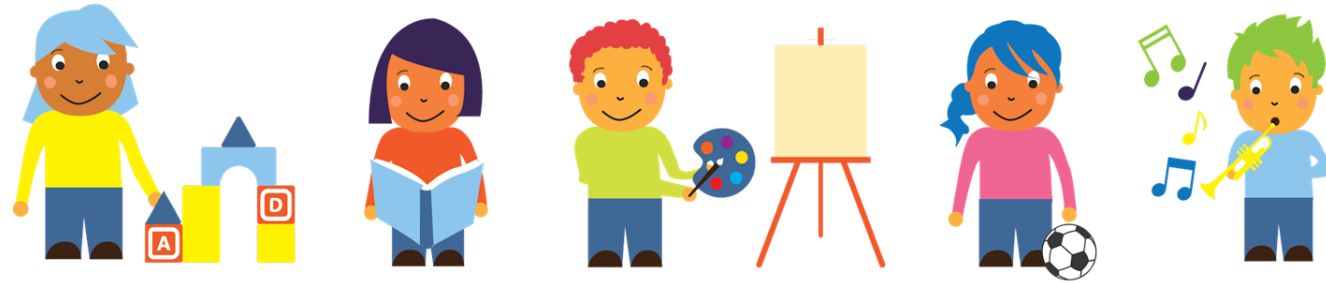




[www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)

# Why Addressing Chronic Early Absence Matters





## Welcome and Introductions - Share in Chat

Write In Chat:

- ✓ Name:
- ✓ Agency:
- ✓ Position:

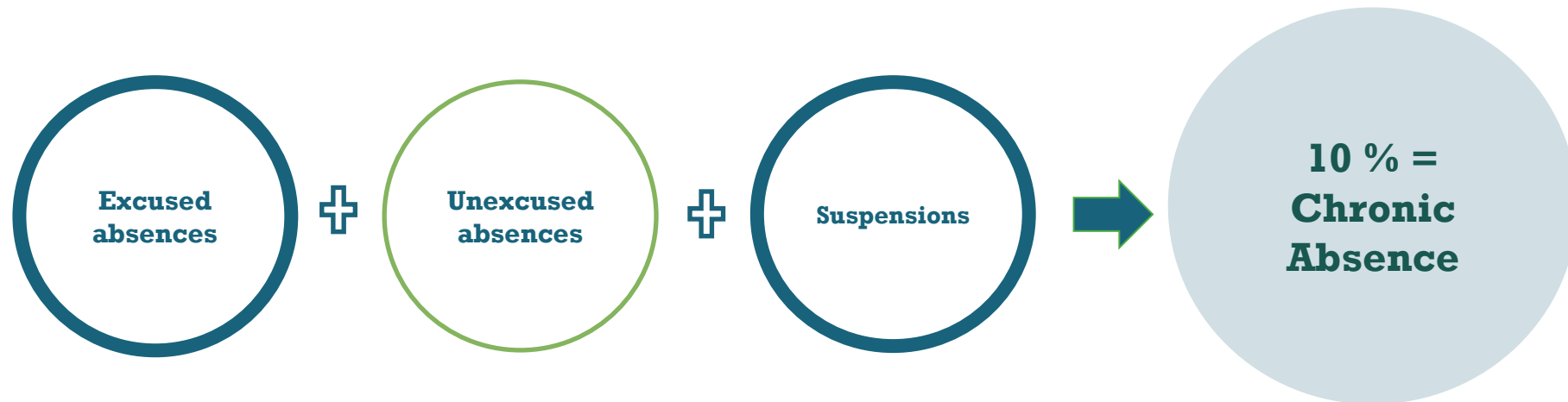
Complete Poll:

***How familiar are you with chronic absence?***  
(Very familiar, somewhat familiar, new concept )



## What is Chronic Absence?

Chronic absence is missing so much class time for any reason that a child cannot experience the full benefit of preschool or school. Attendance Works recommends defining chronic absence as **missing 10% or more of school or preschool for any reason.**



Chronic absence is different from **average daily attendance** (how many students show up to school each day) because it is child-focused and counts **all** absences.

