

**FOCUS
ON
ATTENDANCE**



The Focus on Attendance:

Early Childhood Handbook

Allegheny County Department of Human Services



Focus on Attendance is a partnership between The Allegheny County Department of Human Services, The Allegheny Intermediate Unit, the Fifth Judicial District of Pennsylvania (specifically Juvenile Court, Magisterial District Court and Juvenile Probation) and local schools, grades Kindergarten through 12.

Focus on Attendance can be used as a Community Based Attendance Improvement Program by school staff. It is also approved by the 5th Judicial District as an Adjudication Alternative Program for the Magisterial District Courts. Focus on Attendance facilitates positive communication between systems, provides technical assistance and offers coordination of services. Direct supports to children and families are provided by a variety of resources and services.

Let's start here

COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE IS NOW 6 TO 18 YEARS OLD

What Is Truancy?

Truancy is having three (3) or more unexcused absences in the current school year and these absences do not need to be in a row.

What Is Habitual Truancy?

Habitual truancy means having six (6) or more unexcused absences in the current school year. These absences do not need to be in a row.

What Happens If Your Child Is Habitually Truant?

Once your child becomes habitually truant, the school must take certain actions depending on whether your child is under fifteen (15) or is fifteen (15) or older. These actions include referrals to attendance improvement programs, the county Children, Youth and Family Services (CYF) agency, or file a citation with the Magisterial District Judge.

Always Remember

It is the responsibility of the STUDENT to make up all schoolwork missed during his/her absence. Contact your child's counselor or social worker with any questions.

Did you know that...

In 2007, the Head Start Act was enacted to ensure that barriers were removed to the enrollment of homeless children in Head Start programs. The act enforces the following:



Homeless children are identified and prioritized for enrollment



Allow families of homeless children to apply, enroll, and attend Head Start without required documentation

“Four in the Door”: The four items needed to enroll a child in public school

1. Proof of age (copy of birth certificate, prior school records with child’s age listed)
2. Proof of residency (lease, deed, utility bills, driver’s license/identification)
3. Proof of immunizations from doctor or former school medical records
4. Signed Act 26 statement (Provided by the school and can be completed by person enrolling the child)

Enrollment for Students who are Homeless or in Foster Care:
All school districts in Allegheny County have a dedicated, school staff member for addressing the enrollment and educational needs of students experiencing homelessness or foster care.

Learn more at:
Homeless- <https://homeless.center-school.org/>
Foster Care- www.pafostercare.org



Immunization Requirement(s):



SCHOOL VACCINATION INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

The Department of Health is changing school immunization regulations beginning in August 2017. The regulations are intended to ensure that children attending school in the commonwealth are adequately protected against potential outbreaks of vaccine preventable diseases.



A CHILD MUST HAVE REQUIRED VACCINES OR RISK EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOL.

A child must have the required medically-appropriate vaccines or a plan to complete those vaccines or risk exclusion from school. A child may still obtain medical, religious or philosophical exemption from meeting the immunization requirements. Talk to your child's pediatrician about the vaccines your child needs to attend school.



NEW VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS:

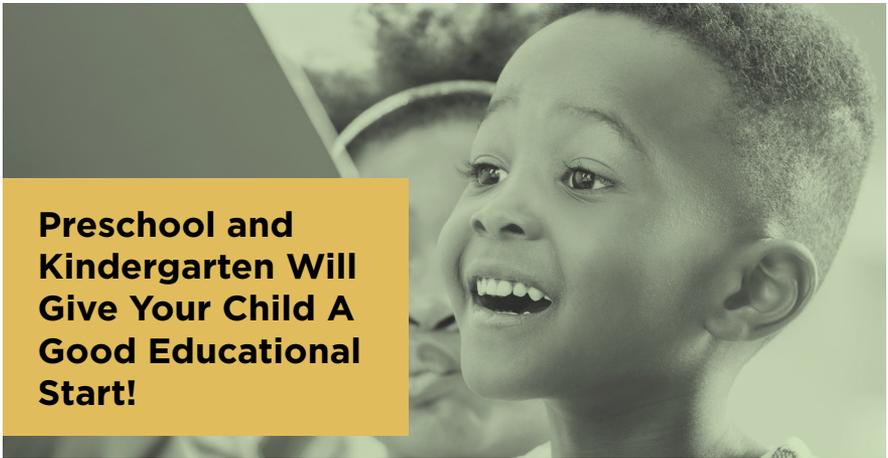
- combination form for diphtheria and tetanus;
- pertussis vaccination;
- combination form for measles, mumps and rubella; and
- meningococcal conjugate vaccine for entry into 12th grade, or in an ungraded school, in the school year the child turns 18.

For more information on the vaccines your child needs to attend school, visit dontwaitvaccinate.pa.gov or talk to your child's pediatrician.

dontwaitvaccinate.pa.gov



Early childhood education is important...



Preschool and Kindergarten Will Give Your Child A Good Educational Start!

