



District of Columbia
Office of the State Superintendent of Education

Attendance and Truancy Resources

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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

EDUCATION

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) was notified by your child's school that he/she has accumulated 10 or more unexcused absences during the current school year. District of Columbia law requires that we provide you with this resource guide when your child accumulates 10 unexcused absences. (See D.C. Code § 38-208(b).)

Attending school every day is critical to your child's success. Whether excused or not, missing school can have a negative impact on your child's education. Chronic absenteeism, defined as missing more than 10 percent of all school days, including both excused and unexcused absences, puts students at increased risk of falling behind academically and dropping out of school. According to Attendance Works, a national initiative that promotes attendance awareness:

- Students should miss no more than nine days of school each year to stay engaged, successful, and on track for graduation.
- Absences can be a sign that a student is losing interest in school, struggling with school work, dealing with a bully or facing some other potentially serious difficulty.
- By sixth grade, absenteeism is one of three signs that a student may drop out of high school.
- By ninth grade, attendance is a better predictor of graduation rates than eighth grade test scores.
- Missing 10 percent, or about 18 days, of the school year can drastically affect a student's academic success.
- Students can be chronically absent **even if they only miss a day or two every few weeks.**
- Attendance is an important life skill that will help your child graduate from college and keep a job.

Included with this letter are resources that include:

1. An explanation of the District of Columbia's (DC) laws and regulations related to absenteeism and truancy;
2. Information on what you can do as a parent or legal guardian to prevent truancy;
3. The common causes and consequences of truancy; and
4. Information for parents, legal guardians, and students that address the common causes of truancy and its prevention.

Where are some next steps you can take?

- **If you have questions about your child's attendance records**, including whether there is an error in his or her attendance records, please contact your child's school directly.
- **To learn more about the resources** available to support student attendance, please see the resources included here in the Resources section or visit <https://attendance.dc.gov/>.
- **To receive additional assistance on attendance matters**, or to learn about additional resources, parents may also contact:
 - For DC Public Schools (DCPS) Parents: DC Public Schools Office of Youth Engagement at (202) 727-0488.
 - DC Office of the Student Advocate, (202) 741-4692 or student.advocate@dc.gov
 - DC Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education, (202) 741-0886 or ombudsman@dc.gov

Sincerely,

Hanseul Kang,
State Superintendent

DC Laws and Regulations Related to Attendance and Truancy¹

DC laws (DC Code) can be found here: <http://www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/dccode>

DC Municipal Regulations (DCMR) can be found here: <http://www.dcregs.dc.gov>

Who is required to attend school?

- Subject to some exceptions, all children residing in the District of Columbia are required to attend school during the regular school year from age 5 (if the child reaches age 5 by Sept. 30th of the school year) until age 18. This requirement is called compulsory attendance.
DC Code § 38-202(a).

Who is responsible for making sure that children attend school?

- Parents, guardians, and other persons with custody of a child are responsible for ensuring that students attend school every day unless they have a valid excuse to be absent. *DC Code § 38-202(a).*

What is an excused absence?

- All schools are required to list the categories of absences they will accept as excused. (5-A 21 DCMR §2102.2.) These categories should be clearly explained in the school's parent or student handbook or otherwise made available to the parent. While there may be differences between schools' policies, all schools must include, at a minimum, the categories of excused absences listed below. In addition to the listed categories below, your school may have other categories of excused absences.
 - (a) Illness or other bona fide (legitimate) medical cause experienced by the student;
 - (b) Exclusion, by direction of DC authorities, due to quarantine, contagious disease, infection, infestation, or other condition requiring separation from other students for medical or health reasons;
 - (c) Death in the student's family;
 - (d) Necessity for a student to attend judiciary or administrative proceedings as a party to the action or under subpoena;
 - (e) Observance of a religious holiday;
 - (f) Lawful suspension or exclusion from school by school authorities;
 - (g) Temporary closing of facilities or suspension of classes due to severe weather, official activities, holidays, malfunctioning equipment, unsafe or unsanitary conditions, or other condition(s) or emergency requiring a school closing or suspension of classes;
 - (h) Failure of DC to provide transportation in cases where there is a legal responsibility for the transportation of the student;
 - (i) Medical or dental appointments for the student;
 - (j) Absences to allow students to visit their parent or a legal guardian, who is in the military; immediately before, during, or after deployment; and
 - (k) An emergency or other circumstances approved by an educational institution.

What is an unexcused absence?

- Any absence that does not fall into one of the excused categories as defined by your child's school, including the excused categories listed above, is an unexcused absence. Also, any absence that is not timely reported to the school by the parent or guardian is an unexcused absence. *DC Code § 38-202(a)*

How long does a parent have to provide the school with a valid excuse?

- Valid excuses for absences must be provided within five school days of your child's return to school. Schools are required to mark all absences as unexcused unless a valid excuse is provided by a parent or guardian within five days of the student returning to school. *DC Code § 38-202(a)*
- *Important Tip: Check with your child's school!* Some schools require notes to be submitted more quickly. Most schools also have their own policies about what must be submitted as documentation of an excused absence. If you do not already have one, ask for a copy of the parent or student handbook or other document containing the school's attendance policies and procedures from your child's school.

