Attendance: How to Talk to Families

Partnering with families is an important piece of any successful attendance initiative. The focus in all conversations with families addressing attendance should be positive and engaging. The goal is to inform parents of the importance of consistent attendance, the impact it has on their child’s future school success and to work closely together to insure the best possible outcomes for their child.

What to Say:

* Children can suffer academically if they miss as little as 10% of the school year (16 days)
* Some absences are unavoidable. Children get sick and will need to stay home but the important thing is to get your child to school as often as possible
* Occasional days away from school matter as much as several days in a row. Just 2 days a month adds up to 10% of the school year.
* Attendance matters even in preschool. Missing 16 days of preschool makes it harder for your child to develop early reading skills, get the skills they need for kindergarten and creates a pattern of poor attendance that is hard to break.
* Creating daily routines of school attendance can carry into a child’s future school career.

What Families Can Do:

* Set a regular bed time and morning routine.
* Lay out clothes the night before.
* Develop back up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, neighbor or other parent.
* Keep up to date with ongoing well child physicals and schedule medical appointments outside of school hours.
* Avoid family trips or vacations during the school year.
* Keep open communication with the center staff. You can turn to center staff for help if you are facing challenges that effect your child’s attendance. They want to partner with you to access services and assistance.
* Be a good role model for your child. Set a good example by showing him/her that attendance is important and school is only missed if someone is truly sick.