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# Chronic Absenteeism: How it Affects Your Child

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Mental Health Series

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## Shocking Truth: Chronic Absenteeism Fuels Failing Grades, Delinquency, and Dropout Rates!

**Did you know?** Students who miss more than three days of school per month can fall behind, with a gap of 1 to 2 years' worth of learning compared to their peers.

**Did you know?** Only 17% of students who were chronically absent in kindergarten were reading proficiently in third grade.

**Did you know?** Academic performance continues to decrease for chronically absent students in comparison to their peers throughout middle and high school.

**Did you know?** Chronic absenteeism has a huge effect on the achievement gap in a child's knowledge.

**Did you know?** Since Covid, about one quarter of U.S. students qualified as chronically absent, meaning that they missed at least 10 percent of school days (or about three and a half weeks). That's vastly higher than before Covid.

**Did you know?** Last year, the estimated 8 million students who were chronically absent pre-pandemic had doubled to an estimated 16 million, or about 33 percent of students nationwide.

**Did you know?** By ninth grade, every week a student misses school reduces that student's chance of graduating by about 20 percentage points.

**Why is this happening?** One study suggests factors like unsafe school conditions, bullying, housing instability, substance abuse and delinquency affect a student's attendance. What's even worse is students who are chronically absent are at higher risk of falling behind, scoring lower on standardized tests and dropping out. It's also important to note students who struggle with attendance are also more likely to live in poverty, be children of color or have disabilities.



**The bottom line...** educators are worried that the kids missing out on school are the same kids who need it the most!

## What is Chronic Absenteeism?

Forty-four states and the District of Columbia deem a student as chronically absent if they miss 10 percent or more of school days. The rest set a specific number of days missed, or leave it up to local school districts to define.

The rise of chronic absenteeism across the United States is a significant problem with several negative consequences for students, schools, and society as a whole:

**Academic Impact:** Leads to lower academic achievement.

**Educational Inequity:** Disproportionately affects disadvantaged students, exacerbating educational disparities.

**Graduation Rates:** Predicts lower high school graduation rates, limiting future opportunities.

**Economic Impact:** Adversely affects local and national economies by reducing the skilled workforce.

**Long-term Consequences:** Increases risks of legal issues, substance abuse, and mental health problems, affecting individuals and society.



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# Featured Articles

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## What are schools doing to fix the rise in absences?

- **Working on creating a positive climate:** building strong relationships is directly tied to attendance
- **Focus on minimize obstacles:** being aware of each student's individual struggles
- **Open lines of communication:** keeping families informed about their children's learning progress
- **Encourage involvement:** provide opportunities for all students to get involved outside of regular class time
- **Creating a mentor programs:** research indicates that young adults who have a mentor are 55% less likely to miss a day of school
- **Empower and educate parents:** continual, ongoing education and resources shared makes an impact

## How can parents help fix the rise in school absences?

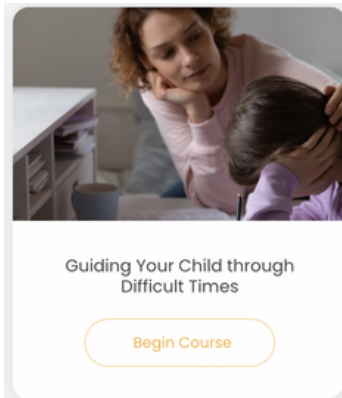
- **Establish a Consistent Routine:** Set a daily schedule that includes a regular wake-up time, school start time, and study time.
- **Prioritize Attendance:** Emphasize the importance of attending school regularly.
- **Communicate with the School:** Maintain open communication with teachers and school staff.
- **Address Health Concerns:** Ensure that your child receives regular health check-ups and vaccinations including mental health care.
- **Engage in Their Education:** Take an active interest in your child's schoolwork.
- **Foster a Love of Learning:** Encourage curiosity and a love of learning by exposing your child to a variety of educational experiences.
- **Address Bullying or Safety Concerns:** Create an open dialogue with your child about their school experiences.



For helpful parenting resources visit:  
[ParentGuidance.org](https://www.parentguidance.org)

**“School policies that recognize mental health as an acceptable reason for absence can help students take the time they need to care for themselves and restore their health.”**

**Barb Solish, director of Youth and Young Adult Initiatives for the National Alliance on Mental Illness**



**Take a no-cost course at [ParentGuidance.org](https://www.parentguidance.org)**

Take this course that provides practical and implementable advice to parents around guiding your child through difficult times that may be impacting their mental health.

## Works Cited

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