

# Why Attendance Matters: The Facts

## What is chronic absenteeism?

**Chronic absenteeism means missing too much school—for any reason—excused or unexcused. Texas State Law defines chronic absenteeism as missing 10% (or around 18 days) during a school year.**

## Why is Chronic Absence a Concern?

- Research proves that children who are chronically absent in preschool, kindergarten, and first grade are much less likely to read at grade level by the third grade. Students who cannot read at grade level by the end of third grade are four times more likely than proficient readers to drop out of high school.
- For every day of school missed, it takes three days to make up what was taught.
- By the sixth grade, if a student continues to be chronically absent, it is a leading indicator of whether he or she will drop out of high school.
- In the ninth grade, chronic absences are a better indicator than test scores of a student's likelihood to graduate from high school.

## Did You Know?

- Kindergarten and first-grade classes often have absenteeism rates as high as those in high school. Missing two days a month—excused or unexcused—can add up to a child being considered chronically absent.
- Two out of ten students in kindergarten and first grade are chronically absent. These early absences correlate with reading difficulties and poor attendance patterns in later years.
- The effects of poor attendance are particularly pronounced among low-income children, who need more time in the classroom to master reading and are less likely to have access to resources outside of school to help them catch up. Unfortunately, low-income children are four times more likely to be chronically absent.
- Parents are often unaware of the corrosive effects of absenteeism and how quickly absences add up to academic trouble in the early grades.
- A student who misses 10 days or more during a school year is 20 percent less likely to graduate from high school and 25 percent less likely to ever enroll in college.
- Chronic absence can affect a student's ability to earn a living. Dropouts are less likely to succeed in a career, and even those who do graduate will not do well at work without good attendance habits.
- When students improve their attendance rates, they improve their academic prospects and chances for graduating