

Mississippi Department of Education

Prepare Today + Achieve Tomorrow = School Success

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MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Ensuring a bright future for every child

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VISION

To create a world-class educational system that gives students the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and the workforce, and to flourish as parents and citizens

MISSION

To provide leadership through the development of policy and accountability systems so that all students are prepared to compete in the global community

1. All Students Proficient and Showing Growth in All Assessed Areas
2. Every Student Graduates From High School and is Ready for College and Career
3. Every Child Has Access to a High-Quality Early Childhood Program
4. Every School Has Effective Teachers and Leaders
5. Every Community Effectively Using a World-Class Data System to Improve Student Outcomes
6. Every School and District is Rated “C” or Higher

Today's Learning Opportunities

- Define chronic absenteeism
- Research says...
- Value of Kindergarten
- Executive Function
- Family Engagement
- Use your Data
- Resources

“

If children aren't in school,
they don't learn. Improving
school attendance improves
success in school.

”

Why is it important?

Children with inconsistent or unstable school attendance miss out on adult support and guidance to help them master foundational skills that are essential for success in later grades.

Chronic Absenteeism

- Chronic absence is defined as missing 10% or more of a given school year.
- In a school year comprised of 180 days, chronically absent students miss 18 days—nearly one month of learning.

What creates the cycle of Chronic Absenteeism?



Chronic absenteeism early in education

- Lack of school staff
- Limited resources
- Home environment
- Transportation issues
- Health concerns
- Lack of knowledge
- Parent beliefs

Research Highlights

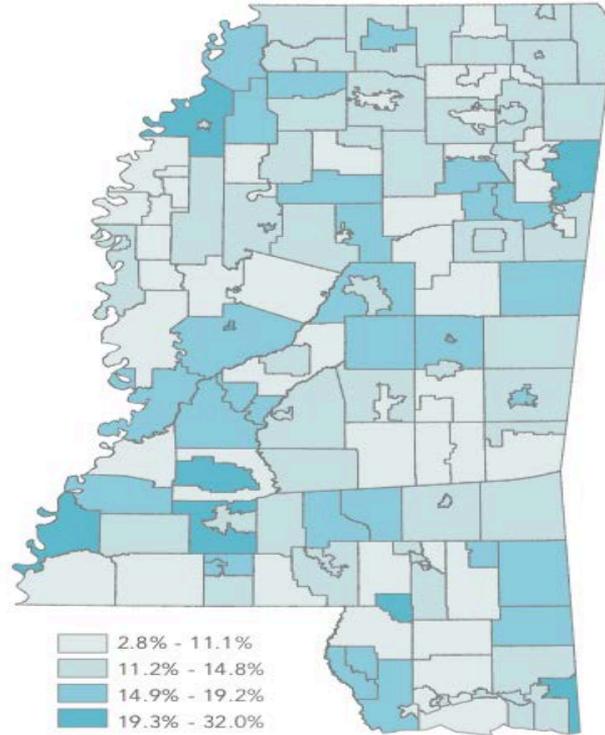
- Absenteeism affects as many as 7.5 million students a year.
- 1 in 10 kindergarteners and first-graders are chronically absent.
- Chronic absenteeism in kindergarten and first grade is linked with a decline in test scores and can cancel out school readiness.
- Among low-income children, chronic absence in kindergarten predicts the lowest levels of educational achievement at the end of 5th grade.
- Low-income kindergartners were four times more likely to be chronically absent than their more affluent peers.

