



FACT SHEET

Truancy

America rates number 10 worldwide in school completion, with 30 percent of our students dropping out before they complete high school, according to the National Center for School Engagement. Of those who drop out, 80 percent had chronic attendance problems.

Truancy is also a strong predictor of involvement in the juvenile justice system.

Causes

Students may skip school because of:

- Bullying
- Academic frustration
- No feeling of connection to teachers
- Family responsibilities
- Lack of appropriate clothing
- Parental opinion that "school doesn't matter"

Patterns

When we talk about truancy, most people picture teens ditching school. In fact, older kids who skip school typically had poor attendance in the primary grades. This creates an excellent opportunity for schools to intervene early and work with families on whatever issues are keeping kids out of school.

Solutions

Some schools have launched initiatives to improve attendance. Strategies fall into two broad categories. Successful programs generally use both.

Tracking Schools should track absences and inform parents immediately about unexcused absences. Working with families and students to stress the importance of attendance – before a child is at risk of falling behind – can get a student back on track quickly.

Engagement Attendance is far better in schools where kids feel connected to adults and to each other. Simple things like a principal greeting children by name or more complex solutions, like citizenship and character curriculums, can help students view their schools positively and be much less likely to look for excuses to miss a day.