Resources

- Proximal and Distal Factors Related to Problematic School Absenteeism

- Student Interest Survey

- School Night Schedule

- When I feel upset, sad or unfocused at school, I can...
  - Whole Hearted School Counseling (2018).

- Too Anxious for School, Now What?

- Staying Motivated
  - Woodburn Press

- The 8 Learning Styles. Which One Works for You?

- Chronic Elementary Absenteeism: A Problem Hidden in Plain Sight
### Proximal and Distal Factors Related to Problematic School Absenteeism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Child Factors</strong></td>
<td>Extensive work hours outside of school</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Psychopathology</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Grade retention</td>
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<td>History of absenteeism</td>
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<td>Low self-esteem and school commitment</td>
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<td>Poor health or academic proficiency</td>
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<td>Pregnancy</td>
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<td>Problematic relationships with authority figures</td>
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<td>Underdeveloped social skills</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Key Parent Factors</strong></td>
<td>Low expectations of school performance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maltreatment</td>
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<td>Problematic parenting styles (permissive, authoritarian)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Poor communication with school officials</td>
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<td>Poor supervision</td>
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<td>School dropout in parents and among relatives</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Psychopathology</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Key Family Factors</strong></td>
<td>Homelessness</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intense conflict and chaos</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Large family size</td>
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<td>Poor access to educational aids</td>
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<td>Poverty</td>
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<td>Stressful family transitions (divorce, illness, unemployment, moving)</td>
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<td>Transportation problems</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Key Peer Factors</strong></td>
<td>Participation in gang related activity</td>
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<td>Poor participation in extracurricular activity</td>
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<td>Proximity to deviant peers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Support for alluring activities outside of school such as drug use</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Victimization from bullies or otherwise</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Key School Factors</strong></td>
<td>Poor school climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequent teacher absences</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Highly punitive or legal means to address problematic absenteeism</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inadequate praise for student achievement and attendance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Poor monitoring of attendance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Poor student-teacher relationships</td>
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<td></td>
<td>School-based racism and/or discrimination</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Key Community Factors</strong></td>
<td>Disorganized or Unsafe neighborhood</td>
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<td></td>
<td>High gang related activity</td>
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<td>Intense interracial tension</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lack of social and education support services</td>
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<td></td>
<td>School district policies and legal statues regarding absenteeism</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Economic pull factors (i.e. plentiful, well-paying jobs requiring little formal education)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source:
Student Interest Survey

NAME

What is the best thing you remember learning about last year? Why is it so memorable?

If you could choose one famous person (living or not) to be the substitute teacher for a day, who would choose? What would you hope to learn from them?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Favorite subject</th>
<th>Favorite book(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Favorite movie and/or TV show</td>
<td>Favorite song and/or musical artist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What do you enjoy doing when you are not in school? (any hobbies, talents, sports you play, etc.)
List three words that describe you:

______________

What one word best describes how you usually feel about school?

______________

Think about the best teacher you ever had. List three words that describe great teachers.

______________

As your teacher, how can I help you to be successful?

What are you most excited about in this school year?

What is one goal you have for the school year? What is something you hope to accomplish?

What else should I know about you that I might not think to ask about?
### School Night Schedule

School lets out at ___________ PM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Week of</th>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appointments During School and will I return Y/N</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Afterschool Activities and Time</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Ride Home is: My Backup:</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I will be home between ____ PM &amp; ____ PM</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OR I will be at ____’s house and can be reached at the phone number ____</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Dinner Ideas/ Time</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Chores</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Daily Assignments/ Homework and due date</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Items you need extra help completing:</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time needed for friends/TV/ outdoors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unplug/Bedtime</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
When I feel upset, sad, or unfocused at school I can:

- BREATHE. As I zoom my attention to my breathing, I will take extra long out-breaths.

- Squeeze a stress ball or use another teacher-approved fidget.

- Doodle, draw, or color.

- Invent a secret hand signal with my teacher that communicates I need help.

- Write down my thoughts or questions if my teacher can’t address them right away.

- Imagine a peaceful and calming place.

- Ask permission to take a short walk down the hallway or up & down the stairs. And then return.

- Stretch.

- Think of or write a list of 3 positive things my your life.

- Read in a quiet spot.

- Visualize a person who supports me and cheers me on.

- Use a break card to let my teacher know I need a break and then use a timer to remind me when to return.

- Ask my teacher to break down the assignment into smaller chunks so it’s not so overwhelming.

- Drink water.

- Push against the wall as hard as I can and then relax my body.

- Listen to calming music with headphones.

- Move away from the distraction or person who is bothering me.

- Ask to deliver books to the library or another class.

- Volunteer to help clean or organize the classroom.

- Remind myself it’s ok to make a mistake.

- Take a 3-5 minute break in the designated classroom peace corner.

