

**LINKS TO OTHER ORGANIZATIONS  
AND AGENCIES WITH VALUABLE  
INSIGHT & INFORMATION ON  
TRUANCY**

**PA Department of Education**

The executive department of the state charged with K-12 and adult educational budgeting, management and guidelines.

[www.education.pa.gov](http://www.education.pa.gov)

**Pennsylvania Truancy Toolkit**

Toolkit For School Attendance and Truancy Reduction provides resources for educators, policy makers, and parents to help students succeed and grow into inspired, productive, fulfilled lifelong learners.

[www.education.pa.gov](http://www.education.pa.gov)

**PA Department of Human Services**

The Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) is the program office within the Department of Human Services that develops child welfare regulation and policy. This site could also be used to access various forms of public assistance, search for service providers and learn more about resources and supportive services that may be available to children and families.

[www.dhs.pa.gov](http://www.dhs.pa.gov)



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## Truancy Intervention:

## School Attendance and Education Success



# SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

In Pennsylvania, all children of compulsory school age (children between the ages of 8 and 17) are required to attend school. However, once a child is enrolled in 1st grade or a higher grade, even if the child is still under the age of 8, the child becomes “of compulsory school age” and must continue to attend school.

## Who is Responsible For Making Sure a Child Attends School?

Every parent, guardian or person in a parental relationship (Foster Parent, or Family Member in the role of Primary Caregiver for a child) is responsible for making sure that the child attends school regularly.

## What if The Parent Has Tried to Get a Child to Attend School and The Child Still Does Not Go?

If a parent shows that they have taken every reasonable step to ensure school attendance by the child, the parent may not be held accountable for the child’s failure to attend school. However, there is no clear definition of what constitutes “reasonable steps”, therefore school officials, the Magisterial District Judge and the Office of Children and Youth will consider the individual circumstances of each case in determining whether the actions of the parents were satisfactory.

## Where to Turn

The Truancy Unit is responsible for handling school-referred behavioral issues.

## For This Support, Contact ChildLine at

[www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis](http://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis)  
or call ChildLine 1-800-932-0313  
or call Montgomery County Children & Youth (610) 278-5800

# WHAT IS TRUANCY?

In Pennsylvania a child can be considered truant when he or she has been absent (3) or more days during the course of a school year without a valid, or lawful excuse.

The school district must provide the parent with written notice of the attendance violation (3) days before filing a citation and bringing court proceedings against a parent. If you receive a truancy notice, you should contact the school as soon as you receive this notice to discuss your child’s attendance problem.

If there is another unexcused absence after receiving this notice, the school district **could** then refer the family to the local Magisterial District Judge and have a hearing to address the issue.

Continual truancy violations may result in the school district or Magisterial Judge referring the child/family to the Montgomery County Office of Children and Youth for services.

***If you are having difficulty getting your child to school, you should discuss the problem with the school immediately and seek assistance.***

***In some instances, Truancy Diversion Services may be appropriate. Being proactive may help***



***you prevent legal proceedings.***

# When a Family is Referred to the OFFICE of CHILDREN & YOUTH

The school district will contact the Office of Children and Youth’s Truancy Unit with referral information related to the student being reported as truant. Upon discussion with school personnel, the Truancy Unit will determine if the referral is appropriate to be set up for a formal family assessment. The criteria includes the following:

- Child resides in Montgomery County and is under the age of 17.
- Child has been truant for at least 10-15 days at time of the referral.
- School district has sent required letters to the parent/caregiver; developed and implemented a plan to address the truancy; has taken the child and parent/caregiver in front of the Magisterial District Judge and truancy issue has continued or the Magisterial District Judge has directed the school district to make a referral to the Office of Children & Youth at the last court appearance.

If the criteria is met, truancy diversion services may be initiated or a formal family assessment completed. During the 60 day assessment, an OCY caseworker will meet the family multiple times; meet/talk with the school; and talk with any other pertinent people involved with the case (family members, therapist, police, etc.)

Within 60 days, the caseworker will make a determination as to whether or not the family will benefit from ongoing services.

When necessary, a dependency petition may be filed in the Juvenile Court, but only after services have been provided and all efforts to resolve the issue(s) identified during the agency’s involvement have been exhausted.