¹ For parents of private school students, please be aware that the requirements in this guide related to school-level interventions (for example, student support teams) applicable to public school students do not apply to students attending private schools.

What happens if your child misses school?

Children who miss school, whether excused or unexcused, quickly fall behind. Chronic absenteeism – missing at least 10 percent of school days in a year for any reason – can drastically affect a child’s academic success.

A student is chronically absent if he or she misses as few as two school days per month.

2 days per month x 9 months = 18 days = 10 percent of 180 school days

What is truancy?

Truancy means being absent from school without a valid excuse (unexcused absences).

What is chronic truancy?

A student who has had 10 or more unexcused absences within a single school year. (5-A 21 DCMR § 2199)

What is chronic absenteeism?

Chronic absenteeism means missing more than 10 percent of school days, including *both* excused and unexcused absences. (5-A 21 DCMR § 2199)
Chronic absenteeism and truancy both have negative long-term impact on children.

Can my child’s school help address attendance?

Yes. All schools are required to develop and follow a process to address absenteeism (both excused and unexcused). This process, also called a protocol, must include a focus on preventing unexcused absences and putting academic and behavioral interventions in place to address the needs of the student. (5-A 21 DCMR § 2103)

What steps must the school take?

- Create a process, including specific due process procedures, for a parent, guardian, or student to appeal any attendance violation decisions made by the educational institution. (5-A 21 DCMR §2103.2(c)(5))
- **After the first unexcused absence:** Schools must contact the parent the first day that an absence is deemed unexcused.
- **After the fifth unexcused absence:** Schools must refer the student to a school-based student support team (SST) within two school days of the fifth unexcused absence within a marking period. (5-A 21 DCMR §2103.2(c)(3). The SST team will:
 - Make reasonable and diligent efforts to communicate and collaborate with the student’s parent or guardian;
 - Review and address the student’s attendance and determine the underlying cause for the unexcused absences;
 - Communicate and collaborate with the student’s existing individualized education program (IEP) team, if applicable;
 - Provide timely response to the student’s truant behavior;
 - Make recommendations for academic, diagnostic, or social work services;
 - Use school and community resources to improve the student’s attendance including referral to a community-based organization when available; and
 - Develop and implement an action plan in consultation with the student and student’s parent or guardian.
- **After the 10th unexcused absence:** The school-based student support team assigned to the student shall notify the school administrator within two school days after the tenth unexcused absence with a plan for immediate intervention including delivery of community-based programs and any other assistance or services to identify and address the student’s needs on an emergency basis. (5-A 21 DCMR §2103.2(c)(4))



Schools are no longer required to refer children to the DC Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) or the court (Court Social Services Division (CSSD) and the Office of the Attorney General (OAG)) for missing partial days. Only full school day absences are required to be counted when determining whether a school is required to refer a child to CFSA or CSSD and OAG for truancy. This means that the “80-20 rule” should no longer result in unnecessary referrals to the child welfare and juvenile justice agencies.



Children may NOT be suspended or expelled for unexcused absences.

Children ages 5-17 may not be suspended or expelled for unexcused absences or late arrivals to school. (D.C. Code §38-236.04(c))

In most cases, children may NOT be unenrolled for unexcused absences.

Children ages 5-17 may not be unenrolled due to unexcused absences or late arrivals to school unless the student has accumulated 20 or more consecutive full school day unexcused absences. (D.C. Code §38-236.04(c))

Homeless children may NOT be unenrolled.

Your child may continue enrollment in their school of origin for the period of time your family is experiencing homelessness. The school of origin is the school your child attended prior to becoming homeless or the school in which your child was last enrolled. You may also enroll your child in the school for the attendance area where he or she is living temporarily. (42 USC 11432(g)(3)(A))

How do other agencies get involved?

If a student accumulates 10 or more full day unexcused absences within the same school year, schools are required by law to begin notifying other agencies. After the 10th unexcused absence for any child ages 5-17, schools are required to notify OSSE. Other specific requirements depend on the child's age:

Children Ages 5-13:

Within two school days of your child's **10th full day** unexcused absence the school must submit a referral to the **DC Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA)** for suspected educational neglect. (D.C. Code § 38-208(c)(1)(A))

What happens next?

- CFSA receives and investigates reports of abuse and neglect of DC young people age 17 and younger, including reports of educational neglect. They will assign a social worker from CFSA Child Protective Services (CPS) to investigate, usually within 24 hours of getting the report. The social worker's job is to find out whether the report of abuse or neglect is true or false. The social worker also decides whether CFSA or a community organization should continue helping your family.

Children Ages 14-17:

Within two school days of your child's **15th full day** unexcused absence, the school must submit a referral to the **Court Social Services Division (CSSD)** of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia and the Juvenile Division of the **Office of the Attorney General (OAG)**. Within three business days of OAG receiving notice that a student has accrued 15 full day unexcused absences, OAG will notify the parent by letter that he or she may be subject to prosecution for violating the attendance requirements. (D.C. Code § 38-208(c)(1)(B))

What happens next?

- Students may be referred to the director of court social services for prosecution, diversion and community-based interventions.
- Parents and students may be assigned community service and placed under court supervision/probation.
- Truancy charges may be filed against the student alleging that the student is a "Person in Need of Supervision."
- Parents may be referred to mediation for services or may face criminal prosecution resulting in community service, fines and/or incarceration.

