WHY SHOULD WE FOCUS ON ATTENDANCE?

- Children can’t learn if they aren’t present in school, so attendance is a must.
- We can influence attendance and poor attendance can be prevented.
- Parents – especially in the early years – are best positioned to ensure children attend school and to build the expectation around attendance.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

HELPING PARENTS

**WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO**

- **Educate** families about the adverse impact of poor attendance on school achievement.
- **Inform** parents about the positive incentives students receive for good attendance; consider recognizing parents as well for their role in their child’s attendance.
- **Notify** parents that their child’s absence was noticed either through a call home or, if feasible, an email.
- **Reach** out to families to find out what is happening if children begin to miss school regularly. Where appropriate, refer families to available resources in the community.

**WHAT COMMUNITY AGENCIES CAN DO**

- **Teach** parents about the importance of regular attendance starting in kindergarten.
- **Help** parents of older students understand that excessive absence is a critical warning sign for dropping out.
- **Partner** with schools to provide social work and case management supports to families of children with extended absences.
- **Address** barriers to attendance by offering services (economic supports, social services, etc.) at schools and referring families to other available resources in the community.

**WHAT PARENTS CAN DO**

- **Help** your child get into the habit and learn the value of regular routines.
- **Teach** your child that attending school is non-negotiable unless they are truly sick.
- **Build** relationships with other families and discuss how you can help each other out (e.g., drop off or pick up children, babysit, translation assistance) in times of need or emergencies.
- **Identify** non-academic activities (drama, art, music, etc.) that can help motivate your child’s interest in school and learning and seek out schools that can offer those experiences.

HOW IS ATTENDANCE FOCUSED ON SCHOOL SUCCESS?

- Chronic absence in Kindergarten is associated with lower academic performance in 1st grade among all children and, for poor children, predicts the lowest levels of educational achievement at the end of fifth grade.
- By 6th grade, missing 20% (or two months of school) is a critical warning sign of school drop-out.
- By 9th grade, missing 20% of school can be a better predictor of drop-out than 8th grade test scores.