



Tier One Intervention Curriculum
Attendance Strategy Elementary Schools
Positive Behavior Reinforcements for Promoting Good Attendance
– Setting Expectations

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Overview

CISNC Introduction

In the 14-15 school-year, Communities In Schools of North Carolina (CISNC) introduced a framework that aligns site and student metrics and interventions and supports to four areas that have been shown to have the greatest impact on student success: attendance, behavior, coursework, and parent involvement, or ABC+P. Both combined and individually, attendance, behavior, and coursework are among the best predictors of a student’s academic success and on-time graduation. While collecting data around ABC+P is critically important to understanding the school and student, it is even more important to use the data to drive high-impact intervention and support delivery to empower each student to reach their full potential. To this end, Communities In Schools of North Carolina has partnered with the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro to design curricula specifically for CIS within the ABC+P framework to enhance student outcomes in school and success in life. This document is one of more than 50 modules developed to support local CIS staff and most importantly the students that are served. We encourage you to explore all of the modules available online at www.cisnc.org.

Using Evidenced-Based Strategies

There are a multitude of strategies that claim to address attendance, but there are few that actually do so for all students. We suggest that schools use an evidence-based, decision-making model to ensure that high-quality information informs the decisions made.

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) at the U.S. Department of Education defines evidence-based decision making as routinely seeking out the best available information on prior research and recent evaluation findings before adopting programs or practices that will demand extensive material or human resources (including both funding and teacher time) and/or affect significant numbers of students (Whitehurst, 2004).

Evidence-based practice means delivering interventions and supports to students (clients) in ways that integrate the best available evidence from data, research, and evaluation; professional wisdom gained from experience; and contextual knowledge of the particular classroom, school, district, or state that might impact the design or implementation.

This document is written to provide you with attendance-related strategies based on the best evidence from prior research and recent evaluations in elementary schools. In the context of our review, we propose six strategies designed to help improve elementary school attendance:

- Monitoring Data strategy
- Health Related strategy



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- School-Family-Community Partnerships strategy
- Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) strategies (2)
- School Climate strategy

This document will focus on one PBIS strategy for fostering and recognizing good attendance habits for grades K-2.

Problem/Rationale

A National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) review of the data revealed that nationally more than 11 percent of kindergarten students and nearly 9 percent of first grade students were chronically absent. By the third grade, chronic absenteeism dropped to 6 percent (Chang & Romero, 2008).

Regular, on-time school attendance is vital to student academic success. Kindergarten students, regardless of gender, socioeconomic status, or ethnicity, who are chronically absent, are likely to show lower gains in reading, math, and general knowledge during the first grade (Change and Romero, 2008). Students who do not attain essential social and academic skills during their early elementary years may require extra assistance to catch up and may also be at greater risk of dropping out of school in later years. Students from low-income families often lack the resources to provide the necessary assistance to help their children make up for skills not previously acquired (Chang & Romero, 2008).

Students may be absent from school for a variety of reasons. They may not be able to attend school, are unwilling to attend school, or may not attend school (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012). Students who do not attend school or will not attend school may be positively influenced to attend school if they have a stronger sense of engagement and belongingness at the school. Students who feel that adults in schools care about them and value them may be more likely to attend school (Change & Romero, 2008). Encouraging students to develop positive behaviors, including regular and on-time attendance, can help them establish good habits early that will carry them throughout their educational careers.

Additionally, when students miss too many days, it can negatively impact their academic achievement, be disruptive to classroom instruction as teachers have to shift attention to students who need to catch up with the rest of the class, as well as, have a negative effect on the overall school climate.

Purpose

The purpose of this curriculum is to help students develop an understanding of school attendance expectations and to set a positive tone for encouraging and acknowledging good



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attendance behaviors. In this curriculum guide we focus on one PBIS strategy to communicate expectations to K-2 students about school attendance. The Student Support Specialist can use this guide to share with school staff:

- A lesson for communicating expectations about attendance to students.
- Options for recognizing and rewarding students for good attendance.
- Resources for communicating attendance expectations with parents.

