

# The Importance of Attendance: Learning is Cumulative

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Students usually begin each new school year with excitement and enthusiasm – even if they don't show it to adults. The anticipation of new classes, new friendships, and renewing old friendships provides real motivation for daily attendance at school during those first few weeks.

Unfortunately, after a brief time some students, particularly those at the middle and high school levels and those who don't do well in school, become careless about regular attendance. Missing a few classes seems inconsequential to them. Sometimes it seems insignificant to parents as well. School officials, charged with the responsibility of enforcing compulsory attendance laws, are sometimes faced with parents who are unaware of their child's absence from school or, worse, who are aware but quite willing to make excuses for the absence.

There are several reasons why regular attendance at school is important for every student. First, it is difficult for young people to learn if

they're not in class. The teaching-learning process builds upon itself: Each lesson presented to students is based upon or related to those that preceded it. Just as we can never regain a moment of time wasted, the child who misses a day of school also misses a day of education which cannot be retrieved. Indeed, research shows that those children who attend school regularly are more likely to be successful during their school years.

Success after graduation is a second reason for regular school

**Teaching children to value education is doing them a lifelong favor.**

attendance.  
If young people don't develop the habits of good attendance and prompt

completion of assignments while they're in school, when will they learn these things? Their success as adults in their

chosen occupations is dependent upon these habits.

From experience, most teachers know that students' success in their school years is directly related to the importance that parents attach to education. If parents believe and act as if the child's education is important, the child will most likely believe it too. So it is with regular attendance at school. When parents believe that consistent attendance is important and communicate that belief to their children starting in the elementary years, unnecessary absences from school will be dramatically reduced.

Young people should attend school every day, unless an illness or emergency prevents them from doing so. Parents who have questions about their child's attendance will find teachers and administrators more than willing to work with them. Together, parents and teachers can help students develop proper attitudes about attendance. All parents need to do is call the school.

