

# Important Information for Parents of Kindergarten and Transitional Kindergarten Students

## Is Good Attendance in Kindergarten and Transitional Kindergarten Really That Important?

It's not just finger painting any more. Kindergarten and Transitional Kindergarten (TK) serves as the basis for students to learn important skills that will set the course for success. What may be surprising is that upon close scrutiny of attendance data, there is room for improvement among the kindergarten and TK students.

Some parents have said that since it is not mandatory, they are not too concerned. Others see it as not a big deal as it's just a half day anyway. However, research shows that missing kindergarten too much sets a bad precedent and may be a barometer of how successful a child may be.

National studies conducted across the U.S. and the California Department of Education addressing chronic absenteeism show that children who are absent too much (more than 10% of the time, or 18 days in a full school year) do less well in first grade and perform much more poorly in reading, math, and general knowledge.

Did you know that one in ten kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade students miss a month of school during the school year when all their absences are added up? That is critical learning being missed. Children who do not learn the building blocks and basic skills in the early grades must work much harder to stay afloat as they progress. Many never catch up. Did you know chronic absence is the single strongest predictor of dropping out of school before graduation? Students who drop out of school are much more likely to be poor, unemployed, have substance abuse problems, be teen parents, and be involved with the law.

Students who miss school miss a lot. It's not just what's in the books or what is being presented in class. They miss the social experiences and connection with other children and the development of relationships that help with fitting in and succeeding in school and life.

Did you also know that missing school can be stressful for children as they must learn what they missed in addition to what is being taught that day? Missing school can put children in an academic hole that they cannot climb out of.

Last year, the Chino Valley Unified's District-wide Kindergarten attendance rate was 95.61% and the TK attendance rate throughout the District was 94.18%. Those are the lowest attendance rates in the District.

The award-winning Attendance Counts! campaign will focus on reaching out to parents of Kindergarten and Transitional Kindergarten students with the message of the importance of daily school attendance.