



Research shows that children with poor attendance are at a disadvantage later in life.

They often

- find it harder to make and maintain friendships
- are less likely to gain good qualifications
- earn lower wages
- have a higher chance of being unemployed
- have low self-esteem

Attendance is everyone's business

“One third of those starting year-one today - about 12,000 will not be “school ready”. In the more deprived parts of Greater Manchester, that figure rises to seven in ten.”

(Andy Burnham, 2017, GMCA Summit).



Checklist

- ☐ Do you have an attendance policy? The attendance policy template can be found on Learning Leads
- ☐ Do you ask parents to call on first day of absence?
- ☐ Do you follow up absences on the first day?
- ☐ Do you communicate clear expectations to parents with regards to attendance and punctuality?
- ☐ Do you have up to date contact numbers for parents?
- ☐ Are parents aware that on occasion you may need to share / discuss information with other professionals?

By promoting good attendance in the early years you can make a difference!

Contacts

If you are concerned about a child's attendance please contact either your linked health visitor or local Health Visiting Team.

However if you have an immediate safeguarding concern please contact the MASSH on: 0161 217 6160

Please ensure parents are aware you are discussing your concerns with other professionals.

For any queries around funding for early education entitlement (2, 3 and 4 year olds) please contact the Start Well Early Years Project team:

eypt@stockport.gov.uk

For further advice on policy and practice contact:

eyit.consultant@stockport.gov.uk
or childminding@stockport.gov.uk



Start Well in the Early Years

Supporting attendance and punctuality in the early years - guidance for childminders, early years settings and nurseries



This leaflet supports the commitments and principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Why is good attendance and punctuality important?

- It helps children settle and form good relationships
- It helps to develop positive self esteem
- It can identify more serious concerns at an early stage
- It fosters healthy habits for future attendance
- Under achievement is often linked to poor attendance
- It improves outcomes for children
- Promotes school readiness

Whilst the legal requirements for attendance do not apply to children under 5, regular routines for young children support the settling-in process and enhance their sense of security. Even if a child only misses just one session it can seriously impact on a child's learning & development and readiness for school. This guidance for practitioners reinforces Stockport Council's commitment to improving attendance in the early years through its Child care and Early Education Attendance Policy 2018 and Model Policy for Settings.

This leaflet includes some ideas and points for further discussion to help support practitioners in working with children and families.

What can be done to promote good attendance and punctuality in your setting?

1 Establishing good relationships

Working in partnership with the family promotes good relationships and communication. These are key to making a child's time in a setting happy and rewarding.

A positive relationship will enable practitioners and parents to talk in an honest and constructive way about issues of lateness or irregular attendance and any support needed.

It is really important to follow up on poor punctuality or attendance with parents and carers in a way that is sensitive and supportive. There may be other factors affecting why they are struggling to get to the setting. Parents and children who often come into the setting late may already feel harassed and judged. By being respectful and having an open and honest conversation can often lead to a simple solution.

It is important that settings have a sound attendance policy and communicate clear expectations about punctuality and attendance to the family before the child starts.

Some settings require the parents to sign an agreement, which sets out the expectations and the steps the setting takes to follow up on any issues.

Ask parents to telephone on the day if their child is absent. If the parent does not let you know, follow up all absences with a telephone call on the first day of absence. This is not about checking up on families but rather about ensuring that the child is safe and well.

2 Explaining the Early Years Foundation Stage 'Play is Children's Work'

Many parents (including some from ethnic/cultural groups where young children are generally at home with their parents until five or six) may not be aware of the importance and benefits of play in early years education, or that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a statutory document.

They may be unaware that any absence or late arrival at the setting can affect the child's ability to fully participate and benefit from the planned and unplanned learning and development opportunities. Meetings for parents to discuss the EYFS and the practice and routine in your setting can give them the information they need and allow them to value the importance of play in their child's development.

3 Environment

Many different families use our early years settings and schools and they all need to feel welcomed and valued. Posters reflecting the ethnicity and languages of the families that use the setting are one example of how to do this.

Some settings have displays promoting good attendance and incentives such as certificates for good attendance

Remember!

Regular attendance and good punctuality are important for maximising achievement and obtaining the greatest benefit from education.

- Good relationships with children and their families are vital in encouraging regular attendance and punctuality
- Children settle well and want to attend settings when they feel valued and have a sense of belonging
- Praising good attendance and punctuality is likely to promote continued regular and punctual attendance
- The way that staff respond to families where there are patterns of lateness is crucial in affecting punctuality and attendance. Make sure that absence is followed up on every occasion
- Parents/carers and settings need to respect and value each other and work collaboratively
- Many parents will need support at times to feel confident and empowered in their skills to meet the challenge of parenting
- Good habits of attendance and punctuality are key skills for adult life

Evidence shows that there is a clear link between levels of school attendance and poor outcomes for young people. This is not just in relation to academic achievement. Poor attendance also leaves young people at greater risk of neglect, social isolation, mental health problems, drug and alcohol issues, sexual exploitation and offending.

