

# Attendance

## Maximizing the Full Head Start Experience

*Learn about strategies programs can use to work with key stakeholders to promote regular attendance. These strategies and guiding questions will help grantees develop policies around program attendance.*

### Building from a Strong Foundation

An effective attendance strategy is multi-faceted and comprehensive, using data to monitor attendance at both the child and program level. Data is used to identify factors contributing to absences and address barriers that prevent consistent attendance. Staff understand the importance of consistent attendance and their role in supporting families, including those facing complex challenges. Services are provided in a warm and welcoming environment, with a focus on relationship-building. Program leadership conveys the value of consistent attendance to staff and families.

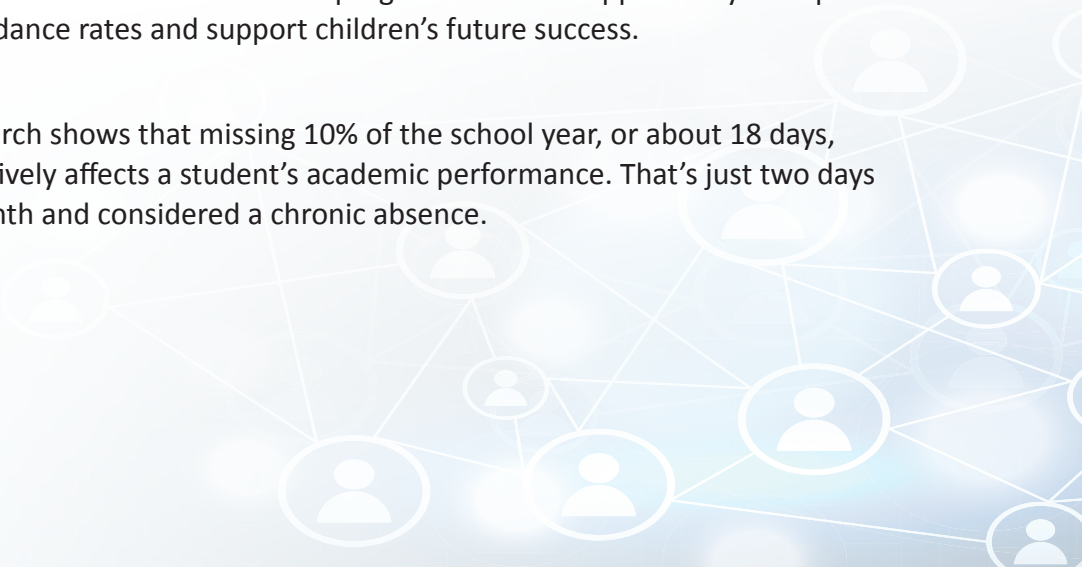
### Did you know?




Children who are chronically absent do not receive the full benefits of a quality early childhood experience. Children from low-income families are more likely to be chronically absent in the early grades and less likely to have access to needed resources to make up for missed time in school. Establishing good early attendance habits supports children's learning and leads to success in school and in life. Head Start programs have the opportunity to improve attendance rates and support children's future success.





Research shows that missing 10% of the school year, or about 18 days, negatively affects a student's academic performance. That's just two days a month and considered a chronic absence.





# A Systems Perspective: Questions to consider


 How do findings from your program's community assessment inform **program planning and service system design**? Does program planning address gaps in services and barriers to care? Does it identify available resources?


 How is your program's **data and evaluation** system used to monitor attendance trends and barriers? These may occur at the child, family, or community level. What kinds of data does your program collect on chronically absent children?