Help Your Child Succeed in Preschool: Build the Habit of Good Attendance



Early School Success goes hand in hand with good attendance!

DID YOU KNOW?

Showing up on time every day is important to your child's success and learning from preschool forward.

Missing 10 percent of preschool (one or two days every few weeks) can:

- Make it harder to develop early reading skills
- Make it harder to get ready for kindergarten and first grade
- Develop a poor attendance pattern that's hard to break

You can make the most of preschool by encouraging your child to attend every day.

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/>

ATTEND TODAY, ACHIEVE TOMORROW

GOOD SCHOOL ATTENDANCE MEANS...



PRESCHOOLERS
build skills and develop
good habits for showing
up on time



**ELEMENTARY
STUDENTS**
read well by the
end of third grade



HIGH SCHOOLERS
stay on track for
graduation



**COLLEGE
STUDENTS**
earn their degrees



WORKERS
succeed in
their jobs

Too many absences—excused or unexcused—can keep students from succeeding in school and in life. How many are too many? 10% of the school year—that's 18 missed days or 2 days a month—can knock students off track.



Kindergarten Readiness: Why Is It Important

The academic success of children in later years depends heavily upon their kindergarten readiness. The first few years of education are the most crucial to establishing a solid foundation from which children can adapt to school systems and learn successfully.

During this period, children develop primary skills that form the foundations of school readiness and social interaction.
<https://www.unitedway.org/blog/kindergarten-readiness-why-is-it-important>

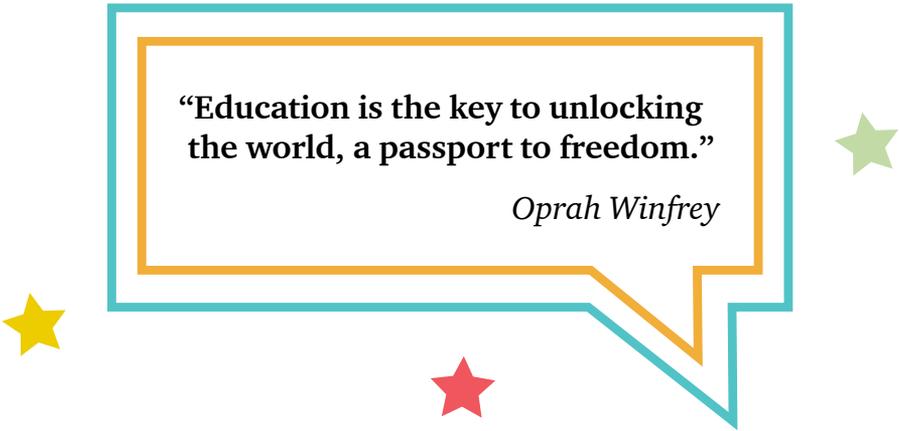
**“Don’t prepare the path for the child,
prepare the child for the path.”**

Anonymous

Why should your child attend Kindergarten?

The kindergarten year is an important time of transition for young children. It represents the first year of formal schooling for 98 percent of the children in the United States, and it marks the bridge between early childhood education and the primary grades of school.

Taken from *Why we care about K in K-12* article from the National Education Association website (<http://www.nea.org/home/18180.htm>)



“Education is the key to unlocking the world, a passport to freedom.”

Oprah Winfrey

Kindergarten provides children with...

- the opportunity to learn and practice the essential social, emotional, problem-solving, and study skills that they will use throughout his schooling.
- the opportunity for development of self-esteem

Taken from *What Makes a Good Kindergarten?* article from the Scholastic website (<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/school-success/school-involvement/what-makes-good-kindergarten.html>)

POSITIVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE is Important to Student Success!

IF YOUR CHILD MISSES SCHOOL

- ✓ **CALL THE SCHOOL TO LET THEM KNOW YOUR CHILD WILL BE ABSENT OR LATE.**
- ✓ **WRITE AN EXCUSE AND HAVE YOUR CHILD PUT IT IN THEIR BACKPACK.**
- ✓ **CALL AND MAKE SURE YOUR CHILD TURNED IN THE NOTE TO THEIR HOMEROOM TEACHER OR THE SCHOOL OFFICE THE NEXT DAY.**

TAKING THESE STEPS WILL MAKE SURE THAT YOUR CHILD'S ABSENCE WILL BE MARKED AS EXCUSED AND AVOID A TRUANCY CITATION BEING ISSUED.



Don't Forget...

If your child misses or is late to school due to a medical appointment, please turn a note in from the medical provider this may be an excused absence. You can ask the doctor to fax to the school.

Children/teens **OFTEN “FORGET”** to turn in the excuse or doctor’s statement once they return to school. So, you will have to follow-up with the school.

I need to stay home if...