- Ask my teacher for help if I feel upset or overwhelmed.

- Write a letter.

- Zoom in on my senses: noticing 5 things I see, 4 things I feel, 3 things I hear, 2 things I smell & 1 thing I taste.

- Tell myself a positive affirmation or mantra.

- Slowly trace my hand with my finger, breathing in, as I trace my fingers going up...breathing out, as I trace my fingers going down.
Too Anxious for School, Now What?

You have tried everything. You have called the SRO, tried outside agencies, tried discipline and rewards...

I. Have you listed the key problem and attempted interventions? This may help you narrow your focus. It may also help if the school district has sent you to court. Even if they have not, it is important to prioritize your families needs.
   A. Empowering Parents has a good questionnaire on their website to help you brainstorm some fundamental considerations:
      https://www.empoweringparents.com/article/hate-school-can-child-refuses-go-school/
   B. Consider listing providers you have seen, phone numbers and results in case you need to contact them in the future.
   C. See Additional Resources in Appendix A

II. Mental Health Services

A. If you are going to court for a County Attorney Referral, they will mandate weekly mental health appointments. It will be in your best interest to get therapy/counseling and to get a mental health evaluation.
   1. In the case of a referral, they want to know that you continue seeing a provider. If you do not like a therapist and switch, that is okay. But stopping for months is not helpful to your case.
   2. The school district can help you pay for appointments if you are still enrolled and you do not have insurance.
   3. Request any diagnosis the doctor makes be sent to the school. The doctor may not tell you a diagnosis. Ask if they have an online portal or if they plan to make a diagnosis, but feel free to tell them that you are not pressuring them for a label so they do not give you a temporary diagnosis (such as adjustment disorder). Sometimes it is helpful to say that you are trying to keep the school updated as to how the mental health and school environment can mesh.

B. If your child is already 16 or 17, it may be good to find a psychiatrist who sees adults and older teens. Psychiatrists prescribe medications and it can be hard for teens to find someone they like—If they start while they are still under your roof, then they have a few years to transition to the provider before moving out on their own.

C. Same for counseling. There are SO MANY types of therapy. ADA, CBT, DBT, ETC. SEE https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/guide-to-psychiatry-and-counseling#1 for a brief explanation for types of psychotherapy. If you pick a provider and your teen does not like the therapist, it is a great chance for them to learn self-advocacy while they are under your roof.
D. **Provider search resource:** [https://nebraskamentalhealth.com/](https://nebraskamentalhealth.com/).

III. Ask the district about alternative placement options
   A. Homebound services—when a child must be in the home or hospital for a long period of time due to illness, the school must provide educational services at home. A doctor has to say this is needed instead of public school.

   B. What options does the district have for online classes or alternative schools?

   C. If the child is near Omaha and is having behavioral issues through the school, can they temporarily go to the Metro Day School through Boystown? They ride a bus to the school and do classes then ride the bus home.

   D. Some kids do well with a school or district transfer. This is not often the case. Ask the child what would be different at a new school and how they would avoid getting into the same situations. If they get into trouble with peers, will they have firm boundaries, and do you have clear rules and consequences for them? Will they avoid some sort of stigma and peer group (a gang, a set of peers or certain staff who has bullied them for years) or will they likely have similar problems?

   E. Consult with Parent Training and Information Nebraska (PTI), especially if your child has an IEP [http://pti-nebraska.org/](http://pti-nebraska.org/)

   F. If your child is under 21 and you are not sure what services they need, one of the best resources is Childfind. They work with early intervention for young kids, Nebraska Department of Ed, and other programs. The can help you coordinate with Assistive technology and other needs: [http://www.childfind.ne.gov/content/resources.html](http://www.childfind.ne.gov/content/resources.html)

IV. Choosing to homeschool
   A. You must decide on a program and then notify the State of Nebraska and fill out the required forms. The state can send the information to the school district, or you can send the school the information at the same time.


   C. Consider partial homeschool programs, especially if they are free. Omaha has the Omaha Virtual School. Elementary and Middle attend twice per week with optional study/tutoring two additional days per week and high school attends every other day. Class sizes are small. They test your child before placing them in a class, so they can be ahead in some areas or behind in others. They have informational meetings that might help you form connections to other parents in the same situation. 531-299-0269 or 855-268-9115 [https://ovs.k12.com/](https://ovs.k12.com/)

   D. Pick Homeschool Schedule options (year-round; traditional, block, etc) [https://pambarnhill.com/homeschool_schedule_options/](https://pambarnhill.com/homeschool_schedule_options/)
E. Create a budget and include extracurricular activities in the budget. Look at groups that provide activities. See the next point

F. For step-by-step ideas on some homeschool groups and curriculum per grade, see "How to Homeschool in Nebraska" at www.movingbeyondthepage.com

