

## Essential Strategies for Boosting Regular Attendance

[Music]

Narrator: Hello from Bennington County Head Start! Today, I want to emphasize the advantages of regular attendance for children. Establishing a pattern of consistent attendance in Head Start enhances children's cognitive development, social skills, and long-term educational success.

Research indicates that missing 10% of the school year adversely impacts a student's academic performance. That's just two days a month. That is considered chronic absence. The link between preschool attendance and attendance in later years persists into the elementary grades.

According to the Head Start Program Performance Standards, programs must monitor and analyze individual child-attendance data. Collecting data on reasons for absences is crucial for identifying trends and patterns, enabling targeted supports for families.

Strategies to promote attendance include contacting parents within one hour of the program start time to ensure the child's well-being, making home visits, and supporting families facing barriers to regular attendance with a success plan. In addition, if the monthly daily average attendance rate falls below 85%, a program must analyze the causes of absenteeism to identify systematic issues that may be affecting children's attendance.

To address these barriers, collaboration with community partners providing resources – such as access to transportation, health services, and support for unstable housing – can be instrumental. This is particularly important for supporting children experiencing homelessness.

Building strong and trusting relationships with parents contributes to enhancing students' attendance. As parents become more engaged in their child's learning and foster stronger relationships with their child's teacher, there is an increased support for academic progress and more opportunities for program staff to emphasize the importance of regular attendance in Head Start.

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