



Reasons for Chronic Absenteeism – PreK/Head Start Parent Version

Chronic absenteeism, commonly defined as missing 10% or more of instructional days per school year, has significant impact on student outcomes. It is associated with decreased reading levels, overall academic performance, on-time graduation rates, and post-secondary enrollment as well as increased dropout rates.^{1,2} Fortunately, chronic absenteeism rates are alterable at the student and system level when interventions are appropriately targeted and matched to student needs.

In order to efficiently and effectively match interventions to student needs, there is a need for reliable and valid data that provide sufficient information to understand the various challenges students experience. The Reasons for Chronic Absenteeism (RCA-P)- PreK/Head Start Parent Survey was developed and underwent extensive validation processes including an expert panel review, parent reviewers, and a national validation study to ensure the technical adequacy of the items and instrument.

The RCA-P PreK/Head Start is designed for parents of PreK/ Head Start students who have missed 10% or more instructional days. The survey is comprised of 30 demographics and perception of absences questions; 35 items measuring multifaceted reasons for absences; and three open-ended questions asking about other reasons for missing school, the reasons they do come to school, and what would help them come to school more often. Parents respond to each of the items that ask why they missed school using a 0-3 scale with response options of Never, Rarely, Sometimes, or Usually. Parents may take the survey via an online survey platform (e.g. SurveyMonkey®, Qualtrics®, etc.) or hardcopy. Survey administration takes approximately 20 minutes and multiple parents may take the survey at one time. Parents may be provided the explanation that they are taking the survey so school staff better understand why students miss school. Please allow parents privacy to independently answer questions.

ID/Demographics

Demographic Items
What state is your student’s school/center located? (state drop down)
What school district/grantee does your student attend? (district/grantee drop down)
What is the name of your student’s school/center? (school/center drop down)
What is your relationship to the student? (parent, guardian, grandparent, foster parent, other)
How old are you? (Under 25, 25-30, 31-35, 36-40, 41-45, 46-50, 51 and older)

¹ Balfanz, R., & Byrnes, V. (2012). *Chronic Absenteeism: Summarizing what we know from nationally available data*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Center for Social Organization of Schools.

² Chang, H. & Romero, M. (2008). *Present, engaged and accounted for the critical importance of addressing chronic absence in the early grades*. National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP): The Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University.

What grade is your student in (Head Start, Pre-school/PreK,)
What is the length of your student's school day? (Full day, Half day)
How old is your student? (2-5)
What is your gender (male, female, other [for example: transitioning, transgendered, etc.]
What is your student's gender? (male, female, other [for example: transitioning, transgendered, etc.]
Does your student get free or reduced price lunch? (yes/no)
What is your level of education? (some high school, high school diploma, GED, some college, 2-year or associates degree, 4-year or bachelors degree, masters degree, doctorate degree, prefer not to say)
What is your Race/Ethnicity? (*if more than one race select multi-racial)? (Multi-racial, Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, White, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Prefer not to say)
What is your student's Race/Ethnicity? (*if more than one race select multi-racial)? (Multi-racial, Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, White, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Prefer not to say)
Does your student get special education services? (yes/no)
Is English your first language or the language you use most often? (yes/no)
Is English your student's first language or the language your student uses most often? (yes/no)
What is your marital/relationship status? (Married/long term-relationship, Single, divorced, widowed, prefer not to say)
What is your employment status? (Full-time, part-time, unemployed, retired, disabled, prefer not to say)
How many people live in your household? (2-6+)
How safe do you think your student's school is? (Very safe, safe, somewhat unsafe, very unsafe)
How supportive do you think your student's school is? (Very supportive, supportive, somewhat unsupportive, very unsupportive)
How is your student's overall academic performance? (Average, above average, slightly below average, significantly below average, not sure)
About how many days of school did your student miss <u>this year</u>? (5 days or less, 6-10 days, 11-15 days, 16-20 days, more than 20 days)
About how many days of school did your student miss in the <u>last month</u>? (0-1 days, 2-3 days, 4 or more days)
Compared to other students, how many school days has your student missed this year? (the same as other students, more than other students, fewer than other students)
How does your student usually get to/from school- check all that apply? (walk, ride a bike, by bus, by car,)
How long does it take your student to get to/from school? (Less than 10 min, 10-20 min, 20-30 min, 30+ min)
On average how many days of school do students miss per school? 0-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20,

21+

How concerned are you about your student's absences? (not concerned, somewhat concerned, very concerned)

Survey Items/Directions:

Please rate each question as being Never, Rarely, Sometimes, or Usually the reasons your student has missed school.

- Never means that it is never a reason your student has missed school or that the question is not true or false .
- Rarely means that it is not very often a reason your student has missed school.
- Sometimes means that it is a reason your student has missed school more than 3 times.
- Usually means that it is often the reason your student has missed school.

Item	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually
1. My student was sick (short term: flu, cold, headache).				
2. My student was sick (long term: asthma, allergies, chronic-illness).				
3. My student had a medical procedure/surgery.				
4. I was sick (short term).				
5. I have a chronic health condition (physical, emotional, addiction, etc.)				
6. My student did not feel safe <i>on the bus ride or walk to or from school.</i>				
7. My student spent time with friends or family instead of going to school.				
8. My student had an appointment (doctor, dentist, counselor, etc.).				

9. My student did not get her/his work done or study for a test.				
10. There were problems with the car (would not run, ran out of gas, flat tire, etc.).				
11. My student did not want to be teased or bullied.				
12. My student thinks school is boring.				
13. My student missed the bus, or the bus was late or the bus did not come.				
14. My student did not feel safe <i>at school</i>.				
15. There was no reason for him/her to go to school.				
16. My student had to take care of or help a family member (child, sibling, relative, etc.).				
17. No one misses her/him when my student doesn't come to school.				
18. I don't think school will help her/him reach future goals.				
19. My student did not want to walk in bad weather.				

20. My student overslept.				
21. I overslept.				
22. My student was too stressed or upset to come to school.				
23. I had to go to court or was in jail.				
24. My student had to go to court or was in jail/juvenile detention center				
25. My student did not want to see another student(s) because of drama or conflict.				
26. My student was suspended.				
27. My student didn't have the right or clean clothes or supplies for school.				
28. We were homeless or had no place to stay.				
29. I was not able to arrange transportation to/from school				
30. The water, heat, or power were turned off at home.				
31. I did not have child care before/after school.				
32. My student's school does not have basic supplies (books, toilet paper, etc.).				
33. My student did not want to get in-				

trouble for being late or tardy.				
34. My student or I had to move.				
35. My student gets sent to the office too much.				
36. Are there any other reasons not listed that your student misses school? (open ended)				
37. What are the reasons your student <u>does</u> come to school (e.g. teachers, friends, to learn/future goals, clubs/sports, activities, etc.)? (open-ended)				
38. What would help her/him come to school more or miss fewer days? (open-ended)				

For additional information on the hardcopy version or survey administration and scoring contact:
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