nieer.wordpress.com

The Empty Space on the Carpet: Absenteeism in the Early Years

Mississippi Research

CHRONIC ABSENCE K-12, 2014/15⁵

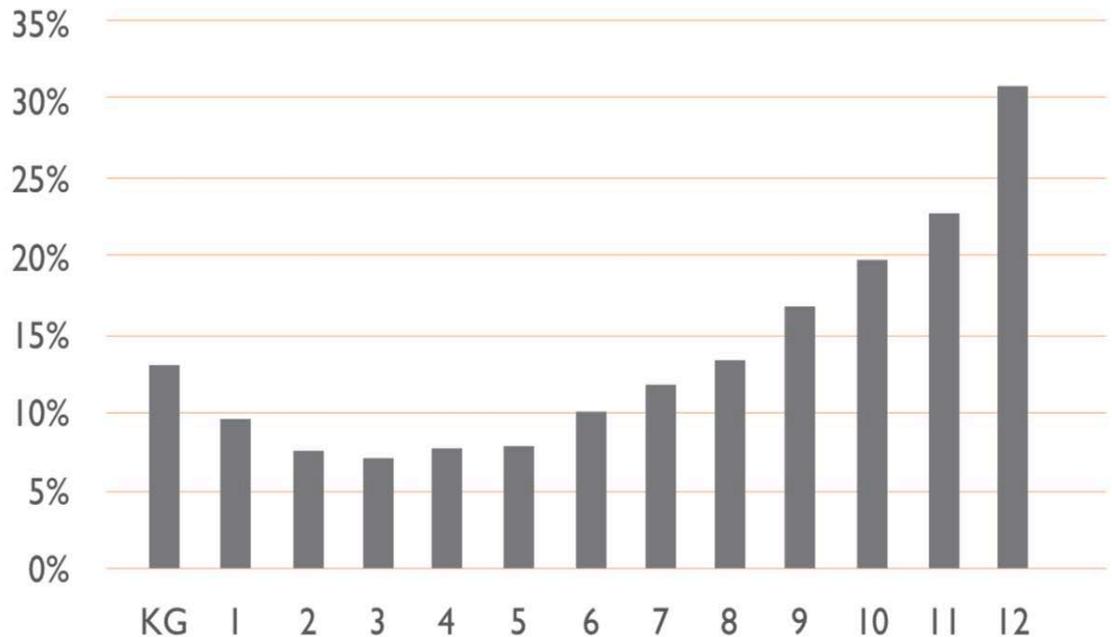


MS: 13.2%

Mississippi Research

- Chronic absence rates start high in kindergarten, decrease through elementary school years, and increase again in middle and high school.
- During the 2013/14 school year, 14% of kindergartners, 15% of 8th graders, and 36% of 12th graders were chronically absent.

Chronic Absence Rates by Grade in Mississippi, 2014/15

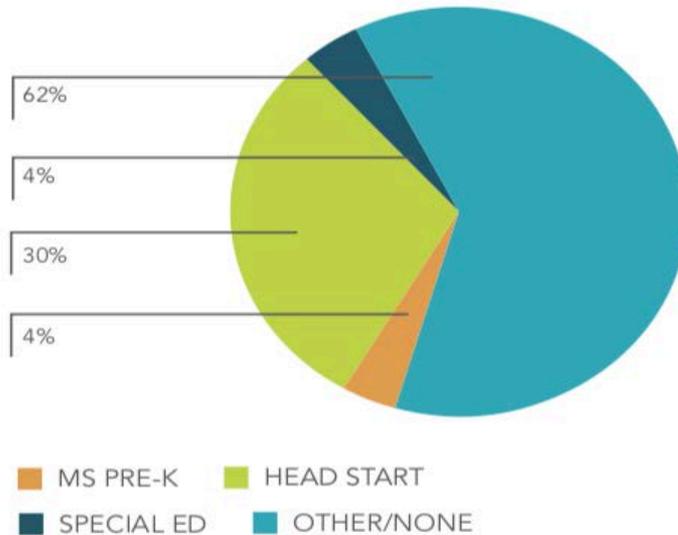


Impact

- Real academic gains can't happen without consistent student attendance, no matter how prepared the teacher.
- Pattern of absenteeism often continues into later grades.
- Short- and long-term academic program, family, and child outcomes are affected and include:
 - Achievement levels in early grades
 - Test scores

Who is coming to Kindergarten?

PERCENTAGE OF MS 4 YEAR
OLDS ENROLLED IN PRE-K
AND HEAD START¹



¹Other/none refers to students who may be enrolled in another type of private or publicly funded program (e.g., state-subsidized child care) or may not be attending a center-based program

Value of Kindergarten

- Adult support and guidance to help them master foundational skills that are essential for success in later grades
- Reflects an understanding of child development and principles embodied in the curriculum design and general learning environment
- The instructional delivery is to be organized around learning centers, where opportunities are provided for children to acquire skills and concepts that include problem-solving, decision-making, questioning, evaluating, and discovering.

Executive Function and Self-Regulation

Executive function and self-regulation skills are the mental processes that enable us to plan, focus attention, remember instruction, and juggle multiple tasks successfully. These skills are critical to lifelong learning.

Executive Function and Self Regulation

Video on executive function

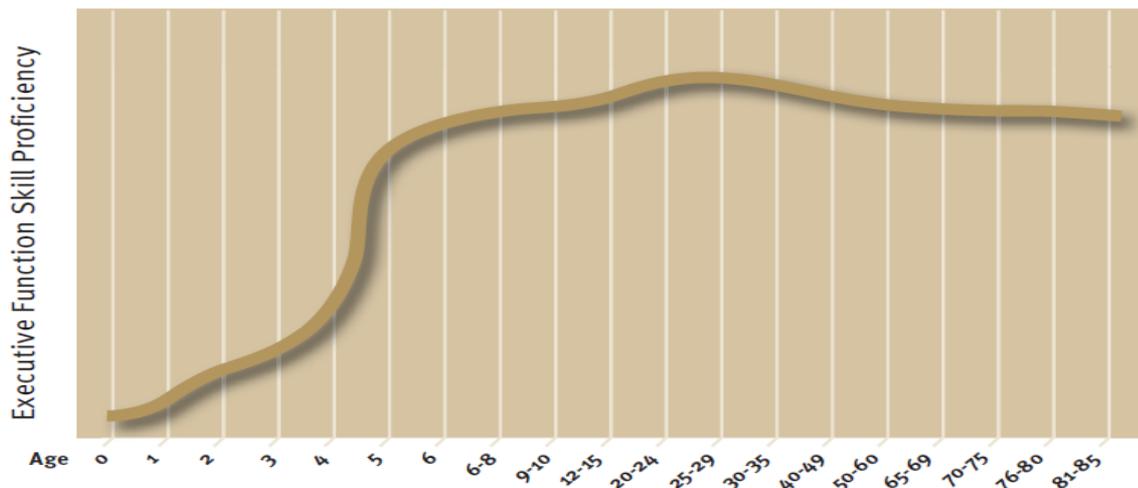
Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University



