



OFFICE of CHILDREN &
FAMILIES in the COURTS

The Pennsylvania Educational Success & Truancy Prevention Roundtable Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Demonstrate effective collaboration efforts including sharing the accountability and responsibility for truancy

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Create an educational culture/climate that prioritizes students' connection to their school and engages families

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Implement specific strategies with measurable outcomes targeting prevention, early identification and intervention

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Track truancy data and program outcomes and share information with stakeholders

RECOMMENDATION 5:

Build sustainable funding bases and allocate resources based on data-informed decisions and partnerships that maximize efficiencies

THE PARTNERSHIP

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.

REFERRAL PROCESS

Referrals are accepted from schools or Magisterial District Courts for students who may have missed six or more unexcused absences.

Please contact Focus_Attendance@alleghenycounty.us to request a Focus on Attendance referral form.

To read more about Focus on Attendance, please visit alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Resources/Education.aspx

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FOCUS

ON

ATTENDANCE

PARTNERSHIP



For PARENTS/CARETAKERS

Is your child struggling to attend school regularly?

Are you receiving notices from the school about your child's school attendance?

Have you received a citation for truancy from a Magisterial District Court?

FOCUS ON ATTENDANCE PARTNERS CAN:

- ✓ Provide you with resources you may need
- ✓ Help you to engage with your school
- ✓ Support you and your child at the Magisterial District Court hearings
- ✓ Assist you to obtain special education services
- ✓ Connect you to an in-home service worker who is trained to assist families around resolving poor school attendance
- ✓ Provide information to you about other school options for your child

For COURT PARTNERS

A referral to Focus on Attendance can be used as an Adjudication Alternative Program for the Magisterial District Courts.

FOCUS ON ATTENDANCE PARTNERS CAN:

- ✓ Provide resource support within court hearings
- ✓ Consult on options for case planning, policy and procedure development
- ✓ Facilitate communication between Judges and the Office of Children, Youth and Families and Juvenile Probation

For SCHOOL PARTNERS

A referral to Focus on Attendance can be used as a Community Based Attendance Improvement Program by school staff.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What are the requirements to be eligible for assistance?

The student should have six or more unexcused absences before a referral is made. If chronic tardies are a concern, assistance can be provided.

Is Focus on Attendance 'mandatory'?

No, it is a free and voluntary program. However, if the family declines any assistance and the school files a truancy citation, the Magisterial District Judge can offer it as an alternative to a fine. School staff can refer students/families involved with the courts in a child welfare case or a juvenile probation case with or without parent permission.

Who can make referrals to Focus on Attendance?

School personnel and Magisterial District Judges can make referrals to Focus on Attendance. However, if the Magisterial District Judge orders a student or family to work with Focus on Attendance, a referral form filled out by the school staff is still needed to ensure the best possible outcomes.

How do I communicate with Focus on Attendance staff?

Referrals are accepted electronically. A confirmation email is sent when the referral is received. If there are any questions, or concerns, please email Focus_Attendance@alleghenycounty.us.

For SERVICE PROVIDERS

You may be working with a family with school-aged children who are missing school often. Or you may be serving a young person *because* of concerns about school attendance. Regardless, you are in the perfect position to have a positive impact on school attendance due to your relationship with the children or family. We hope you have the opportunity to help in the following ways:

Assist the student, family and school staff to recognize and uncover the root causes of poor school attendance

Add a goal (or goals) in your case planning to address these root causes

FOCUS ON ATTENDANCE PARTNERS CAN:

- ✓ Help judges and other system partners understand your role
- ✓ Help you understand how students involved with your services are impacted by poor school attendance and provide training and educational opportunities for your staff
- ✓ Connect you with school staff and inform you of school attendance concerns of the young people you serve
- ✓ Consult with you or your staff in order to access needed resources and referrals