Implementation Plan

This guide will provide suggestions for encouraging regular attendance by communicating expectations, letting students know that teachers care about them, and acknowledging/praising good attendance habits.

Uses

Student Support Specialists can use the information provided in this guide to help teachers understand the importance of communicating with students that they care about them and the school's (and teacher's) expectations for on-time and regular attendance.

Audience

Information provided in this guide is designed for teachers for use with K-2 students. Information as it pertains to discussion of school-wide expectations of student behaviors may be introduced to administrators with possible follow-up during a staff meeting if school-wide expectations are not currently, routinely, and consistently communicated.

Activities

The activity highlighted is a lesson to communicate attendance expectations with K-2 students. Some additional strategies listed below support this lesson, including: establishing school-wide expectations, communicating with students and parents, acknowledging good attendance, and intervening when students have poor attendance.

- Use data-based decision making.
 - Refer to the curriculum guide on monitoring data.
- Develop a simple set of school-wide expectations for regular and on-time attendance.
 - Develop and post attendance expectations in school hallways and classrooms.
- **Teach attendance expectations.**
 - Teach a lesson early in the school year that introduces school expectations; including attendance (see Appendix D for sample slides).
 - Develop a quick set of rule-related questions that allow students to repeat rules periodically throughout the day in the first weeks of school, and weekly, or as reminders are needed throughout the school year (K-2).



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- Note: Teachers of 3rd-5th grade students can develop a Jeopardy-style game that incorporates school/classroom rules and expectations, including attendance.
- Establish ways to recognize students who have regular and on-time attendance publically in the classroom and school-wide.
 - Examples of classroom recognition activities may be completing an image (e.g., pie or pizza) weekly on a classroom bulletin board. For example, each Monday, students start with an empty pie tin and at some point early in the school day they get to add a slice of pie to their tin for each day they are at school and in the classroom on time. Give stickers to students who had perfect attendance for the week on Friday afternoons before leaving school.
- Establish school-wide reward systems for students who were in attendance every day during the previous month.
 - Create a cumulative attendance chart on the wall outside the classroom and add a badge for each student who had perfect attendance during the previous month. Badges should be cumulative and reflect overall monthly perfect attendance.
 - Have an ice cream party for students who had perfect attendance in the prior month.
 - Acknowledge students with perfect attendance (and provide a certificate) at year-end assembly.
 - Recognize students who demonstrate marked improvement in attendance from the prior month.
- Involve parents.
 - Make parents aware that regular on-time attendance is important for their child's success in school.
 - Send home a letter at the beginning of the year that outlines the importance of regular on-time attendance and school expectations for attendance. Include school contact information in the event a parent has concerns about their child's attendance. (See resource list for sample letter).
 - Include an attendance-related activity during parent orientation, PTO meeting, or other parent night early in the school year. (Refer to parent involvement curriculum guide for an example).
 - Send a note home to parents each month indicating their child's attendance record for the previous month.
 - If the student had perfect attendance (or marked improvement from the prior month), the note should be upbeat and praise the student (and parent/guardian/family) for recognizing the importance of attendance for their child's academic success.



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- If student attendance was poor, contact parents by phone to ensure parents are aware of the number of days their child missed school, and to enquire whether there are issues the school/teacher should be aware of. (See resource list for sample one-to-one communication tips).

Materials/Equipment/Space

Presentation slides of student lesson with handouts.

Note: For presentations, check for access to computer, Smartboard or data projector and screen, relevant power cords, and remote slide advancer.

Time

- Student activity – 20 minutes

Lesson Plan of Activity

A sample presentation to accompany the lesson below can be found in Appendix D. Refer to the notes section of the slides for talking points.

Teachers should:

- Modify slide #8 to incorporate simple school-wide behavioral expectations based upon school policies and rules.
 - Keep the number of rules to a minimum.
- Convey expected behavior and provide examples of rule-following behaviors.
 - Establish a positive tone – rules are designed to help us (not designed to punish).
- Make rules age-appropriate.
- Check for understanding.