G. **Consider contacting a homeschool mentor for free at www.nebraskahomeschool.org**

H. Join social media groups that are focused on solutions, such as getting you into programs and helping with socialization. Examples: HOME—Homeschooling in the metro for everyone, Nebraska Homeschool (Nonprofit), Homeschool for free, Omaha Homeschool Network, Omaha Unschoolers, Omaha Area Homeschool Dances

I. Create a directory of favorite websites and resources. Catalog one-time use sites and those that help with ongoing information, such as the Omaha library homeschool information. Make a time of day in which your child researches sites such as https://freehomeschooling.net/ and takes notes and learns to categorize the information

V. Create a shared family calendar, possibly also an email just for school material. Give your older child a share of the responsibility in checking the email and letting you know what you have received

   A. Cozi, Google, Outlook, etc. Add family appointments and research time as well as time for social events for your child

   B. Create an Our Home account for required chores/rewards

   C. Check in with your library and local events regularly and insist your child take ownership
Appendix A

Internet Resources

The Child Anxiety Network:  
www.childanxiety.net

Anxiety Disorders Association of America:  
www.adaa.org

The Center for Mental Health Services:  
www.mentalhealth.org

Columbia University Clinic for Anxiety and Related Disorders  
www.anxietytreatmentnyc.org

Columbia University  
Department of Psychiatry  
http://www.cumc.columbia.edu/dept/pi/
[PLEASE ENTER YOUR DISTRICT NAME HERE]

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)

Student: ___________________________  Grade: ___________
School: ___________________________  Date: ___________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preliminary Strategies</th>
<th>Instructional Strategies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ask yourself:</strong> Can I figure out how to correct the problem-to-change the context somehow so the problem behavior doesn’t occur in the first place? (Refer to the antecedent column on page one)</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ I could make adjustments as the WHEN the problem behavior is likely to occur:</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ I could make adjustments as the WHERE the problem behavior is likely to occur:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ I could make adjustments to the SUBJECT/ACTIVITY during which the problem behavior is likely to occur by:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ I could make adjustments as to the PEOPLE present when the problem behavior is likely to occur by:</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other Adjustments</strong> that might make the problem behavior less likely to occur include:</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Clarifying and/or re-teaching expectations/routines. How?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Modifying Task/Assignment/curriculum. How?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Modifying instructional methods. How?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Increasing supervision. How?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Utilizing Special Equipment. How?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ask yourself:</strong> What skills will the student need to be taught in order to successfully demonstrate the replacement behavior identified in column two of page two.</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Social Skills:</td>
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<td>□ Communication Skills:</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Study skills:</td>
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<td>□ Academic Skills:</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ask yourself:</strong> How will these skills be taught:</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Individual instruction</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Group instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Demonstration/modeling</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Role Play</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Guided practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Independent practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who will provide the instruction?</td>
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<tr>
<td>When will the instruction take place?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Where will the instruction take place?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How often will instruction take place?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How will opportunities for practice/rehearsal be provided?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How will I prompt the student to utilize his/her newly acquired skill?</td>
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[INAPT Logo]
Appendix B

State Requirements

Nebraska Homeschool Laws

In Nebraska, parents choosing to homeschool must notify the state of their intention by completing the forms mandated by the state. Homeschools are considered "exempt schools" and parents must file for an exemption under Rule 13, the rule that governs the procedures and standards for homeschooling parents.

- **Rule 13** affidavits state that the requirements for school approval and accreditation required by law i) violate the parents' or legal guardians' sincerely held religious beliefs, OR ii) interfere with the decision of the parents or legal guardians in directing their child's education. Religious exempt schools do not need to comply with immunization laws.

To get forms and review the information from the Nebraska Department of Education, visit their [website](#).

A Brief Review of Homeschool Laws

**Synopsis of Nebraska Education Statutes Applicable to Home Education**
(Sections 79-201, 79-202, 79-211, 79-217, 79-1601)