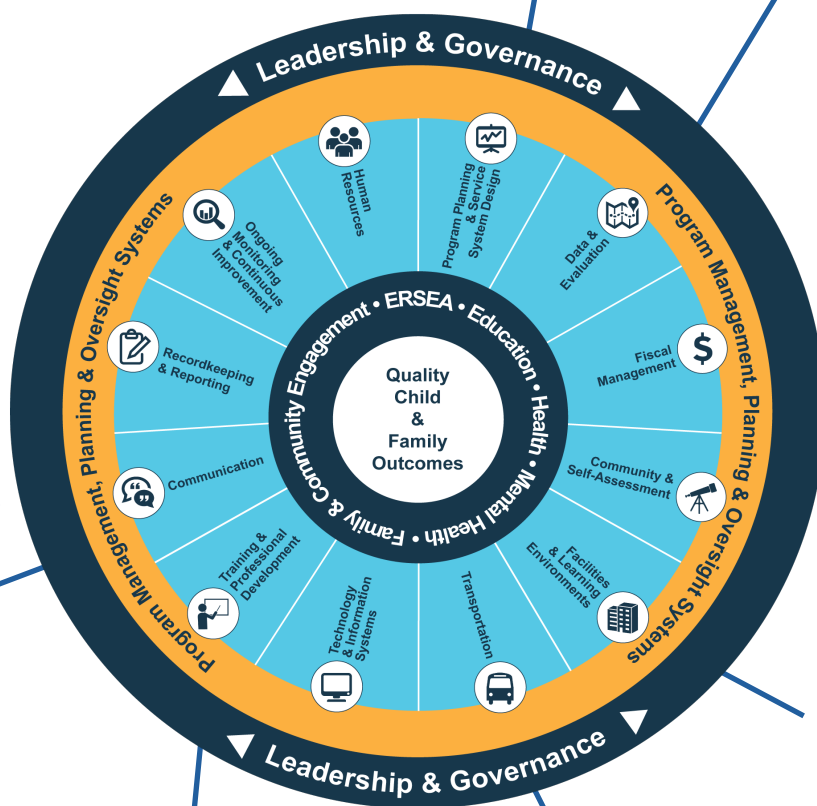
 How does your program's **community assessment** identify barriers to regular attendance? Barriers may include conditions such as lack of transportation, poor housing, or unsafe neighborhoods.

 How does your program make sure **facilities** are welcoming to all cultures and backgrounds? Do diverse families see their languages and lifestyles visually represented? Are the **learning environments** accessible to children of all abilities?

 How does your program's **communication** system share its attendance policies and make them accessible to all families? How does the program communicate the importance of regular attendance? Is it emphasized regularly?

 How does your program's **training and professional development** system teach staff to share the benefits of regular attendance with diverse families? Does it help staff identify and address unique barriers to regular attendance?

 How does your program assess how **transportation** needs impact attendance? Has your program considered specific ways to address these needs?





# Planning for Continuous Improvement



Attendance improvement strategies, both individual and program-wide, are developed, monitored, and evaluated. The resulting data is used for future planning. Programs use data for understanding the reasons behind inconsistent attendance. Staff have the resources and support they need to work with all families in a non-biased and accepting manner. The program engages families in their understanding of how consistent attendance supports children's learning and describes how attendance directly impacts children's success in school years and in life. Partnerships with community agencies provide resources to engage families and remove [attendance barriers](#).

## Resource Spotlight

### [Learning for New Leaders, Head Start A to Z, 2.0: Ongoing Monitoring and Continuous Improvement](#)

Programs use ongoing monitoring and continuous improvement to measure program performance. They identify areas of concern, make immediate program corrections, and generate reports. These processes are critical for identifying and achieving your attendance improvement goals. This training session explores the key components of these interrelated processes.

### [Transportation](#)

Transportation services can help you meet your program's attendance goals. These resources can help you understand requirements when transportation services are offered and how to expand those services to better meet community needs.

### [Transportation Services Checklist | ECLKC \(hhs.gov\)](#)

Use this checklist to maintain a comprehensive transportation system that is safe, cost effective, and compliant with state and federal regulations.

### [Requirements for Program Transportation Services | ECLKC \(hhs.gov\)](#)

Use this resource to better understand HSPPS requirements when transportation services are offered.

### [Attendance Works](#)

This action research project offers tools and interventions for reducing chronic absenteeism. Their materials are free and customizable by acknowledging attribution to Attendance Works.



ADMINISTRATION FOR  
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