SEAT 02

THE SEAT SERIES · HANDOUT A · SEAT CARD: DO THIS MONDAY

Teachers · Grades K-2

Early Absence Is a Logistics Signal

Why do my youngest students miss, and what can a K-2 teacher do about it?



THREE MOVES FOR THIS WEEK

☐ Greet by name

Cost: $0

A warm, named welcome at the door every morning, for every child.

☐ Class attendance goal

Low cost

Post a class goal, update it monthly and celebrate together.

☐ Positive note home

Low cost

Send a Family Connection Postcard when attendance improves, before any concern.

FRIENDLY FAMILY CHECK-IN

1. We missed [child] today and wanted to check that everyone is okay.
2. How are mornings going at home right now?
3. Is getting to school hard on certain days?
4. What is one thing we could do to help this month?

CLASSIFY BEFORE YOU CONSEQUENCE

Withdrawal
Most common in K-2. Ask about rides, shifts and siblings first.

Refusal
Separation worries and tummy aches on school mornings. Partner with the counselor.

Avoidance
A classroom, peer or noise that feels scary. Adjust the setting.

Truancy
Rare at this age. A young child's absence is an adult decision.

AVOID THESE MISSTEPS

- x Assuming families do not value school
- x Sending warning letters before a friendly call
- x Waiting for a pattern to become chronic in kindergarten

HOW YOU WILL KNOW IT WORKS

Leading: Families reached with a positive contact
Lagging: Kindergarten and grade 1 chronic absence

Evidence: Schools Spared, Children Punished, Ch. 3 (Antoine and Kayla, composite cases); Gentle-Genitty, Bowen, Kearney, Jackson & Lashbrook (2024), The Role of Health in Schools, Ch. 4, Rowman & Littlefield; Fiese et al. (2002), Journal of Family Psychology 16(4).

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