Teachers can incorporate additional classroom expectations; however, teachers should start with school-wide expectations so that the overall message for all students is consistent. Keep expectations in a simple and positive tone.

Links to download resources and handouts to be used and/or shared during the activity can be found under the Resources section.



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Sample Lesson – Give Me Five!

Teacher Prompts and Activity Process Notes	Slide
<p>Introduce the lesson.</p> <p><i>The “Give Me Five” is simply a play on five days of school each week.</i></p>	<p>Title slide – Give Me Five</p>
<p><i>Purpose: Activating attitudes about attendance – Setting the right tone about school</i></p> <p><i>Prompt: Ask students to name reasons why coming to school is cool.</i></p>	<p>Slide #2 – Coming to school is cool</p>
Teacher Prompts and Activity Process Notes	Slide
<p><i>Tell students: Students who come to school are more likely to do better in school.</i></p> <p><i>Prompt: Ask students why they think coming to school every day will help them to do better in school.</i></p> <p><i>Establish a sense of acceptance. Affirm student responses.</i></p>	<p>Slide #3 – Attendance is important for learning</p>
<p><i>Tell students that: Learning takes place every day. It is important to be at school so that you don’t miss any learning, because it can sometimes be difficult to catch up.</i></p> <p><i>Prompt: Ask students what they might have missed from the current day (or prior day if doing this activity early in the day) if they had not come to school.</i></p>	<p>Slide #4 – Learning takes place every day</p>
<p><i>Note: This is another way of restating slide 2 – may focus questions on a specific project or activity.</i></p>	<p>Slide #5 – New learning takes place every day</p>
<p><i>Tell students that: School is an important place to make and keep friends. We meet lots of other people at school who we might not have met otherwise.</i></p> <p><i>Prompt: Give students time to talk about meeting and making friends.</i></p>	<p>Slide #6 – Social benefits of school</p>
<p><i>Students who make connections with adults and with other students are more likely to feel a sense of belongingness at school and have better attitudes about being in school.</i></p> <p><i>Prompt: Talk about how important students are to you. Let students know that you care about their well-being.</i></p>	<p>Slide #7 – Teachers care about students</p>



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Note: Write a few simply stated rules as it relates to school attendance, such as:

- *What time students are expected to be at school.*
- *What students should do when they arrive at school.*
- *Any first of the morning ritual(s) for the classroom – e.g. set up a “Give Me Five” attendance board and allow the student to put a cut-out of their hand with their name on it on the board each morning when they arrive (remove at the end of each day, so this can be repeatedly easily). Setting up something like this as a ritual means that others visiting or volunteering in the classroom can also easily see the names of students who are in attendance.*

Frame as positive statements, not as punitive statements, but make clear that these are expectations.

Slide #8 – School/Classroom
Attendance Rules



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Teacher Prompts and Activity Process Notes	Slide
<p><i>Tell students that:</i> Learning is a student’s job. Parents have jobs that they must go to and the student’s job is coming to school regularly and on time prepared to learn.</p> <p><i>Prompt:</i> Ask students about their parents’ job(s). Ask them what having a job means.</p> <p><i>Tell students that:</i> Having a job comes with responsibilities, such as, doing our school work well, paying attention, being respectful, working well with others, etc.</p> <p><i>Prompt:</i> Ask students to name some responsibilities that come with being a student.</p> <p><i>Tell students that:</i> Showing up for school is a key responsibility for students, so it is important to prepare properly so that we can be at school on time and prepared for learning.</p> <p><i>Note:</i> Review list of things students can do to be on time for school (younger students have less control over morning routines, thus encouraging them to talk openly with their family about being at school on time can be a motivator for family members).</p> <p><i>Teachers can modify slide to add age-appropriate images if preferred over text.</i></p>	<p>Slide #9 – Student Responsibility - School is a student’s job</p>
Teacher Prompts	Slide
<p><i>Note:</i> Develop a slogan to generate student enthusiasm and meaning for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Regular and on-time attendance.</i> • <i>Being responsible by following routines in the classroom.</i> • <i>Establishing routines at home that will help students establish good planning habits early.</i> <p><i>Review rules/expectations regularly and give students the opportunity to repeat frequently.</i></p>	<p>Slide #10 – Create Classroom Attendance Slogan</p>



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Tier 2 Intervention and Support Examples

The Tier 2 examples focus on the practices of students and faculty/staff.