Are schools required to notify the police?

No. Schools are no longer required to notify the DC Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) within two business days if a student accumulates 10 unexcused absences during a school year. However, within two business days of a student accumulating 10 unexcused absences, schools must send a letter to parents with information from MPD regarding the attendance requirements and criminal penalties. (D.C. Code §38-207(c))

Please also note that MPD must return students to schools and schools must accept them. During school hours, MPD is required to take into custody children suspected of being truant and deliver them to the school in which they are enrolled. The school is required to receive the student from the MPD officer. For minors not currently enrolled in school, MPD is required to take the minor to the District of Columbia Public Schools placement office. (D.C. Code §38-207)

What are the consequences of truancy to parents and students?

Parents/guardians who fail to have their children attend school are subject to the following consequences:

1. The absence of a child without a valid excuse (unexcused absence) is unlawful, and a parent/guardian of such a child is guilty of a misdemeanor. (D.C. Code §38-203(c)(1) & (d))
2. The student will be referred to a school-based student support team (SST) which will meet within five school days of the referral and regularly thereafter to:
 - Determine the underlying causes for a student's absenteeism or truancy;
 - Communicate and collaborate with the student and parent;
 - Create and implement action plans in consultation with the student and student's parents;
 - Make recommendations for academic, diagnostic, or social work services; and
 - Use school and community resources to reduce the student's truancy including referrals to appropriate community-based organizations when available.
3. Students ages 5 through 13 with 10 or more unexcused full day absences will be referred to CFSA no later than two business days after the accrual of 10 full day unexcused absences within a school year.
4. Neglect charges may be filed against the parent by OAG or CFSA.
5. Students ages 14 through 17 with 15 or more unexcused full day absences in a school year will be referred to the Court Services Division of the Family Court and to the Juvenile Division of OAG. Students may be referred to the director of court social services for prosecution, diversion and community based interventions.
6. The Office of the Attorney General Juvenile Section will send a letter notifying parents that they may be subject to prosecution for violating school attendance requirements.
7. Parents and students may be assigned community service and placed under court supervision/probation.
8. Truancy charges may be filed against the student alleging that the student is a "Person in Need of Supervision."
9. Parents may be convicted of violating the compulsory school attendance law and face fines and incarceration.

What are some of the common causes of absence?

<p>Health and Mental Health Barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child abuse and/or neglect • Drug or alcohol use and/or abuse • Childhood depression • Asthma or other chronic illness, poor nutrition, dental, vision, hearing problems • Neurological factors, such as dyslexia <p>Financial Barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of affordable transportation • Insufficient food • Proper clothing not available • Homelessness • Students needing to be employed to support the family <p>Community/Cultural Barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of safety in the home or school community • Unawareness of community agencies that may provide needed support • Bullying • Language barriers <p>Personal Barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low academic grades • Peer pressure or inability to maintain friendships • Feelings of rejection and failure • Embarrassment due to lack of “fashionable” clothing • Low self-esteem • To meet with friends • Abuse by significant other 	<p>School-based Barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher conflict • Inadequate transportation • Fear of being bullied or cyber bullied • Inappropriate programming: too challenging/not challenging enough • Weak or no monitoring of daily attendance • Inconsistent attendance policies • Lack of parent involvement in the school • Lack of personalized attention to students • Lack of teacher expectations for high student achievement • School size: too small/too large • Inflexibility toward meeting different learning styles • Inconsistent procedures for dealing with chronic absenteeism <p>Family Barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient parent support • Child kept home for babysitting or caring for a sick parent • Family history of dropping out • Lack of adequate adult supervision • Parent(s) addicted to drugs or alcohol • Parent(s) who do not value education • Lack of awareness of attendance laws • High mobility
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How can I address attendance and truancy?

Parent involvement can reduce truancy. Parents can ensure students are present in the classroom by making school attendance a priority.

HOW CAN I WORK WITH MY CHILD?