**Section 79-201 and 79-202 Compulsory Education; Attendance Required.**

**Ages:** School attendance is compulsory unless the child:
- has obtained a high school diploma from a state approved or accredited school; or
- has completed the program of instruction offered by an unapproved Rule 13 school under section 79-1601 [includes homeschool graduates]; or
- has reached the age of 18 years; or
- has reached the age of 16 years, attends a public, private, denominational, or parochial school, and successfully completes an exit interview with parents and the local school superintendent; or
- has reached the age of 16 years, attends an unapproved school under 79-1601, and such child's parent or guardian has signed a notarized release discontinuing the enrollment of the child on a form provided by the Commissioner of Education and filed it with the Department of Education; or
- will reach 6 years of age on or after January 1 of the then-current school year (i.e., those children who will reach 6 years of age prior to January 1 must attend school), or
- will reach 6 years of age prior to January 1 of the then-current school year, but will not reach 7 years of age prior to January 1 of such school year, such child's parent or guardian has signed an affidavit stating that the child is participating in an education program that the parent or guardian believes will prepare the child to enter grade one for the following school year [e.g., Montessori school, etc.], and such affidavit has been filed by the parent or guardian with the school district in which the child resides; or
- will reach 6 years of age prior to January 1 of the then-current school year but has not reached 7 years of age, such child's parent or guardian has signed an affidavit stating that the parent or guardian intends for the child to participate in an unapproved school under section 79-1601 and the parent or guardian intends to file the Rule 13 paperwork on or before the child's seventh birthday, and such affidavit has been filed by the parent or guardian with the school district in which the child resides [this effectively retains the old 7-year-old compulsory attendance age, but only for those children who will be attending a Rule 13 unapproved school whose parents file the affidavit]; or
- will not reach 6 years of age prior to January 1 of the then-current school year and such child was enrolled in a public school and has discontinued the enrollment according to the policy of the school board (i.e., the parents discontinue enrollment of their under-compulsory-age child because he/she wasn't really ready yet).

**Section 79-211. Minimum school term.**

School term: "not less than one thousand thirty-two (1,032) hours for elementary grades and one thousand eighty (1,080) hours for high school grades"  

**Section 79-1601. Schools. Private, teachers, laws applicable; election not to meet accreditation or approval requirements.**
There are no statutes that define homeschools. Homeschooling takes place under Section 79-1601(2) that applies to private, denominational, or parochial schools which elect not to meet accreditation or approval requirements. A homeschool is considered a private school.

Subjects: "language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and health" Section 79-1601(2)

Parents or the legal guardians of children attending a private school, i.e. homeschool, must submit the following information to the Commissioner of Education:

1. a certified copy of each child's birth certificate the first year they begin to homeschool, and
2. a notice of intent to operate a private (home) school 30 days prior to the date the parents initially start/begin to homeschool their compulsory attendance age children, and
3. a signed statement that specifically states they are choosing to home educate because the requirements for approval and accreditation required by law and the rules and regulations adopted and promulgated by the State Board of Education either (i) violate sincerely held religious beliefs of the parents or legal guardians, or (ii) interfere with the decisions of the parents or legal guardians in directing their child's education.
4. necessary information to prove to the Commissioner of Education that the homeschool:
   1. meets the minimum requirement relating to health, fire, and safety standards,
   2. meets the attendance requirements of Section 79-201 (see above),
   3. maintains a sequential program of instruction designed to lead to basic skills in the language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and health (see Subjects above).
5. a statement that the parents or guardians have satisfied themselves that the individuals monitoring instruction in the homeschool are qualified to monitor instruction in the basic skills (see Subjects above).
6. Items #2 through #5, above, must be submitted by the parents or guardians to the Commissioner of Education annually by July 15 after the initial date they begin to homeschool.
7. Parents or guardians who do not intend to start homeschooling their child who will reach 6 years of age prior to January 1 of the then-current school year must file an affidavit with their local school district stating that they intend for their child to participate in a school which has elected or will elect pursuant to section 79-1601 not to meet accreditation or approval requirements and that the parent or guardian intends to provide the Commissioner of Education with a statement pursuant to subsection (3) of section 79-1601 on or before the child’s seventh birthday.
8. Parents or guardians will need to sign a notarized release discontinuing the enrollment of their 16- or 17-year-old child should they allow that child to drop out of school prior to graduation. This notice should be filed with the Department of Education in order to avoid possible truancy charges.
9. Parents or guardians should file a notice of course completion [i.e., graduation] to the Department of Education if their graduate will remain under 18 years of age during a significant portion of any typical school year (Sept-May) in order to avoid possible truancy charges. Parents may want to file the notice anyway because the state is now effectively recognizing completion of homeschool studies (i.e., graduation) as suitable for fulfilling the educational requirements of the compulsory attendance law.
10. Parents or guardians choosing to home educate for other than religious reasons must comply with the immunization requirements of Section 79-217, which requires each student attending a private school to be protected against measles, mumps, rubella, poliomyelitis, diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus by immunization prior to enrollment. There are exceptions to Section 79-217 at Sections 79-221 & 222.

Teacher Certification: None; Section 79-1601(3).

Department of Education Rules and Regulations: The statutes identified above are implemented by Department of Education rules and regulations; specifically, Rule 13 which now covers both homeschooling for religious reasons and homeschooling for other than religious reasons. Rule 13 originally became effective August 22, 1984, for religious homeschooling only; Rule 12 became effective August 4, 1999, for homeschooling for other than religious reasons only. On May 21, 2016, Rule 13 was changed to the current version which includes both homeschooling for religious reasons and other than religious reasons, and rule 12 was repealed.