Example 1: PBIS Team – The PBIS Team can determine the types of interventions that will occur at each level based on the data. In addition, they can create “clubs” for students who are struggling to attend school and in a subtle way impart the school’s expectations

McNamara, K., Rasheed, H., & Delamatre, J. (2008). A statewide study of school-based intervention teams: Characteristics, member perceptions, and outcomes. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 18*(1), 5-30.

Newton, J. S., Horner, R. H., Todd, A. W., Algozzine, R. F., & Algozzine, K. M. (2012). A pilot study of a problem-solving model for team decision making. *Education and Treatment of Children, 35*(1), 25-49.

Example 2: Coaching for Teachers – Another option is teaching students how to use positive reinforcements and make changes within their classrooms.

Hershfeldt, P. A., Pell, K., Sechrest, R., Pas, E. T., & Bradshaw, C. P. (2012). Lessons learned coaching teachers in behavior management: The PBIS plus coaching model. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 22*(4), 280-299.



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Resources

The following resources relate to the suggested activities. Read through these resources carefully to become familiar with any concepts and instructions as they pertain to the content and activity.

Attendance Works. *Make Every Day Count*. Retrieve from:

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/MakeEveryDayCount2.pdf>

- Sample letter to parents/guardians on the importance of attendance (in editable Word document, see link on page 7)

Attendance Works. *Promoting Attendance Through One-on-One Communications*. Retrieve

from: http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Attachment1_promotingattendancethrough1on1communications.pdf

Attendance Works. *Establishing School-wide Attendance Incentives*. Retrieve from:

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/AW-Incentives-two-pager-1-4-111.pdf>

Educational Technology Network. Sample templates for creating quizzes and games in PowerPoint. Retrieve from: <http://www.edtechnetwork.com/powerpoint.html>



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Measuring Success

Identifying outcomes and collecting data to measure the success of PBIS strategies can help the school track quality of implementation as well as the effectiveness of these strategies.

Following are some suggestions that schools may find useful to begin measuring success.

Assess students' attitudes and knowledge about the importance of school attendance:

- Ask students why they think coming to school every day will help them to do better in school.
- Ask students what they might have missed from the current day (or day before if doing this activity early in the day), if they had not come to school.
- Ask students to name some responsibilities that come with being a student.
- Ask students to identify things they can do to help ensure they are prepared for school and arrive on time.

Assess students' attitudes and knowledge about school and/or classroom rules as they relate to school attendance:

- Ask students to identify school/class rules about attendance.
 - Ask students to explain in their own words what the rules mean.

How many students were recorded as having perfect attendance each month?

- Chart data at the classroom level, grade level and school-wide.
 - Establish a baseline and compare to past months or years.

How many children showed marked improvement in attendance from earlier months (or the previous year if in 1st-5th grade)?

- Chart data at the classroom level, grade level and school-wide.
 - Establish a baseline and compare to past months or years.



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Appendix A: Glossary

Following are some key terms used in the Attendance Curriculum Guides.

Average Daily Attendance (ADA): the presence of a student on days when school is in session. A student is counted as present only when he/she is actually at school, present at another activity sponsored by the school as part of the school’s program, or personally supervised by a member of the staff. ADA is based on the sum of the number of days in attendance for all students divided by the number of days in the school month. No state allotments are based on ADA (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2014).

Average Daily Membership (ADM): the total number of school days within a given term – usually a school month or school year – that a student’s name is on the current roll of a class, regardless of his/her being present or absent, is the “number of days of membership” for that student. Average Daily Membership is a calculation using data from the Principal’s Monthly Report. The calculation uses the number of days in the school month and the number of Non-violation (NVIO) Membership Days (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2014).

Chronic Absenteeism: “typically based on the total number of days of school missed, including both excused and unexcused absences” (Balfanz and Byrnes, 2012).