- **Set and maintain a routine:** Stick to a regular schedule for bedtime, waking up, eating breakfast (at home or at school), and doing homework. Think through the amount of time that it will take you and your child to make it to school and be on time. Try to leave the house at the same time every day. Monitor things in your home such as family routines that may prevent you or your child from keeping to the schedule.
- **Set and have consistent expectations:** Talk to your children about the role education plays in their future/life success. Let them know that you do not approve of them missing school. Refuse to write an excuse for unacceptable reasons. Review acceptable and unacceptable behavior with your child. Relaxing the rules for even one assignment or day can send a mixed message.
- **Ask questions:** Take an active interest in your children's schoolwork. Ask them to demonstrate what they learned in school. Know your children's friends.
- **Stay informed:** Know the school's attendance policy, the time school starts, the difference between an excused and unexcused absence, and share the information with your child. If you need more assistance with understanding school attendance policies, please make an appointment to speak with the principal or school leader.
- **Get to know the services at your child's school and/or community:** Community groups and schools use different services and incentives to support student attendance. Reinforce those services and incentives to the child in your household.
- **Be prepared:** Prepare your child for school with required supplies and clothes. If you need assistance, contact your local social services agency. Contact numbers can be found in the Resources section.
- **Plan appointments:** Plan visits to the doctor or dentist after the school day ends. If you must take an appointment during the school day, allow the child to miss only time needed for that appointment.
- **Plan vacations around school:** Always talk with the school and review the school calendar before you plan your holiday or vacation.
- **Be alert:** Look for early signs of a child's decision that school is not worthwhile. Monitor changes in friendships, teachers, classrooms or even the loss of a pet or family member. All of these things contribute to reasons why children dread going to school. Get help! Contact information for counseling services can be found in the Resources section.
- **Look for alternatives:** If your child tells you they are bored at school, seek support outside the school such as music lessons, sports clubs, neighborhood or church-related youth groups, or mentors.
- **Provide incentives:** Reward good attendance. However, keeping your child out of school for his or her birthday is not an acceptable reward.
- **Talk about consequences:** Be sure that your child knows if they skip school, there will be consequences to pay such as losing television or video game time, limiting time with friends, or the loss of other privileges.
- **Monitor behavior:** Look for negative behavior changes such as alcohol use or staying out late. Seek a counselor if your child's behavior becomes distant, withdrawn, anxious, depressed, delinquent, or aggressive.
- **Communicate with your child:** Ask your child how you can help. Think about what situations he or she might face and talk about ways to handle these situations before or when they occur.
- **Be supportive:** Encourage your child to take an active role in the school by joining clubs or participating in sports. Teach them when and how to ask for help.
- **Use unconventional times to talk with your child:** Use car or Metro rides, walks, or any extra time that you may have together to talk with your child about the importance of school attendance.
- **Identify a support network:** Identify family members, friends, neighbors, or community groups that can assist you in ensuring that your child makes it to school.

HOW CAN I WORK WITH MY CHILD'S SCHOOL?

Communicate with the school. The school can provide support to help you prevent your child from skipping school or missing classes. Remember, the school needs your help also.

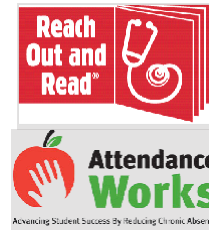
- **Be available:** Make sure the school has your correct contact information. Provide work, home, cell and, if necessary, caretaker phone numbers. Email addresses can also be helpful.
- **Do what you can:** If you cannot maintain constant communication with your child's school, prioritize scheduled parent-teacher conferences. If you can't attend those meetings, let your child's school know your availability and the best way to reach you (i.e., text message, email, or phone call).
- **Be honest:** Talk with the principal and school social worker regarding changes that may affect your child's behavior such as divorce, death or sickness in the family, a missing pet, or a possible move/homelessness. If your child has special needs, inform the teacher at the start of the school year. Help the teacher connect with your child; tell the teacher about your child's hobbies, interests, or learning challenges.
- **Get advice:** Ask the teacher for suggestions on how to make the homework time go more smoothly. Ask for tutors if your child needs help in a course or subject.
- **Get involved:** Assist your child's teacher in classroom-related projects such as reading or one hour mentoring programs. Volunteer to assist with activities outside of the school such as class trips or school sponsored neighborhood events. Participate in parent, teacher, student associations organized by the school. Attend meetings scheduled by the school such as teacher conferences, school-based student support team intervention meetings (SST), or family workshops such as planning for college.
- **Be open-minded:** Inform school officials and teachers of your interest in receiving feedback on your child's progress, attendance, and behavior.
- **Speak up:** Question policies that go against the goal of keeping children in the classroom. Encourage your school to create alternatives to out-of-school suspension and expulsion. Seek changes in school grading policies related to attendance.
- **Collaborate:** Be familiar with school disciplinary policies to ensure that actions at home support or reinforce the actions of the school.
- **Follow-up:** When your child must miss school because of illness, contact the school immediately and arrange to pick up assignments, if necessary. Finally, make certain that your child returns to school with a valid excuse.

HOW CAN I WORK WITH MY COMMUNITY?

Involve trustworthy people, churches, businesses, and community-based organizations in the education of your child.

- **Participate:** Sign up and attend parenting education programs. This is a great way to learn new techniques and share what you have learned.
- **Set up a parent network:** Talk to neighbors about your child's behaviors and activities. Set up a neighborhood watch or patrol to ensure that all children go to and remain in school every day. Exchange phone numbers with other parents in the neighborhood in case you need to reach a parent quickly.
- **Create a homework or study group:** Seek other parents or older children who are willing to help you and your child with homework. Make your home the homework center or develop a telephone tree to make homework help available to all neighborhood children and their parents.
- **Seek consistency:** Insist that all community agencies—social workers, school counselors, or juvenile officers—work together to develop a coordinated individual learning plan of support for your child.
- **Make school relevant:** Push for activities where students can take part in their own learning by developing projects that address community needs.
- **Vote:** Vote in local school board elections and voice your opinion and concerns about what is working or not working in schools. Contact your elected representative.

Please see page 12 for resources that may be helpful to you and your family.



Help Your Child Succeed in School: Build the Habit of Good Attendance Early

School success goes hand in hand with good attendance!

DID YOU KNOW?

