



# New Research Shows Nearly Half of American Parents Underestimate the Harm of School Absences

**U.S. Department of Education, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and the Ad Council Partner on Absences Add Up campaign to help parents keep their children in school and on a path to success.**

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A student who misses just two days of school each month — 18 days total in the year — is considered to be chronically absent. However, many parents don't realize that, even when excused or understandable, absences add up and can greatly impact a child's education. In the United States, more than 6 million children are chronically absent from school each year.

New research released today by the Ad Council found that an overwhelming majority (86%) of parents understand their child's school attendance plays a big role in helping them graduate from high school. However, nearly half (49%) of parents believe that it is okay for their children to miss three or more days of



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school per month – and that they won't fall behind academically if they do. In reality, missing just two days of school per month makes children more likely to fall behind and less likely to graduate.

To combat chronic absenteeism, the U.S. Department of Education, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and the Ad Council have partnered to create a public service campaign, Absences Add Up. The campaign features a series of digital and out of home PSAs that drive parents to [AbsencesAddUp.org](http://AbsencesAddUp.org). On the website, parents are empowered with information and resources to help ensure their children attend school each day.

***“Ensuring kids actually make it to school is a vital part of leveling the playing field. Just missing a couple of days of school a month can mean the difference between dropping out and graduating on time. Absences add up. That’s why eliminating chronic absenteeism is a critical part of our work at the federal, state, and local level to ensure that every child has the opportunity to succeed,” said U.S. Secretary of Education John B. King Jr.***

***“A good education provides the best pathway to opportunity,” said Mott Foundation President Ridgway White. “But to succeed in school, students have to be in school. That’s why we’re pleased to support a campaign that will help families and communities keep kids in the classroom.”***

Absences Add Up is part of the My Brother's Keeper Every Student, Every Day initiative, a broad effort to combat chronic absenteeism led by the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and Justice. The initiative calls on states and local



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communities across the country to join in taking immediate action to address and eliminate chronic absenteeism by at least 10% each year, beginning with the current school year.

One third of parents surveyed in the new Ad Council survey say they could do more to ensure that their child attends school every day. There are many reasons why students miss school when there are resources available to help. Some are struggling in the classroom, while others may be having trouble with bullies or dealing with challenges at home.

***“Many parents don’t realize that absences can add up quickly and make children more likely to fall behind quickly in the classroom,” said Lisa Sherman, President and CEO of the Ad Council.***

***“The Absences Add Up campaign gives parents the proper information they need to understand the true impact of school absences and the tools they need to set their children up for long-term success.”***

Children who are chronically absent in preschool, kindergarten and first grade are less likely to read on grade level by the third grade. Students who cannot read at grade level by the third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school.

The Absences Add Up campaign directs parents and community members to [AbsencesAddUp.org](http://AbsencesAddUp.org), where they can find information about the importance of school attendance and resources to learn how to help children who are struggling in school, being bullied, managing chronic illness or dealing with mental health challenges. The site also provides parents with resources to assist with caregiving, housing and food challenges. For teachers, community leaders, after



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school programs, and mentoring partners, there is information about how to encourage school attendance and resources to help address issues like poor grades, bullying, and family challenges that cause children to miss school when they don't have to.

The Ad Council survey was conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs in June 2016. Ipsos surveyed more than 1,000 parents of children ages 6-13 to capture key attitudes regarding their children's school attendance.

### **Ad Council**

The Ad Council is a private, non-profit organization with a rich history of marshaling volunteer talent from the advertising and media industries to deliver critical messages to the American public. Having produced literally thousands of PSA campaigns addressing the most pressing social issues of the day, the Ad Council has affected, and continues to affect, tremendous positive change by raising awareness, inspiring action, and saving lives. To learn more about the Ad Council and its campaigns, visit [www.adcouncil.org](http://www.adcouncil.org), like us on [Facebook](#), follow us on [Twitter](#), or view our PSAs on [YouTube](#).

### **My Brother's Keeper**

President Obama launched My Brother's Keeper in February of 2014 to address persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color and ensure that all young people can reach their full potential. In response to the President's call to action, nearly 250 local municipalities in all 50 states have accepted the MBK Community Challenge.

### **U.S. Department of Education**

U.S. Secretary of Education John B. King Jr's top priorities for this year have been promoting equity and



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excellence at every level of education to ensure that every child has the opportunity to succeed; supporting and lifting up the teaching profession; and continuing the Department's focus on returning America to the top of the rankings in college completion by ensuring more students earn an affordable degree with real value.

### **Charles Stewart Mott Foundation**

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, established in 1926 in Flint, Michigan, by an automotive pioneer, is a private philanthropy committed to supporting projects that promote a just, equitable and sustainable society. With year-end assets of approximately \$2.7 billion in 2015, the Foundation made 400 grants totaling more than \$119 million. As a longtime funder of community education and afterschool programs, the Foundation considers education an important pathway to opportunity. Through its work with the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative and the Absences Add Up campaign, Mott believes afterschool leaders can help schools connect and partner with parents to build good attendance habits that will benefit children throughout their lives.

For a print out on this information click [here](#).



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