Excessively Absent: defined in some locales as missing 20 days or more of school (Balfanz and Byrnes, 2012).

Expulsions: students who are expelled are to be withdrawn from school (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2014).

Germ (pathogen): types of microbes that can cause disease.

Hand hygiene: a general term that applies to routine hand washing, antiseptic hand wash, antiseptic hand rub, or surgical hand antisepsis.

Hand sanitizer – alcohol-based: for alcohol-based hand sanitizers, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) (5) recommends a concentration of 60 percent to 95 percent ethanol or isopropanol, the concentration range of greatest germicidal efficacy.

Hand washing: the vigorous, brief rubbing together of all surfaces of lathered hands, followed by rinsing under a stream of water. Hand washing suspends microorganisms and mechanically



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removes them by rinsing with water. The fundamental principle of hand washing is removal, not killing.

Influenza: a viral infection that attacks your respiratory system — your nose, throat and lungs.

Lawful Absence: when satisfactory evidence of a lawful absence is provided to the appropriate school official, the absence should be coded as lawful (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2014).

Medically Fragile and Teacher-In-Treatment: the 1H absence code should only be used for students who have been identified as medically fragile or for students who are enrolled at one of the six Teacher-In-Treatment sites (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2014).

Microbes: tiny living organisms that may or may not cause disease.

School Refusal: refers to student absenteeism because of (short-term or long-term) emotional stressors related to school attendance (most common occurrence is in students aged 5, 6, 10, and 11) (American Family Physician).

Suspensions: absence of a student which results from the suspension or expulsion of that student for misconduct may not be used for a compulsory attendance violation action (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2014).

Truancy: “typically defined as a certain number of or certain frequency of unexcused absences” (Balfanz and Byrnes, 2012).

Unlawful Absences: students who are willfully absent from school without a lawful excuse are to be considered unlawfully absent (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2014).

Vaccine: a product that stimulates a person’s immune system to produce immunity to a specific disease, protecting the person from that disease. Vaccines are usually administered through needle injections, but can also be administered by mouth or sprayed into the nose.

Vaccination: the act of introducing a vaccine into the body to produce immunity to a specific disease.



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Appendix B: References

- Balfanz, R. and Byrnes, V. (2012). *The Importance of Being in School: A Report on Absenteeism in the Nation's Public Schools*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Center for Social Organization of Schools. Retrieved from:
https://ct.global.ssl.fastly.net/media/W1siZiZlsljwMTQvMDgvMTUvMjE1dnkya3BzOF9GSU5BTENocm9uaWNBYnNlbnRlZWlzbVJlcG9ydF9NYXkxNi5wZGYiXV0/FINALChronicAbsenteeismReport_May16.pdf.pdf?sha=ffcb3d2b
- Change, H.N. and Romero, M. (2008). *Present, Engage, and Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in the Early Grades*. New York, NY: The National Center for Children in Poverty, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University. Retrieved from: http://www.nccp.org/publications/pdf/text_837.pdf
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- Whitehurst, G. J. (April 26, 2004). Making education evidence-based: Premises, principles, pragmatics, and politics. Institute for Policy Research (Northwestern University) Distinguished Public Policy Lecture Series. Retrieved from:
<http://www.northwestern.edu/ipr/events/lectures/DPPL-Whitehurst.pdf>



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Appendix C: Research Alignment

Citation	Brief Summary of Strategy	Sample Size	Impact/Evidence of Effectiveness	Implementation
<p>Barber, R. M., & Kagey, J. R. (1977). Modification of school attendance for an elementary population. <i>Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis</i>, 10(1), 41-48.</p>	<p>Behavioral program where teachers were instructed on the importance of placing positive reinforcement on students' behavior in order to improve their attendance. Introduction of attendance charts and contingent parties once a month.</p>	<p>Three first grade classes, four second grade classes, and three third grade classes; 212 total students.</p>	<p>Compared to baseline data, the experimental period had increases in attendance from Jan-April. In comparison to other schools, experimental period attendance gradually increased through Jan-April and declined in May. Application of behavioral principles increased school attendance.</p>	<p>The amount of party time children earned was based on the number of days they came to school. A child with perfect attendance for the month earned the full 1-hr of party time and admittance to four "fun rooms". Children missing one day of school earned 45 party minutes and were admitted to only two "fun rooms". Those missing two days during the month earned 30 party minutes and one "fun room" while those missing three days, earned only 15 party minutes and no "fun rooms". Children who missed more than three school days during the month were sent to a</p>