- Starting in kindergarten, too many absences can cause children to fall behind in school.
- Missing 10 percent (or about 18 days) can make it harder to learn to read.
- Students can still fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks.
- Being late to school may lead to poor attendance.
- Absences can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up.

Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school—and themselves. Start building this habit in preschool so they learn right away that going to school on time, every day, is important. Good attendance will help children do well in high school, college, and at work.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Set a regular bed time and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Find out what day school starts and make sure your child has the required shots.
- Introduce your child to her teachers and classmates before school starts to help her transition.
- Don't let your child stay home unless she is truly sick. Keep in mind complaints of a stomach ache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home.
- If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, school counselors, or other parents for advice on how to make her feel comfortable and excited about learning.
- Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.
- Avoid medical appointments and extended trips when school is in session.

When Do Absences Become a Problem?



CHRONIC ABSENCE
18 or more days (excused or unexcused)

WARNING SIGNS
10 to 17 days (excused)

SATISFACTORY
9 or fewer excused absences

Note: These numbers assume a 180-day school year.

For more on school readiness, visit attendanceworks.org and reachoutandread.org



Pay Attention to Attendance: Keep Your Child On Track in Middle and High School

Showing up for school has a huge impact on a student's academic success starting in kindergarten and continuing through high school. Even as children grow older and more independent, families play a key role in making sure students get to school safely every day and understand why attendance is so important for success in school and on the job.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Students should miss no more than 9 days (excused or unexcused) of school each year to stay engaged, successful and on track to graduation.
- Absences can be a sign that a student is losing interest in school, struggling with school work, dealing with a bully or facing some other potentially serious difficulty.
- By 6th grade, absenteeism is one of three signs that a student may drop out of high school.
- By 9th grade, regular and high attendance is a better predictor of graduation rates than 8th grade test scores.
- Missing 10 percent, or about 18 days, of the school year can drastically affect a student's academic success.
- Students can be chronically absent even if they only miss a day or two every few weeks.
- Attendance is an important life skill that will help your child graduate from college and keep a job.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Make school attendance a priority

- Talk about the importance of showing up to school every day; make that the expectation.
- Help your child maintain daily routines, such as finishing homework and getting a good night's sleep.
- Try not to schedule dental and medical appointments during the school day.
- Don't let your child stay home unless truly sick. Complaints of headaches or stomach aches may be signs of anxiety.

Help your teen stay engaged

- Find out if your child feels engaged by his classes and feels safe from bullies and other threats. Make sure he/she is not missing class because of behavioral issues and school discipline policies. If any of these are problems, work with your school.
- Stay on top of academic progress and seek help from teachers or tutors if necessary. Make sure teachers know how to contact you.
- Stay on top of your child's social contacts. Peer pressure can lead to skipping school, while students without many friends can feel isolated.
- Encourage meaningful afterschool activities, including sports and clubs.

Communicate with the school

- Know the school's attendance policy – incentives and penalties.
- Talk to teachers if you notice sudden changes in behavior. These could be tied to something going on at school.
- Check on your child's attendance to be sure absences are not piling up.
- Ask for help from school officials, afterschool programs, other parents or community agencies if you're having trouble getting your child to school.



RESOURCES

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I. ATTENDANCE & TRUANCY

a. ACCESS Youth

1101 30th Street NW, #500, Washington, DC 20007

Phone: (202) 652-0287

Website: <http://www.accessyouthinc.org>

ACCESS Youth provides a range of programs and services for at-risk juveniles. Developing skills and fostering friendships, ACCESS Youth combines the benefits of mentorship and mediation in dynamic and engaging summer and after school programs.

b. Attendance Works

Website: www.attendanceworks.org/

Attendance Works is a national and state initiative that promotes better policy and practice around school attendance. This organization promotes tracking chronic absence data for each student beginning in kindergarten or earlier, and partnering with families and community agencies to intervene when poor attendance is a problem for students or schools.

c. DC ReEngagement Center

100 42nd Street NE, Washington, DC 20019

Phone: (202) 671-2539

Website: backontrackdc.osse.dc.gov/about

The ReEngagement Center is a “single-door” through which youth ages 16-24 who have dropped out can reconnect back to educational options and other critical services to support their attainment of a high school diploma or GED. Services provided include: assessing academic status and non-academic needs of youth and using this information to help them develop individualized education plans; identifying good-fit educational options; supporting the re-enrollment process (e.g., collecting required documents, accompanying youth on site visits, connecting to resources that will address reconnection barriers); and providing ongoing support for at least one year once re-enrolled.

d. Parent and Adolescent Support Services (PASS) – Department of Human Services (DHS)

64 New York Avenue NE, Washington, DC 20002

Phone: (202) 698-4334

Website: dhs.dc.gov/service/parent-and-adolescent-support-pass

PASS serves DC families of youth who are committing status offenses. Status offenses include truancy, running away, curfew violations, and extreme disobedience, among other behaviors that are illegal for young people under the age of 18.

e. Show Up, Stand Out

Phone: (202) 727-1700

Website: www.showupstandout.org

Show Up, Stand Out is a free program from the DC Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants (OVSJG). The program helps parents get their kids to school every day and helps solve the problem of truancy in DC schools. If your child has five unexcused absences or more, this program is for you. While Show Up, Stand Out is sponsored by the DC government, all emails, visits, and phone calls are confidential. Our team members are here to help parents get their kids to attend school and to help with problems that hinder their attendance.

