

Did you know?

-For elementary school children, in grades kindergarten through third, chronic early absence of 20 or more days is associated with poor achievement, delinquency, substance abuse and school dropout. For urban, low-income students in elementary school, each additional day absent from school, beyond 20, correlates with a 7 percent lower probability of graduating from high school.

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- When youth are absent from school, there is increased opportunity for them to engage in high-risk behaviors. The incidence of crime by youth ages 10–17 during the 2004–05 school year was 26 percent higher during school hours (Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.) than out of school hours (Monday through Friday, 3 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.), and crimes against youth are 13 percent higher.

- Research has shown that truancy is related to delinquency, substance use and abuse, high school dropout, suicidal thoughts and attempts, and early sexual intercourse.

-High truancy and absence rates affect the achievement of schools overall, slowing the rate of instruction, which harms all students.

- There is a clear link between truancy and substance use. Fourteen-year-olds who skip occasional classes are four times as likely to start using marijuana as those who never skip. Chronic truants (more than nine days) are 16 times as likely.

- Truancy is not only the most significant risk factor for predicting first time marijuana use, it predicts 97 percent of first time drug use. The greater number of days truant, the greater the drug use.

- Delinquent behavior is associated with self-reports of truancy. Students who admitted to occasional or chronic truancy were, respectively, four and 12 times as likely as non-skipper to report having committed a serious assault, about five and 21 times as likely to report having committed a serious property crime, and two and seven times as likely to report having been arrested. The truancy–delinquency connection appears to be particularly acute among males.

- A link has been shown between truancy and later problems in marriage, in jobs, and with violence, adult criminality, and incarceration.

- After looking at the estimated per incident costs associated with juvenile delinquency, researchers conclude that school failure is so costly that neither the court nor the truancy reduction programs have to be widely successful in order to achieve a positive payback over time. Estimates suggest that even the most expensive truancy reduction program, if it graduates one additional truant out of 115, will break even in cost–benefit terms.

Source: Truancy Literature Review, prepared for U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Prepared by Martha Yeide & Kobrin, Development Services Group, Inc.
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