

## The Importance of Regular School Attendance

- ▶ Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school – and themselves.
- ▶ You can help your children start building good attendance habits early, so they learn that going to school on time, every day is important.
- ▶ Your child's attendance can also positively impact other students and the whole school! They can feel proud to be a role model for others and contribute to making the school a place where everyone can learn and have fun.

**Good attendance will help your children do well in school, in post-secondary, and when they enter the world of work.**

### Did you know?

- ▶ By encouraging good attendance, you will make an important difference to the education of your children. Regular attendance and arriving at school on time is key to educational success.
- ▶ Challenges to daily attendance are unavoidable; illness and pressing issues will arise sometimes. But try not to let absences add up!
- ▶ Being in school as much as possible is an essential part of the learning process.
  - It doesn't matter if absences are excused or unexcused, and being late and leaving school early are also important.
  - What matters is helping all students be in the classroom as much as possible, so they can access lots of opportunities to learn.

### Research shows ...

- ▶ Students who have the best chance to succeed in school are those who attend school regularly.
- ▶ Students who regularly attend school receive more hours of instruction, are better able to keep up with their schoolwork, and they usually stay in school longer.

- ▶ Studies show that students with good attendance have a greater chance of graduating, and they often finish high school with higher grades. That means they will have a wide range of options for post-secondary education and careers.
- ▶ Students who graduate from high school are more likely to be employed and earn more money later in their lives.
- ▶ Students who attend school regularly have more opportunities to build positive relationships with adults and other students in the school. School helps students practice and improve their behavioural and social-emotional skills.
- ▶ There is evidence that students who attend school more often are less likely to be negatively affected by challenges outside of school, such as substance abuse or other risky behaviours.

- ▶ *This does not mean that students who experience attendance challenges cannot catch up and go on to graduate and be successful. They can!!*
- ▶ It does mean that helping all students attend school regularly is very important.
- ▶ It also means that students who are experiencing attendance challenges should be provided support as soon as possible.

## What families do is key.

- ▶ A regular bedtime and morning routine can help your children make it to school on time and ready for the day ahead.
- ▶ Get to know your children's teachers! Learn about the school's attendance policies. Keep in regular touch so you know how your children are doing.
- ▶ Make sure you make plans for transportation to school before the school year begins, especially if you need to make arrangements for busing.
- ▶ Let your children know that attendance matters to you. By learning how to show up for school every day, your children are learning that it is important to show up for work every day later in their lives.
- ▶ Encourage your children to go to school unless they are too sick.
- ▶ Try to avoid having older children stay home from school to care for their younger siblings.
- ▶ Ask the community and school if attendance incentives are available, and how your child can be considered.

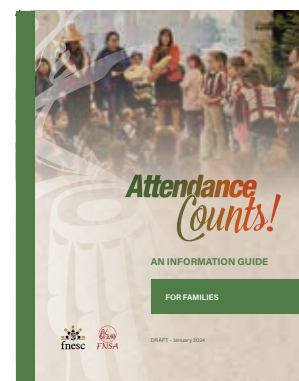
- ▶ Provide regular study times and a quiet area for doing homework so your children don't avoid school because their assignments are not complete.
- ▶ Ask for help if you need it. What services are available in your community? Can the school help you access any resources you might need?
- ▶ Join with other parents to make an attendance commitment. Agree to help one another if something comes up that will make getting to school difficult.
- ▶ Contribute to your school's efforts to address absenteeism. Do what you can to help improve attendance for all students.

### Do you want to learn more?

**FNESC and FNSA have created a more comprehensive *Attendance Guide for First Nations Families*. It includes more information about why attendance is important, and how families and schools can work in partnership to address this critical component of school and student success. Contact FNESC and FNSA for copies.**

That document includes input from First Nations parents who participated in a number of attendance capacity building sessions. What did those participants say families can do to help with attendance?

- ☐ Tell their children they value education and want to support them in school.
- ☐ Start each school day in a positive way; share positive messages before children leave for school in the morning.
- ☐ Set routines at home so kids are healthy and well-rested.
- ☐ Share the message with students that "education = independence."
- ☐ When possible, try to avoid having older children stay home from school to care for younger siblings and try not to book medical appointments or trips during school hours.
- ☐ Limit screen time and take away phones at bedtime (not always easy).
- ☐ Talk with other families and the school about how to help address students' anxiety about attending school.
- ☐ Regularly check in with teachers.



- ☐ Contact the school (for younger students) or help students reach out to their teachers when days are missed, so children and teens don't fall further behind.
- ☐ Text each other when they need or can share help, such as transportation supports, and encourage each other on the rough days when their children don't want to go to school.
- ☐ Text the teacher, when appropriate, to share "my child is having a rough day today," so everyone is aware when students might need some extra attention, patience, and support.