Student Testing/Standardized Tests: While Section 79-1601(2)-(5) gives the State Board of Education the option to adopt rules and regulations for regular achievement testing of students and visitation of schools, these would have to be arranged with the consent of the parents. An opinion issued by Nebraska Attorney General Robert Spire dated July 30, 1987, stated testing of students and visitations must be applied uniformly
to all private schools and their students and must be arranged with the consent of the parents. To date, the State Board of Education has chosen not to test or visit private schools.

THIS SUMMARY DOES NOT CONSTITUTE LEGAL ADVICE
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PO Box 57041, Lincoln, NE 68505-7041
Staying Motivated

- Do you give up on schoolwork too easily?
- Do you think negative thoughts about school? About yourself or your abilities?
- Are you frustrated in your classes or unhappy with your grades?
- Would you like to feel more confident in yourself, or more optimistic about your future?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, it's important that you find a way to feel more positive about your abilities and your education—and that you find ways to stay motivated.

Changing the way you feel about your academic abilities and/or your education involves making changes in both your thinking and your behavior.

Remember, your education is an investment in your future! More than anything else, your education will determine the kinds of choices and opportunities you are going to have in life!

Have a Positive Attitude

Believe in yourself
Have you ever heard a coach talk to a team before a game? In pregame speeches, coaches try to energize their players and make them believe they can win. This is because coaches know that people have a greater chance of succeeding if they believe in themselves.

Whether you're an athlete preparing for competition or a student tackling a difficult subject, it's important that you recognize the talents and abilities you have, and that you believe you can succeed!

"To succeed, we must first believe that we can."  
Michael Korda

Surround yourself with positive people
In life, we come across all kinds of people. Some are positive influences in our lives and some are not. Try to stay away from people who are negative or critical. Instead, choose to be around people who support and encourage you. These are the people who will help you achieve your goals and dreams.

Move with positive energy
Stand tall, walk with confidence and purpose, and smile. If you act positive, you just may find that you feel more positive.

Plan for Success

Set goals
Goals give you direction. They help you decide where you want to go and what you need to do. Have a list of both short-term goals (e.g., get a B on Monday's Biology test) and long-term goals (e.g., graduate with a 3.0 GPA).

"Without goals and plans to reach them, you are like a ship that has set sail with no destination."
FitzHugh Dodson

Focus on your strengths
You are a unique individual with talents, strengths, and weaknesses. While it's good to work on your shortcomings and weaknesses, your strengths are where your future lies. Identify your talents and strengths, and look for ways to develop them.

Self talk
We all have a voice inside our head, and when things aren't going well, that voice can be negative and critical. You can help yourself stay positive and motivated just by changing your "self talk."

Replace "I'm terrible at math" with "I'm smart – I can do this." Changing how you think will change how you feel, and how you act.
Things to Do

1. Visualize success - For example, before the day of a test, close your eyes and imagine yourself
   2. Raise Your Grades
   3. Don't give up!!

Staying Motivated

Thomas Edison
"I didn't invent the light bulb...I just happened to be the one who didn't give up when everyone else did." raised in extreme poverty, Oprah Winfrey didn't have a "good" school education because he had "no good ideas."

When you're studying, try to find someone who will help you.

Keep going! They refuse to give up. People believe they have found the motivation to study at some point in their lives, but like the most successful people, they faced failure and doubt at some point in their lives, but like the...
THE 8 LEARNING STYLES
Which One Works for You?

Written by:
Nayomi Chibana

The 8 Learning Styles: Which One Works for You?
THE 8 LEARNING STYLES
Which One Works for You?

Remember back in school when you used to compare your talents with those of your classmates? In every classroom you could find a few or all of the following: the book worm, the class clown, the artist, the jock, the math genius, the well-rounded one, and, of course, the infamous slacker.

Some of us might have believed that our talents were superior to others or that classmates without any notable skill—such as the unpopular student with straight Fs—were somehow overlooked by Nature.

We could not have been more mistaken.

Recent research has shown that different people learn in different ways and that our current educational system—with its one-size-fits-all model—is probably catering to only a handful of the learners in their classrooms. The rest are forced to adapt—or not, as in the case of the "slow" student.

Although you've probably heard of the concept of learning styles before, it's most likely limited to an understanding of visual, auditory and kinesthetic learning. In this post, we will go further and cover the eight different learning styles, which is based on psychologist Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. And if you're eager to determine your own learning style before you read on, take this 5-minute quiz, created by Branton Shearer of M.I. Research and Consulting.
Unique Processors of Information

Although most people have a combination of these eight different learning styles, most of us have a preferred method of processing information. Each has its own strengths and weaknesses, but there is no one right way to learn.

