

BERKS INITIATIVE FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

The Berks Initiative for School Attendance is committed to improving school attendance, reducing truancy and thereby increasing the graduation rate throughout Berks County. The initiative began in 2011 when the Berks County Commissioners and Berks County Judges recognized truancy as a problem and determined that it was a community problem that needed a community solution.

Since then, the Initiative has assisted schools and the courts with devising a common protocol to combat attendance problems, coordinating efforts in and among school districts, providing additional options, and increasing awareness about the problem. The Initiative funds the Advancing School Attendance Program that assists individual students and families with improving school attendance.

For more information about the initiative, contact the coordinator at BISAba@comcast.net.

ADVANCING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROGRAM

The Advancing School Attendance Program is designed to work with families and youth to increase school attendance.

- * Increases school success and achieves academic goals through effectively and efficiently using individualized, family-focused services
- * Identifies objectives, strengths, needs and preferences toward reaching those goals
- * Builds partnerships with school staff, service providers and other supports and resources in the community
- ❖ Involves family, friends or other people important to you and your child in reaching your goals

For help with chronic absenteeism, call 610-236-4847 or email AdvancingSchoolAttendanceProgram@sam-inc.org.



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Berks Believes Five Absences or Less Leads to Success.



Every day at school matters.

What is Chronic Absenteeism?

Chronic absenteeism is a measure of how many school days a student misses for *any* reason.

Chronic absence includes unexcused, excused and medical days missed—any absence, regardless of reason, is counted.

A student is considered chronically absent when he or she misses 10% or more of a school year. And that adds up. Consider this: 10% of the school year is 18 days, or just two days a month.

Chronically absent students are less likely to succeed academically, are more likely to be suspended and are more likely to eventually drop out. The discipline and determination to get to school every day builds a habit that helps a student persist and succeed in their future.



10% of the school year is 18 days.*

*Assumes a 180-day school year.

2 Days



each month

Just two days a month adds up to 18 days.



Keep track of absences
before they become a problem.

BUILD THE HABIT OF GOOD ATTENDANCE.

- * Set regular bed time and morning routines.
- * Make sure parents and kids get plenty of sleep.
- * Get clothes ready, pack backpacks and lunches the night before.

Don't allow your child to stay home unless he or she is truly sick.

- * Complaints of stomachaches or headaches could be signs of anxiety and not reasons to stay home.

- * If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, school counselors or reach out to other parents for advice on how to make your child feel better about school.
- * Sometimes emergencies happen, so make a backup plan for getting to school. Make arrangements ahead of time with a family member, neighbor or other parent.
- * Before school starts for the year, make sure your children are up to date on their shots and have all their school supplies ready.

FIND OUT MORE.

Visit AttendanceWorks.org for more resources to better understand, prevent and correct chronic absenteeism. Attendance Works is a national and state initiative that promotes better policy and practice around school attendance.



THE NUMBERS ADD UP.

- * 83% of students who were chronically absent in kindergarten *and* 1st grade will **not** read on grade level after 3rd grade



64%
who have good
attendance

can read on grade
level after 3rd grade



17%
who are
chronically absent

can read on grade
level after 3rd grade

- * 75% of students who are chronically absent in 6th grade will drop out of high school
- * In 9th grade, the primary reason for failing or low grades is absence from class
- * Compared to students who attended kindergarten regularly, those who are chronically absent:
 - » Scored 20% lower in reading and math in later grades
 - » Are twice as likely to be retained in grade
 - » Are twice as likely to be suspended by the end of 7th grade
 - » Likely to continue being chronically absent
- * Chronically absent students have a negative effect on the achievement of other students in the classroom
- * Only 11% of chronically absent high school students advanced into a second year of college versus 51% of those with low absences