f. Student Attendance: Every Day Counts! Attendance Resources

Website: <https://attendance.dc.gov/>

II. GENERAL DC AGENCIES

a. **DC Office of Unified Communications' (OUC) 311 Call**

Center Phone: 311 in DC, (202) 737-4404 from outside

DC Website: <https://311.dc.gov/>

The OUC 311 Call Center Operation provides a one-stop service experience for constituents, residents, and visitors searching for DC government services, numbers, and information. OUC's 311 Call Center is designed to make the public's interaction with the DC government less frustrating.

b. **Department of Human Services (DHS)**

64 New York Avenue NE, 6th Floor, Washington, DC 20002

Phone: (202) 671-4200

Website: <https://dhs.dc.gov>

DHS administers a number of public assistance programs, including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and provides a wide range of family services, including child care assistance, homelessness prevention, family violence prevention, and the Parent and Adolescent Support Services (PASS). *For information on PASS, please see page 13.*

c. **State Board of Education (SBOE) Online Education and Community Resources Guide**

Website: <https://sboe.dc.gov/page/resource>

The SBOE Resource Guide is a continuously evolving resource that currently has more than 400 resource listings organized into 33 category areas. The guide provides students, parents, families, and communities across all eight wards with a roadmap to getting started in navigating the public education landscape in DC.

d. **Office of the Student Advocate**

Phone: (202) 741-4692

Website: <https://sboe.dc.gov/page/office-student-advocate>

Email: student.advocate@dc.gov

The Office of the Student Advocate guides and supports students, parents, families, and community members in navigating the public school system in DC. The mission of the office is to empower DC residents to achieve equal access to public education through advocacy, outreach, and information services.

e. **Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education**

Phone: (202) 741-0886

Website: <https://sboe.dc.gov/page/office-of-the-ombudsman-for-public-education>

Email: ombudsman@dc.gov

The Office of the Ombudsman is responsible for helping students and parents resolve problems as they engage with District of Columbia Public Schools and public charter schools. The Ombudsman offers conflict resolution services to parents, families, and students and is committed to resolving school related complaints, disputes and problems quickly and efficiently in all areas that affect student learning.

III. CHILD CARE

a. Finding Child Care

OSSE DC Child Care Connections

Phone: (202) 829-2500

Website: <http://childcareconnections.osse.dc.gov>

DC Child Care Connections is a searchable list of licensed child care providers in DC that meet your specific criteria such as type of care, age of child, location, services needed and more. Check the options that apply to you and then click on "view results" to obtain the list of referred providers. You can adjust your selections and re-run the search as often as you need. The more specific you are, the fewer providers will be listed.

b. Paying for Child Care

Department of Human Services' Child Care Subsidy Program

4049 South Capitol Street SW, Washington, DC 20032

Phone: (202) 724-0284

Website: <https://dhs.dc.gov/node/120852>

The Child Care Subsidy Program helps low-income families pay child care fees. The subsidy is based on an assessment of need, income, and family size. **Parents must visit the Child Care Services Division to apply for assistance.** Doors open at 7:30 a.m. and close at 4:45 p.m. Visitors are encouraged to arrive early for appointments. Limited walk-in visits for new applicants are available on a "first come, first serve" basis: Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, from 8:15 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Applicants are encouraged to call to schedule an appointment, Monday-Friday from 8:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

c. School-Based Child Care for Parenting Teenagers

DCPS New Heights Program for Expectant and Parenting Students

Website: <https://dcps.dc.gov/page/expectant-and-parenting-students>

This program provides expectant and parenting DCPS students (male or female) with the assistance, support, and guidance they need to handle the responsibilities of raising a child and graduating from high school. The program seeks to keep students engaged in school, improve the graduation rates of these students, prepare them for college or career, and prevent subsequent pregnancies. The following DCPS schools have the New Heights program in their buildings:

Anacostia, (202) 645-4040 Ballou, (202) 645-3400 Ballou STAY, (202) 727-5344 Cardozo, (202) 671-1995	Columbia Heights Education Campus, (202) 939-7700 ext. 5063 Coolidge, (202) 282-0081 Dunbar, (202) 698-3762 Luke C. Moore, (202) 678-7890 Roosevelt, (202) 576-8899	Roosevelt STAY, (202) 576-8399 Washington MET, (202) 727-4985 Wilson, (202) 282-0120 Woodson, (202) 939-2030
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IV. COUNSELING & MENTAL HEALTH

a. Counseling & Mental Health Services for Children, Youth, and Adults

Department of Behavioral Health (DBH)

64 New York Avenue NE, 3rd Floor, Washington, DC 20002

Phone: (202) 673-2200

Website: <https://dbh.dc.gov>

DBH provides prevention, intervention, and treatment services and supports for children, youth, and adults with mental and/or substance use disorders including emergency psychiatric care and community-based outpatient and residential services. DBH serves eligible adults, children, youth, and their families through a network of community based providers and unique government delivered services.

Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) Resource Directory

Website: dbh.dc.gov/page/behavioral-health-resource-directory or washington.dc.networkofcare.org/mh/

DBH seeks to make it easy for residents to access quality behavioral healthcare when needed and recognizes that needs, services, and priorities are very individualized and often complex. The Behavioral Health Resource Link is an online directory of mental health and substance use services and resources.

b. Mental Health Crisis Hotline – Department of Behavioral Health (DBH)

Access Helpline

1-888-7-WE-HELP (1-888-793-4357)

Website: <https://dbh.dc.gov>

Call for help with: emergency psychiatric care, problem-solving assistance, determining whether to seek ongoing mental health services or other types of services, and to learn more about DBH services.

Emergency Psychiatric Services

(202) 673-9319

Website: <https://dbh.dc.gov/service/emergency-psychiatric-services>

Call for help with: comprehensive emergency psychiatric services.

Children and Adolescent Mobile Psychiatric Service (ChAMPS)

(202) 481-1440

Website: <https://www.catholiccharitiesdc.org/ChAMPS>

Call for help with: immediate on-site assistance for children and youth ages 6 to 18 facing a behavioral or mental health crisis in the home, school, or community.

c. Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) Child/Youth Ombudsman Program

821 Howard Road SE, Washington, DC 20020

Phone: (202) 698-2329 or (202) 671-4035

The DBH Child/Youth Ombudsman Program assists parents, guardians, and youth with challenges related to behavioral health needs for children/youth (up to 25 years old) with concerns or complaints about services, questions about rights, navigation assistance to access services and benefits, ideas for making services better, and general questions about services for persons with behavioral health needs.

V. FAMILY & PARENTING SUPPORT

a. Neighborhood Collaboratives

There are five Neighborhood Collaboratives operating in DC. Each Collaborative draws on the unique capabilities and services found within its network of service providers to assist at-risk children and families. There is a set of core neighborhood-based prevention services that each Collaborative provides. Services are provided by ward:

Ward(s) Served	Ward Location	Neighborhood Collaborative
1, 2	1	Collaborative Solutions for Communities (formerly Columbia Heights/Shaw Family Support Collaborative)
4	4	Georgia Avenue Family Support Collaborative
5, 6	5	Edgewood/Brookland Family Support Collaborative
7	7	East River Family Strengthening Collaborative
8	8	Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative, Inc.

Collaborative Solutions for Communities (formerly Columbia Heights/Shaw Family Support Collaborative)

3333 14th Street NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20010 (Ward located: 1; Wards served: 1, 2)

Phone: (202) 518-6737

Website: www.chsfsc.org

Examples of Services Provided: home-based visitation, family advocacy, family group decision making meetings, truancy prevention and intervention, parenting education, and parental support.

East River Family Strengthening Collaborative

3917 Minnesota Avenue NE, Washington, DC 20019 (Ward located: 7; Ward served: 7)

Phone: (202) 397-7300

Website: www.erfsc.org

Examples of Services Provided: case management, crisis intervention, life skills/workforce development, parenting empowerment, adolescent services, housing assistance, fatherhood support, youth activities, financial education classes, community engagement, capacity building, and technical assistance.

Edgewood/Brookland Family Support Collaborative

601 Edgewood Street NE, Suite 25, Washington, DC 20017 (Ward located: 5; Wards served: 5, 6)

Phone: (202) 832-9400

Website: www.ebfsc.org

Examples of Services Provided: family preservation and case management services

Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative, Inc.

2041 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave SE, 4th Floor, Washington, DC 20020

Phone: (202) 889-1425 (Ward located: 8; Ward served: 8)

Website: www.fsfsc.org

Examples of Services Provided: family support services, housing assistance, Men and Boys Program, and youth after-care

Georgia Avenue Family Support Collaborative

4420 Georgia Ave NW, Washington, DC 20011 (Ward located: 4; Ward served: 4)

Phone: (202) 722-1815

Website: gafsc-dc.org/

Examples of Services Provided: parent empowerment, Family Rehousing and Stabilization Program, and K-8 truancy program

b. Parenting Classes & Resources

Common Sense Parent Training (THEARC and Children's Health Project of DC)

Town Hall Education Arts Recreation Campus (THEARC)

1901 Mississippi Avenue SE, Suite 101, Washington, DC 20020

Phone: (202) 889-5901

Website: www.thearc.org

Services Provided: parent resources library, parenting classes, and grandparent support group.

Participants learn how to communicate effectively and avoid power struggles with their children, give positive attention, stay calm in frustrating situations, balance discipline with affection, and praise their children's good behavior.

The Parent Encouragement Program, Inc. (PEP)*

101000 Connecticut Avenue, Kensington, MD 20895

Phone: (301) 929-8824

Website: www.pepparent.org

Services Provided: parent classes and workshops

PEP, Inc. is a non-profit educational organization located in Maryland that provides classes, events, and other educational resources to parents and all who care for children, toddlers through teens. Classes are for parents, teachers, and others who want to deal constructively with children and teens. **There are fees associated with classes; scholarships and a free introductory class are available.*

c. Parent Support Groups

Mary's Center

2333 Ontario Road NW, Washington, DC 20009

Phone: (202) 483-8196

Website: www.maryscenter.org

Mary's Center provides a Father-Child Program, which is designed to help men develop the attitude, knowledge, and skills to become involved in and connected to their children's lives. Father-Child has three main components: home visits, sports activities, and monthly fatherhood outings. During home visits, fathers receive social support services, training, and advocacy services. Sports activities are designed to promote healthy habits and behaviors among fathers.