Also, it is important to note that just because you fall into a certain category, such as social learning, this does not mean that you are destined to fail subjects requiring logical learning, such as math and science. This diagnostic is not meant to limit your capabilities, but rather to give you greater insight into how you uniquely process information.

With that said, let's delve into the different learning styles and how each can be addressed within a classroom or professional setting.
1 Visual

The visual or spatial learner is often referred to as a right-brained learner. This person is typically good at deciphering visual data in the form of maps and graphs. While they excel at subjects such as geometry, they struggle with arithmetic and numbers in general. Incorrectly labelled as "late bloomers" for their struggles with reading and writing, these learners simply see the world in a different manner: They are imaginative, think outside of the box and quickly process what they see rather than what they hear.

Ways to Enhance Retention

- Use charts, graphs, maps, diagrams, time lines and infographics.
- Implement digital tools and technology to assist learning.
- Replace words with colors and images.
- Create outlines with different levels instead of blocks of text.
- Highlight important points in text.
2 Verbal

A bit different from the previous category, verbal learners are adept at processing information through the use of language. They excel at reading, writing, listening and speaking. They have an excellent memory for things they have read and enjoy all types of word games, puns, rhymes and tongue twisters. Many of them also enjoy learning different languages. These learners particularly enjoy their writing, drama and speech classes.

Ways to Enhance Retention

- Take thorough notes.
- Go over old tests.
- Reread and rewrite your notes.
- Make summaries of your notes.
- Create lists with key words and phrases to help you remember concepts.
- Use acronym mnemonics to assist in recall.

3 Logical

This type of learner is skilled at mathematical and logical reasoning. They are able to solve problems involving numbers and can easily decipher abstract visual information. They are also adept at analyzing cause and effect relationships and tend to think linearly. They like to classify and group information, as well as create ordered lists, agendas and itineraries. They are able to perform relatively complex calculations in their heads and enjoy strategy games such as chess and backgammon.

Ways to Enhance Retention

- Try to understand the key concepts behind lessons. Don’t just memorize.
- Extract key information from notes such as statistics and facts to create lists.
- Turn material and lessons into strategic mind games.
- Stimulate your mind by playing computer math games and solving brain teasers.
- Create specific goals and incentives and record your progress.
4 Auditory

The auditory (musical) learner thinks in sounds rather than images. They think chronologically and
learn best through step-by-step methods. Unlike visual learners, they have an impeccable memory
for conversations and enjoy debates and discussions. They have strong language skills and perform
well on oral exams. As the name suggests, they also have musical talents and are able to discern
individual notes, rhythms and tones. On the downside, they have difficulty interpreting facial
expressions and gestures, as well as complex graphs and charts.

Ways to Enhance Retention

- Participate in discussions and debates.
- Read aloud.
- Memorize material.
- Listen to music while you go over material.
- Use jingles or rhymes to remember new material.
- Use mnemonic devices.
5 Social

The social (interpersonal) learner is unique in his/her ability to learn best through interactions with other people. They usually enjoy working through topics in a group setting and bouncing ideas off of other people. Social learners are gifted at reading others' emotions and facial expressions, as well as relationship dynamics. They are also very good at identifying the root cause of communication problems.

Ways to Enhance Retention

- Seek cooperative learning settings.
- Use role playing to enhance learning.
- Teach others what you have learned.
- Engage in language exchange programs.
- Join a volunteer or service-oriented group.
- Interview others to learn about their perspectives.
6 Intrapersonal

The intrapersonal, or solitary, learner likes to use self-study and work alone. Usually, solitary learners are in tune with their feelings, who they are and what they are capable of doing. These types of learners are very independent, so they guide themselves on their journey to learning something new each day. They are particularly gifted in the areas of self-management and self-reflection.

Ways to Enhance Retention

• Find a quiet but comfortable place to study alone.
• Establish personal learning goals and track your progress regularly.
• Keep a learning journal or log.
• Reflect on what you have already learned and think through new material.
• Find connections between what you have already learned and new material.
7 Physical

Physical (kinesthetic) learners are always moving and doing something with their hands. They learn best when their bodies are involved in the learning process. This can mean anything from creating artwork with their hands to being able to manipulate what is being learned. These types of learners benefit from large spaces that enable them to draw and write. They can also find walking back and forth while reading conducive to their learning. It comes to no surprise that physical learners are many times athletically gifted and tend to live in the present moment rather than in the future or the past.

Ways to Enhance Retention

- Hands-on lessons are the ideal method of learning.
- Review and recite notes while doing other physical activities, such as walking, jogging or riding a stationary bike.
- Use role playing or mime games to act out subject material.
- Teach someone else the material.
- Turn lessons into art projects.
- Make graphs, pictures and maps to involve all the senses.
8 Naturalistic

These types of learners process information best when it is related to finding patterns in nature and applying scientific reasoning to the understanding of living creatures. They usually grow up to be farmers, naturalists or scientists. These learners particularly enjoy being outdoors and connecting with Nature. They are often found observing and appreciating plants and animals in rural settings.

