



Kindergarten COUNTS

Chronic Absence in Kindergarten

An information and tool sheet for anyone who works with families with young children

KEY MESSAGES

for communicating with parents about the importance of kindergarten attendance

1. Researchers have analyzed years of data that shows that attendance in kindergarten is extremely important and connected to academic success in the later grades.
2. Good attendance in kindergarten (missing less than 10% of school or approximately 18 days during the school year) is associated with higher levels of achievement in fifth grade.
3. Developing good habits starts early—attendance is also important for parents who have children in early learning and child care settings. Developing good attendance habits in these settings sets the stage for better attendance in kindergarten.

A flyer for parents available in multiple languages can be downloaded online at: www.multco.us/sun/kindergartencounts. Use the flyer to **talk to parents about attendance**; find opportunities for one-on-one and large group communication of the key messages to parents.

→ The RESEARCH¹

Chronic absence means missing 10% or more of the school year and includes unexcused and excused absences. This translates to about 18 school days depending on the total number of school days in a particular district. Chronic absence in kindergarten is associated with lower academic performance in first grade among all children. For children in poverty, it predicted the lowest levels of educational achievement at the end of fifth grade **even if their attendance improved after kindergarten**. For more information and resources, visit www.attendancecounts.org.

1. Chang, H. & Romero, M. (2008). Present, engaged, and accounted for: The critical importance of addressing chronic absence in the early grades. National Center for Children in Poverty. Retrieved from http://www.nccp.org/publications/pdf/text_837.pdf

→ In MULTNOMAH COUNTY

Nationally, 1 in 10 kindergarten and 1st grade students are chronically absent each year. Across the six largest school districts in Multnomah County, 1 in 4 kindergarten and 1st grade students were chronically absent in the 2009-10 school year. **In kindergarten alone, almost 1 in 3 students (29%) were chronically absent that year.**