Advocates for Justice and Education, Inc. (AJE)

25 E Street NW, 3rd Floor, Washington, DC 20001

Phone: (202) 678-8060

3912 Georgia Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20011

Phone: (202) 876-5690 / *Tuesdays and Thursdays Only*

Website: www.aje-dc.org/

AJE is DC's designated Parent Training and Information Center. AJE's mission is to educate parents, youth, and the community about the laws governing public education, specifically for children with special needs.

Grandparent Support Group (Children's Health Project of DC)

1901 Mississippi Avenue SE, Suite 101, Washington, DC 20020

Phone: (202) 889-5901

Website: www.thearc.org

This program offers a support group to encourage grandparents who are raising their grandchildren.

VI. HEALTH

a. **Asthma: Children's National IMPACT DC**

Phone: (202) 476-3970

Website: <https://childrensnational.org/departments/asthma-impact-dc>

IMPACT DC is a pediatric asthma program dedicated to improving asthma care and outcomes for children through clinical care, education, research, and advocacy. One of IMPACT DC's main goals is to lessen the need for emergency room visits and hospital stays by educating patients and families about ways to manage the condition, and connecting them with valuable resources in the local community.

b. **Department of Health (DC Health)**

Multiple Locations

Phone Directory: (202) 442-5955

DC Health promotes health, wellness, and equity, across DC, and protects the safety of residents, visitors and those doing business in the nation's Capital. DOH's responsibilities include: identifying health risks; educating the public; preventing and controlling diseases, injuries and exposure to environmental hazards; promoting effective community collaborations; and optimizing equitable access to community resources.

c. **Department of Health (DOH) Infants, Children, Teens and School Health**

Multiple Locations

Phone: (202) 442-5925

Website: <https://dchealth.dc.gov/service/infants-children-teens-and-school-health>

DOH recognizes the importance of tracking, promoting, and improving the health of its youngest residents. DOH operates a number of programs to ensure that infants, children, and teens are equipped with the necessary tools and services to make them successful at home, in school, and in their communities. Please call (202) 442-5925 or visit the website listed above for more information on:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child, Adolescent and School Health• Childhood Obesity• Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs• DC Healthy Start Project• Early Childhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Free Pregnancy Test and Birth Control• Dental Services• Health Care Services• Health Education• Immunizations• In-Home Health Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Newborn Screening• Pregnancy Risk Assessments Monitoring System (PRAMS)• School-Based Health Centers• School Health Surveillance and Disease Reporting• School Nurses
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d. **DC Healthy Families (Health Insurance)**

Multiple Locations

Phone: (202) 639-4030

Website: <https://dhcf.dc.gov/service/dc-healthy-families>

DC Healthy Families is a program that provides free health insurance to DC residents who meet certain income and US citizenship or eligible immigrant status to qualify for DC Medicaid. The DC Healthy Families program covers doctor visits, vision and dental care, prescription drugs, hospital stays, and transportation for appointments. DC Healthy Families also offers special programs for newborn babies, children with disabilities or special health care needs, and people with HIV or AIDS.

e. **Healthy Youth Resource Guide**

Website: <https://osse.dc.gov/healthy-youth-resource-guide>

The Healthy Youth Resource Guide is a directory that assists users to identify youth serving organizations, which offer sexual health services and other care within the District. Users of this guide include school staff and community stakeholders who serve youth. The guide also offers assistance on how users can navigate the referral process to encourage and instruct youth on seeking care.

f. Office of Health Care Ombudsman and Bill of Rights

441 4th Street NW, 900 South, Washington, DC 20001

Phone: (202) 724-7491

Website: <https://healthcareombudsman.dc.gov>

The Health Care Ombudsman Program was established to provide assistance to uninsured DC residents and individuals insured by health benefits plans in DC regarding matters pertaining to their health care coverage. In addition to commercial insurance, this office can help with Medicaid, Medicare, DC HealthCare Alliance, DC Healthy Families, prescription drug coverage, and medical billing issues.

VII. HOUSING SUPPORT

a. Department of Human Services (DHS) – Family Services Administrations (FSA)

64 New York Avenue NE, Washington, DC 20002

Phone: (202) 399-7093 (24-hour Shelter Hotline)

Website: <https://dhs.dc.gov/page/family-services>

FSA features the Homeless Services Program and administers the following housing-related social service programs and grants: emergency rental assistance program, emergency shelter, homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing program, homeless services, permanent supportive housing program, temporary shelter, and transitional shelter.

VIII. TRANSPORTATION

a. Kids Ride Free / School Transit Subsidy Program

Phone: (202) 673-1740 (DC Department of Transportation)

Website: <https://ddot.dc.gov/page/school-transit-subsidy-program>

The School Transit Subsidy Program offers free or reduced fares for DC students who use Metrobus, the DC Circulator, or Metrorail to travel to and from school and school-related activities. The program is available to students enrolled in DC public, public charter, and private schools.