Ways to Enhance Retention

- Imagine your learning material is a new ecosystem you must understand through the recognition of patterns.
- Identify and classify different plants and animals.
- Pick topics that are related to daily life, Nature or people to increase your interest in the subject matter.
- Approach your learning environment as you would field research: Observe and record data.

About the Author

Nayomi Chibana is a journalist and writer for Visme’s Visual Learning Center. Besides researching trends in visual communication and next-generation storytelling, she’s passionate about data-driven content.
Summary

Chronic absenteeism—or missing 10 percent or more of school days for any reason—is a proven early warning sign of academic risk and school dropout. Too often, though, this problem is overlooked, especially among elementary students, because of the way attendance data are tracked. This study confirms the premise that districts and schools may fail to detect high levels of chronic absence because the problem is easily masked by average daily attendance, one of the most commonly calculated attendance measures. While many educators assume a 95 percent ADA rate is an indicator of good attendance, our research found that is often not the case. We found that schools with average daily attendance rates higher than 97 percent rarely have a problem with chronic absence, but that schools with ADA rates between 93 and 97 percent need to analyze their data to determine whether chronic absence is a significant problem. Moreover, schools with ADA rates of 93 percent or below are almost certainly dealing with high concentrations of absenteeism. Local, state and federal governments can take steps to ensure districts and schools use existing data to monitor and identify chronic absence starting in kindergarten.

The Critical Importance of Attendance In the Early Grades

A key ingredient for ensuring success in school is helping children—at the beginning of their academic careers—get into the habit of attending school every day. While going to school regularly will not by itself ensure that children learn, missing extended periods of school, especially when children are acquiring the basic academic skills that lead to becoming proficient readers, certainly puts a child at risk. The research shows:

- All children, regardless of socio-economic background, do worse academically in 1st grade if they are chronically absent (missing 10 percent or more of school including excused and unexcused absences) in kindergarten. A recent study in California found that only 17 percent of children chronically absent in both kindergarten and 1st grade were proficient readers by the end of 3rd grade as compared to 64 percent of their peers who attended regularly (missing less than 5 percent of school). 

- Going to school regularly in the early years is especially critical for children living in poverty, who are less likely to have the resources to make up for lost time in the classroom. Among poor children, chronic absence in kindergarten predicts the lowest levels of educational achievement at the end of 5th grade.

- Available well before the results of standardized tests—typically in 3rd grade—chronic absence can be an important early warning sign that intervention may be needed to ensure a child is on the path to success.

"If children aren’t in school, they don’t learn. Improving school attendance improves success in school."
While chronic absence is not a problem everywhere, it can reach surprisingly high levels even in the early grades. Nationwide, nearly 10 percent of kindergartners and 1st graders are chronically absent. In some communities, chronic early absence can affect a quarter of all students in kindergarten through 3rd grade. Within particular schools in the same district, chronic early absence can range from less than 1 percent to more than 50 percent!iii

Why is chronic early absence overlooked?

Unfortunately, although teachers take roll every day, most schools currently do not use their data to monitor if they have a problem with chronic absence. Schools generally focus on average daily attendance (ADA) figures and mistakenly assume that 95 percent ADA is an indicator of good attendance. This is not necessarily the case. For example, even in a school of 200 students with 95 percent average daily attendance, 30 percent (or 60) of the students could be missing nearly a month of school (i.e. chronically absent) over the course of the school year. It all depends whether absences are due to most students missing a few days or excessive absences among a small but still significant minority of students.

In keeping with No Child Left Behind, states, school districts and schools also typically track and monitor truancy. While the definition of truancy is left to states to determine, in most places it only refers to unexcused absences and is associated with students willfully missing school without the permission of an adult. Most importantly, truancy figures miss chronic absence especially among young children, who typically do not stay home without the knowledge of an adult who can call in an excuse.

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i Attendance in Early Elementary Grades: Association with Student Characteristics, School Readiness and Third Grade Outcomes, Applied Survey Research. May 2011


What is the connection between Average Daily Attendance and Chronic Absence?

To better understand the relationship between ADA and chronic absence, Attendance Works and the Child and Family Policy Center obtained school-by-school attendance information for elementary schools in three urban districts. The data include both the average daily attendance rate and the percentage of students who met the definition of chronic absenteeism. We then plotted this information and calculated the degree to which the ADA rate could “explain” or “predict” the level of chronic elementary absenteeism.