I have a fever
100°F or higher



I am vomiting
within 24 hours



I have diarrhea
within 24 hours



I have a rash
with itching or fever



I have head lice
actively itching



I have an eye infection
redness, itching, pus



I have been in the hospital
hospital stay or E.R. visit

I can go back when I...



am fever free
without medication
for 24 hours.



free from vomiting
for at least 24 hours



free from diarrhea
for at least 24 hours



free from rash,
itching, or fever; to
the doctor if needed



treated with
appropriate lice
treatment at home



free from drainage
or to the doctor if
needed



released by my
medical provider to
return to school

If your child has strep throat or another bacterial infection, he/she should stay home until the antibiotic has been given for at least 24 hours and your health care provider has given permission for your child to return to school. We encourage you to seek medical attention when your child is sick and to follow your health provider's recommendations about returning to school and other activities.

Important:

Once a child is registered for Kindergarten, attendance is taken.

If the child **DOES NOT ATTEND** on a regular basis, the child **CAN BE FOUND TRUANT** and a **TRUANCY PETITION CAN BE FILED** against the parent.

Parent Tips

Tips to improve school attendance

- Tell your child why school attendance is important
- Set an age appropriate bedtime for your child and stick to it.
- Teach your children how to set and use their own alarm to get up in the morning.
- Pick out clothing the day before, and keep bookbags and lunch near the door and ready to go.
- Take baths or showers the night before instead of in the morning.
- Have your child do a quiet activity before bedtime (ex., reading or listening to a story) instead of stimulating activities like video games or TV.
- Avoid TV on school mornings.
- Tell your child “good job” when they are ready for school on time – let them know how proud you are.

Good school attendance is important to your student's educational success!

Resources

Early Childhood Program(s)

Head Start

Full-day programming to support school readiness, either in the home or classroom.

Enrollment Options:

Early Learning Resource Center/ELRC (412)350-6611

Allegheny Intermediate Unit (412)394-4594

Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center (412) 488-2750

Pittsburgh Public Schools (412) 529-4291 (select Option 2)

Head Start Program Locator from the Office of Head Start

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/center-locator>

PA Pre-K Counts

Pre-kindergarten classroom education for children ages 3 to 5. Free to eligible families through childcare subsidy program.

Enrollment Options:

Allegheny Intermediate Unit (412) 394-4594

Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center (412) 488-2750

For more information see the Early Learning Programs section at the PA Compass website at www.compass.state.pa.us

Early Intervention

Provides support and services to families of children with developmental delays and disabilities, ages birth to 5.

Enrollment Options:

Allegheny Intermediate Unit (412) 394-4594

Alliance for Infants & Toddlers (412) 885-6000

Pittsburgh Public Early Intervention Office (412) 323-3960

Therapeutic Early Intervention Services (TEIS) (412)271-8347

Emergency Childcare Program(s)

Jeremiah's Place

Emergency childcare for children birth to 6, ranging from a few hours to a few days. Childcare is FREE.

For more information call (412) 924-0726

Wright Childcare Solutions

Daycare and emergency childcare services serving the Greater Pittsburgh Area.

Locations:

- Wright Family Daycare (6mos to 2yrs)
- Learning Loft at Urban Academy (2 to 12yrs)
- Learning Loft Hill District (6wks to 12yrs)

For more information call (412) 336-8637

Teenies Tots

Drop-in and emergency childcare services available M-F, 6am-8pm.

For more information call (412) 761-1836

Davis Family Childcare

Drop-in and emergency childcare services available for kids 6 weeks to school age.

For more information call (412) 867-7701



Education Resources

Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC):

<https://elrc5.alleghenycounty.us/>

To get enrolled in childcare/apply for childcare financial assistance, contact (412) 350-3577

PA Department of Education

www.education.pa.gov

Education Law Center

<https://www.elc-pa.org/>

Special Education Resources

Warmline for emotional support from peers

1-866-661-WARM (9276)

Alliance for Infants and Toddlers

For more information: 412-885-6000

Department of Human Services Bureau of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

Education Specialist/School Based Liaison

Individualized Education Plan (IEP) & 504 Plan support

For more information: 412-350-4456

Allegheny County Family Centers

Community hubs where parents with young children can attend programs, access resources, and connect with other parents. Centers focus on child development, health, positive parenting, school-readiness, financial stability, and a network of other community services. Allegheny County Family Support is a network of 28 neighborhood-based centers.

For more information, contact Lori Vollman (412) 394-5962 or visit <http://www.alleghenycountyfamilysupport.org/>

Home Visiting

Family-focused supports for pregnant and parenting families of newborns and young children.

Enrollment Options:

Allegheny Intermediate Unit3 (412) 394-4594

DHS Allegheny Link (866) 730-2368

Family Foundations University of Pittsburgh
Office of Child Development (412) 383-3367

We Care About Your Education!

To learn more visit us at <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Resources/Education/Resources-for-Families.aspx> and click on **Truancy/School Attendance** for more information!

Check us out on  

#FOCUSONATTENDANCE

Any questions, please contact us at:
Focus_Attendance@AlleghenyCounty.US

NOTES



**The Focus on Attendance Partnership:
A Partnership between DHS, AIU and JPO**

