out than 8th grade test scores.

## HELPING PARENTS

### WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO

- Educate families about the adverse impact of poor attendance on school achievement.
- Inform parents about the positive incentives students receive for good attendance; consider recognizing parents as well for their role in their child's attendance.
- Notify parents that their child's absence was noticed either through a call home or, if feasible, an email.
- Reach out to families to find out what is happening if children begin to miss school regularly. Where appropriate, refer families to available resources in the community.



## WHAT COMMUNITY AGENCIES CAN DO

- Teach parents about the importance of regular attendance starting in kindergarten.
- Help parents of older students understand that excessive absence is a critical warning sign for dropping out.
- Partner with schools to provide social work and case management supports to families of children with extended absences.
- Address barriers to attendance by offering services (economic supports, social services, etc.) at schools and referring families to other available resources in the community.

## WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

- Help your child get into the habit of attending school and learn the value of regular routines.
- Teach your child that attending school is non-negotiable unless they are truly sick.
- Build relationships with other families and discuss how you can help each other out (e.g., drop off or pick up children, babysit, translation assistance) in times of need or emergencies.
- Identify non-academic activities (drama, art, music, etc.) that can help motivate your child's interest in school and learning, and seek out schools that can offer those experiences.