The analysis found:
- Schools with average daily attendance rates higher than 97 percent rarely have a problem with chronic absence.
- Schools between 93 and 97 percent need to analyze their data further to determine the extent of the problem.
- Schools with ADA rates below 93 percent are almost certainly dealing with high concentrations of absenteeism.

In fact, all schools would benefit from an analysis of chronic absence to determine patterns of absenteeism and possible interventions. All schools enroll some students who have injuries or illnesses leading to frequent absences, and schools should know who these students are and design individual strategies to support them. But buildings where 4 percent of students are chronically absent do not have systemic attendance failures. Buildings where 20 percent are chronically absent, on the other hand, clearly face individual as well as school- and community-wide challenges. There may be systemic problems in the building, such as a negative school climate, ineffective discipline practices or chaotic classrooms. Or there may be community and family challenges, such as a lack of access to health care, unreliable transportation, high levels of violence or unaffordable housing. Strategies to reduce chronic absenteeism require public recognition and community support, as well as school-wide policy changes and strategies targeted toward with specific children and their families.

“Even in a school of 200 students with 95 percent average daily attendance, 30 percent (or 60) of the students could be missing nearly a month of school over the course of the school year.”
The Results

Figure 1 shows the results of the analysis in one of the three urban districts studied, with similar patterns discerned in the other districts, as well. (see the appendix for information on all districts). The data show that schools around the 95 percent ADA mark (between 94.5 percent and 95.5 percent) have rates of chronic absenteeism ranging from a little more than 7 percent to as high as 14 percent. Analysis from other cities included in the appendix show rates higher than 20 percent. That range implies at least some concern with chronic absenteeism at many of the schools in this group; understanding the nature of that concern—whether individual, school or community issues—students requires further study.

Figure 1

At the higher or lower levels of average daily attendance, the relationship to chronic absenteeism is more straightforward. In the district depicted in Figure 1, average daily attendance rates in most buildings range from 93 percent to 97 percent. In the schools with 97 percent ADA, only 4 percent of the children are, on average, chronically absent. In comparison, in the schools with 93 percent ADA, 21 percent of children are, on average, chronically absent. This 4 percentage point difference in average daily attendance translates to a 17 percentage point difference in chronic absenteeism!

1 Although the slopes of the lines and the range of attendance and chronic absenteeism patterns are slightly different, the data from all three districts are very consistent with Figure 1.

2 The r² value shows the percentage of the variation in chronic absenteeism across schools that can be predicted simply from knowing the average daily attendance. For the data in the Figure, the r² value is .8258. Statistically, values that exceed .8 (80 percent) in the social science world are uncommonly high and suggest that there is a nearly complete match in what underlies their measurement.
Implications

If schools, school districts and states are to improve educational achievement and, in particular, the sentinel measure of 3rd grade reading proficiency, they will need to address chronic elementary absenteeism.

To do so effectively, they will need more and better data. They will need to know how many, and which, students are chronically absent. This requires comparing the number of days each student attends school with the number of days the student is enrolled. At a minimum, such measures should be incorporated into school data systems at the district and state levels. Additional information – on tardiness, the reasons for absences and the enrollment history of students who change schools within a school year – would be helpful to fully understand and respond to chronic absenteeism, starting in elementary school.

Such data collection will not happen overnight. Examination of average daily attendance information offers a valuable way to begin assessing the degree of concern around chronic absenteeism while laying the groundwork for collecting more complete data:

- At the district level, officials can start by identifying elementary schools with average daily attendance rates at or below 95 percent to collect information about chronic absenteeism and act upon it.

- At the state level, education departments can report more fully on ADA and its implications and provide technical assistance to districts in addressing low rates of attendance, while at the same time requiring or pressing for collection of chronic absence data.

- At the federal level, the reauthorization of ESEA can require or provide incentives for states to collect information on chronic absenteeism for all schools and districts and provide incentives (through demonstration grants, use of ESEA funds and technical assistance and support) to report and act upon chronic absenteeism.

One of the great values of focusing upon chronic absenteeism in elementary school is that it represents an early warning sign for subsequent school problems. In a presentation to the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading in March 2011, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan noted as much. “We know in pre-K and K who our students most at risk are, those students who are missing, 15, 20, 25 days a year,” he said. “We know right there if we don’t intervene, these are our future dropouts.” Beyond that, it’s a problem that can be fixed with the right response from school and community leaders. Nationally, there is increasing attention to this issue, particularly as it relates to early literacy. The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading—a collaborative effort by dozens of funders to ensure more children master reading by the end of third grade—recognizes chronic elementary absenteeism as a significant problem that must be addressed.

Further, many of the solutions represent low-cost or no-cost activities that make education simpler, rather than more complicated, for all involved. Finally, successful efforts to address chronic absence generally involve schools, families and communities working together, an approach that also supports educational success generally.

