

# Preventing Truancy

“Habitually Truant” is a school-aged child, not excused from attendance under the lawful and reasonable regulations of such child’s school, who willfully fails to attend school for **more than 8 school days in a quarter (marking period)**. M.G.L. c.119 sec.21.

Truancy is a problem that has long-term effects on children, families and the community. Truancy has been clearly identified as one of the early warning signs that youths potentially are headed for delinquent activity, social isolation or education failure. Keeping children in school is critical to helping children stay out of trouble while increasing the likelihood of their successful transition to adulthood.

We know that for truants or drop-outs:

- Serious assault crimes are twelve times more likely to occur;
- Marijuana use is sixteen times more likely to occur;
- Unemployment is 20% higher than graduates
- Full-time employment is less likely to occur, with only one-half holding full-time jobs; and,
- Projected earnings are 25 % less for male and 40% less for female drop-outs than what a graduate earns.

## Resources

Access Nantucket: 508-228-3955  
Bay Coast Behavioral: 774-294-5722  
Big Brothers & Big Sisters of Cape Cod: 508-771-5150  
Boys & Girls Club of Cape Cod: 508-477-8845  
Boys & Girls Club of Martha’s Vineyard: 508-627-3303  
Boys & Girls Club of Nantucket: 508-228-0158  
Cape Cod Center for Women: 508-564-7266  
Cape Cod Child Development: 508-775-6240  
Cape Cod Children’s Place: 508-240-3310  
Cape Cod Family Resource Center: 508-362-0600  
Cape Cod Neighborhood Support Coalition: 508-771-4336  
Child & Family Service: 508-778-1839  
Children’s Cove: 888-863-1900  
Community Health Ctr. Of Cape Cod: 508-477-7090  
Cultural Center of Cape Cod : 508-394-7100  
Dept. of Child & Families (DCF): 508-760-0200  
Dept of Youth Services (DYS): 508-759-0307  
Falmouth Human Services: 508-548-0533 x16  
Falmouth Prevention Partnership: 508-540-2317  
Falmouth VIPS-School based mentoring: 508-548-1621  
Family & Child Services of Nantucket: 508-228-2689  
Family Continuity: 508-862-0600  
Gosnold: 1-800-444-1554  
Harbor Community Health Center-Hyannis- 508-788-5499  
Ellen Jones Community Dental Center  
Hyannis Service Center: 508-862-6600  
Dept. of Mental Health (DMH)  
Dept. of Transitional Assistance (DTA)  
Dept. of Developmental Services (DDS)  
Massachusetts Rehab. (MRC)  
Independence House: 508-771-6507  
Justice Resource Institute (JRI): 508-771-3156  
Kennedy Donovan Ctr.: 508-385-6019  
Martha’s Vineyard Community Services: 508-693-7900  
Island Wide Youth Collaborative: IWYC  
Martha’s Vineyard Youth Task Force: 508-696-5304  
MSPCC (Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children): 508-775-0275  
MASS 2-1-1  
Nantucket Family Resource Center: 508-332-6821  
The Needy Fund: 508-778-5661  
South Bay Mental Health Services: 508-760-1475  
YMCA of Cape Cod: 508-362-6500  
YMCA of Martha’s Vineyard: 508-696-7171  
Your Local Human Services Department



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## Keep Them Coming

A Program

To

Improve School

Attendance



# Keep Them Coming

## An effective Program to Improve School Attendance throughout the Cape & Islands



### Why it Matters

If children don't show up for school regularly, they miss out on fundamental reading and math skills and a chance to build a habit of good attendance and the social interactions that will carry them into college and careers.

Children who were chronically absent in their kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade years were far less likely to read proficiently at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

Yes, Kindergarten DOES matter!

### How the Program Works

Every school district has its own parameters for allowable unexcused absences within the school year.

Depending on the School District, once a child is absent for multiple days a phone call is made to the parents indicating the importance of attending school.

If attendance continues to be an issue a meeting is set up with the parents, the School Adjustment Counselor and Principal. This is an informative, general non confrontational meeting addressing the importance of being in school and assisting with school and outside resources.

The school will continue to monitor the child's attendance.



### Continued Truant Behavior

The School will notify the Cape & Island's District Attorney's Office (DAO) to request a meeting with a representative from the DAO, school personnel and other community based organizations.

These meetings are not punitive and are designed to work **with** the school and families to provide the services and support each family may need. This collaboration between the school, families, community partners and the DAO has developed creative problem solving methods for improving the child's attendance.

If attendance fails to improve after this meeting, an application for a Child Requiring Assistance (C.R.A.) for the student may be filed by the school administration in juvenile court.

For application:

<http://www.mass.gov/courts/selfhelp/family/cra-application.html>