https://youtu.be/efCq_vHUMqs

Executive Function

Executive Function Skills Build Throughout Childhood and Adolescence



A range of tests measuring different forms of executive function skills indicates that they begin to develop shortly after birth, with ages 3 to 5 providing a window of opportunity for dramatic growth in these skills. Growth continues throughout adolescence and early adulthood; proficiency begins to decline in later life.

Source: Weintraub et al. (In Press).⁹⁹

Executive Function and Self Regulation

Relies on three types of brain processes:

Working
Memory



Inhibitory
Control
(Cognitive
Self-
Control)



Mental
Flexibility
(Cognitive
Flexibility)



Executive
Function

Executive Function and Self-Regulation

- **Working memory** refers to our ability to hold on to information so that one can act on that information at a later time.

For example: remembering their role/scene in a play

Standards this example would cover: TH:RE8.1.K, TH:PR6.1.K, TH:PR5.1.KA, TH:PR5.1.KB, TH:PR4.1.KA

Executive Function and Self-Regulation

- **Mental flexibility (cognitive flexibility)** refers to our ability to maintain attention and to shift attention in response to different demands or roles in different settings.

For example: building a tower; if it falls, child uses another strategy

Standards this example would cover: K.G.3, K.G.4, K.G.6, P.K.5B.1, P.K.5B.2, P.K.5B.3, L.K.1, SL.K.3, SL.K.6, VA.CR1.1.K, VA.CR2.1.K

Executive Function and Self-Regulation

Inhibitory control (self-control) enables us to set priorities and resist impulsive actions or responses.

For example: When frustrated; instead of hitting/kicking, the child is able to stop and think before acting

Standards this example would cover: SS.CHR.3B, SS. CHR.3D

Executive Function: What You Can Do – Start Early!

- Establish routines.
- Model social behavior.
- Create and maintain supportive relationships.
- Foster creative center time and social connections.
- Teach children how to cope with stress.
- Provide opportunities for directing own actions with decreasing adult supervision. (This is done over time.)
- Provide daily physical activity (exercise).

How to support it?

- State education agencies are increasingly prioritizing the issue of school attendance.
- WHY is absenteeism important?
- What are the roots of chronic absenteeism?
- Promising Strategies

Strategies to Reduce Absenteeism

- Build Relationships.
- Nurture a culture of attendance.
- Catch problems early.
- Create a more positive school culture and a focus on engaging instruction.
- Utilize Mentors, Teachers, and School Counselors.

It's not one size fits all...

“greater understanding of the personal situations of parents helps teachers improve their communication and ability to provide support and resources when needed”

Family Engagement for School Success

- Build relationships
- Communication
- Prepare them, tell them, teach them, and engage them
- Family engagement activities

Family Engagement Activities

- Welcome and Empower ALL Families
- Student Success
- Leadership and Building Capacity
- Community Investment and Partnerships

Family Engagement Activities



Use your Data

- Administrator's can:
 - Secure your school's chronic absence data
 - Review your school's attendance data
 - Identify individuals and groups of students who are missing 10% of their days on roll
 - Use data, both quantitative and qualitative, to provide additional supports for chronically absent students
 - Set goals and monitor progress

What's happening in your backyard?



https://youtu.be/cYh_mrLyF6g

Resources



**Help Your Child Succeed in School:
Build the Habit of Good Attendance Early**
School success goes hand in hand with good attendance!

DID YOU KNOW?

- Starting in kindergarten, too many absences can cause children to fall behind in school.
- Missing 10 percent (or about 18 days) can make it harder to learn to read.
- Students can still fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks.
- Being late to school may lead to poor attendance.
- Absences can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up.

Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school—and themselves. Start building this habit in preschool so they learn right away that going to school on time, every day is important. Good attendance will help children do well in high school, college, and at work.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Set a regular bed time and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Find out what day school starts and make sure your child has the required shots.
- Introduce your child to her teachers and classmates before school starts to help her transition.
- Don't let your child stay home unless she is truly sick. Keep in mind complaints of a stomach ache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home.
- If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, school counselors, or other parents for advice on how to make her feel comfortable and excited about learning.
- Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.
- Avoid medical appointments and extended trips when school is in session.

When Do Absences Become a Problem?



Note: These numbers assume a 180-day school year.

For more on school readiness, visit attendanceworks.org and reachoutandread.org

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Prepare Today

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Achieve Tomorrow

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School Success

Wrap-up