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Citation	Brief Summary of Strategy	Sample Size	Impact/Evidence of Effectiveness	Implementation
				special workroom where they were required to complete constructive academic assignments. Also, children who received only partial party time had to go to the work room for the initial part of the party to complete a short academic assignment.
Epstein, J. L., & Sheldon, S. B. (2002). Present and accounted for: Improving student attendance through family and community involvement. <i>The Journal of Educational Research</i> , 95(5), 308-318.	<p>Respondents returned a series of surveys designed to explore the relationships between school attendance policies, school practices to involve parents and changing rates of student attendance.</p> <p>Guidance from NNPS (National Network of Partnership Schools) to assist schools to develop and implement research-based family and community activities to improve school</p>	<p>18 schools returned baseline, midyear, and final surveys; 12 elementary schools and 6 secondary schools (only data from elementary schools was used).</p> <p>The 12 elementary schools in this sample ranged in size from 172 to 1,020 students, with an average school size of about 500 students. Half of the schools were located in Maryland, and the others were located</p>	<p>On average, attendance rates increased each year from '95, '96, and '97. Chronically absent students decreased from 8% to 6.1% when school-family-community partnerships were developed.</p>	<p>Attendance variables: Schools were asked to provide information about daily student attendance rates for 3 years. Family Involvement variables: Respondents asked to report whether schools conducted practices designed to reach out to parents or community groups to improve or maintain student attendance. Use of practices: Respondents were asked whether</p>



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Citation	Brief Summary of Strategy	Sample Size	Impact/Evidence of Effectiveness	Implementation
	attendance.	in California, Minnesota, and Pennsylvania. The schools served over 5,000 students.		schools used practices of calling home when students were absent, visiting homes of chronically absent students, rewarding students for improved attendance, giving families contact information of a person from school to ask questions about attendance, conducting workshops on attendance and other issues, referring chronically absent students to a counselor and using truant officers to work with students who have serious attendance problems.
Peek, S. D. (2009). Integrating effective and beneficial interventions to increase student attendance in an	Determine the impact of current interventions (attendance forms, attendance review teams, incentive program) to increase regular student	One elementary school. Twenty-nine anonymous surveys were sent out and 28 were completed and returned. All teachers with a homeroom	Using the survey, 89% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that modified attendance forms were beneficial for tracking absences. 93% of participants	Interventions to the attendance process were implemented over the previous 15 months of the study. An attendance form for tracking student



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Attendance Strategy Elementary Schools

Positive Behavior Reinforcements for Promoting Good Attendance – Setting Expectations

Citation	Brief Summary of Strategy	Sample Size	Impact/Evidence of Effectiveness	Implementation
<p>elementary school setting. <i>Georgia School Counselors Association Journal</i>, 16(1), 9-20.</p>	<p>attendance.</p>	<p>received the survey, along with the principal and assistant principal.</p>	<p>agreed or strongly agreed that “Perfect Pals” was a good idea for increasing student desire to come to school. Using attendance records, 51 students had more than 15 absences for the school year prior to the interventions. During the implementation years (2007 and 2008) only 39 and 41 students were absent more than 15 days, respectively. Counselor documentation identified a steady average of 213 students attending the monthly Perfect Pals luncheon.</p>	<p>absences was modified to increase its use and effectiveness for teachers. Attendance Review Team (ART) was implemented to make parents accountable for attending a scheduled meeting with school staff to discuss child's current attendance. Notices sent to parents informing them of student absences. A form integrated in the ART meetings to address other areas of concern besides attendance. The “Perfect Pals” student incentive program was also started.</p>



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Appendix D: K-2 Student Lesson Presentation Slides