School Health & Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism is a proven early warning sign of academic risk and dropout. The long-term consequences can lead to a population that is less educated, less healthy, under-employed, and less financially stable in the community.

Research shows that student health issues are a leading contributor to chronic absenteeism. These health issues include physical, mental, behavioral, social and emotional health issues in addition to issues connected to a child’s surrounding environment such as family health issues, community violence, housing insecurity and food insecurity.

Identifying and implementing school health interventions is a critical step to addressing chronic absenteeism and a key opportunity for collaboration among the health and education sectors.

School Health Interventions Resulting in Improvements to Student Attendance

- **Physical Education**
- **Physical Activity**
- **Healthy School Food**
- **Healthy School Buildings**
- **Supportive School Climate**
- **School Health Services**
- **Skills-Based Health Education**
- **Mental Health Services**

**Kids who are healthy and physically active are more likely to have lower rates of absenteeism!**

What Can Schools Do to Improve Student Attendance?

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<td>Increase the quantity and quality of PE and physical activity.</td>
<td>Improve the quality and promote healthy foods and beverages.</td>
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<td>Improves strength and endurance; helps build healthy bones and muscles; helps control weight; reduces anxiety and stress; increases self-esteem; and may improve academic performance.</td>
<td>Supports proper growth and development and can prevent health problems like obesity, cavities, iron deficiency, and osteoporosis.</td>
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<td>Improve the quantity and quality of health education.</td>
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<td>Schools are an excellent place to gain skills for avoiding conditions like obesity, diabetes, and asthma. Students can learn how to make smart food choices; exercise; and monitor their health.</td>
<td>Using proven practices to manage chronic health conditions like diabetes, asthma, and food allergies can help schools improve student health and reduce absenteeism.</td>
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