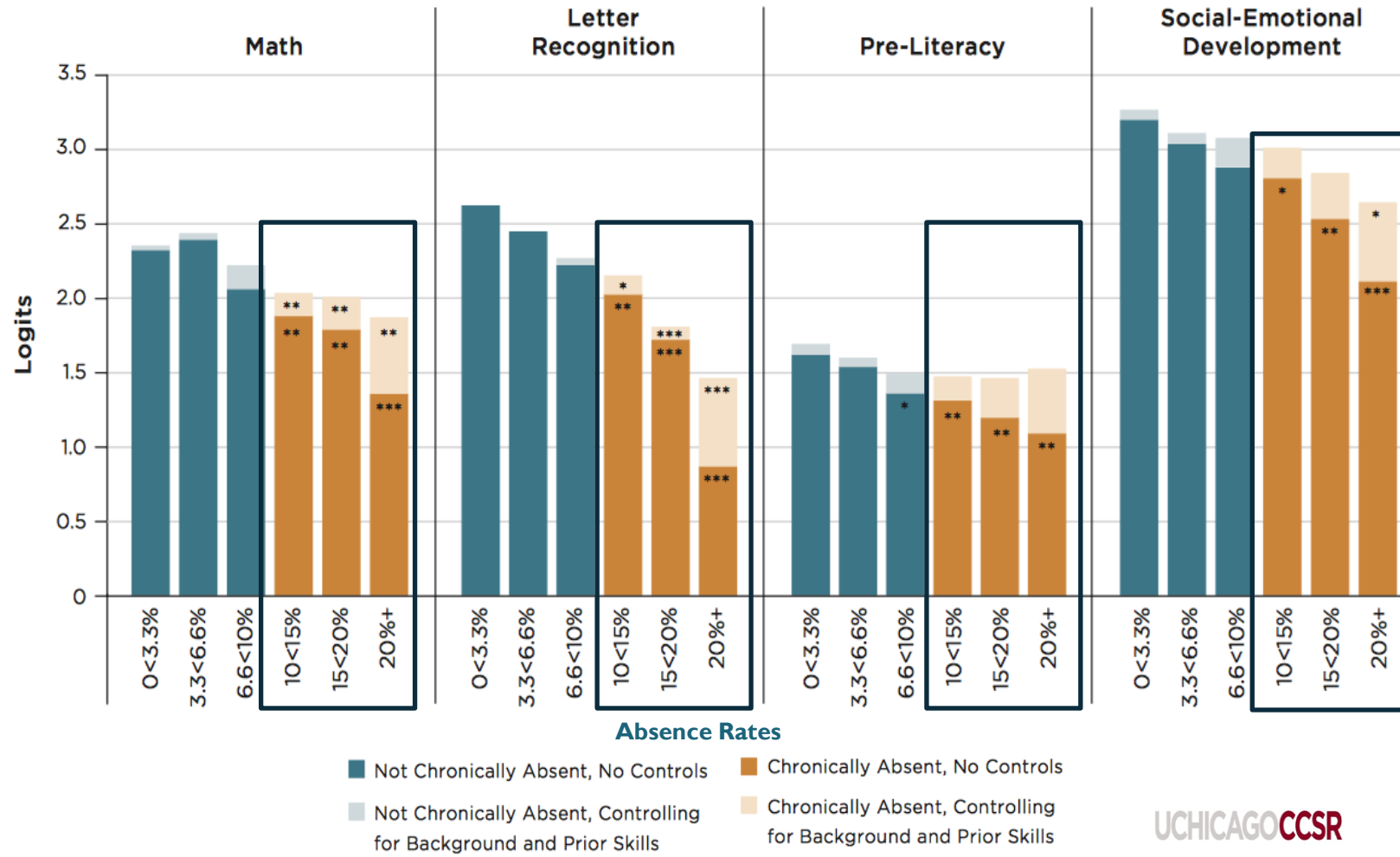


## Chronic Absence is Especially Challenging for Children from Low-Income Communities

- ✓ Children living in low-income communities are **4x** more likely to be chronically absent in K than their highest income peers.
- ✓ Children in poverty are also more likely to lack basic, consistent health and safety supports (e.g. health care, transportation, stable housing, food, clothes, etc.) that ensure a child is more likely to get to school.
- ✓ The adverse impact of absenteeism on literacy development is **75% greater** for these children than for their middle-class peers.

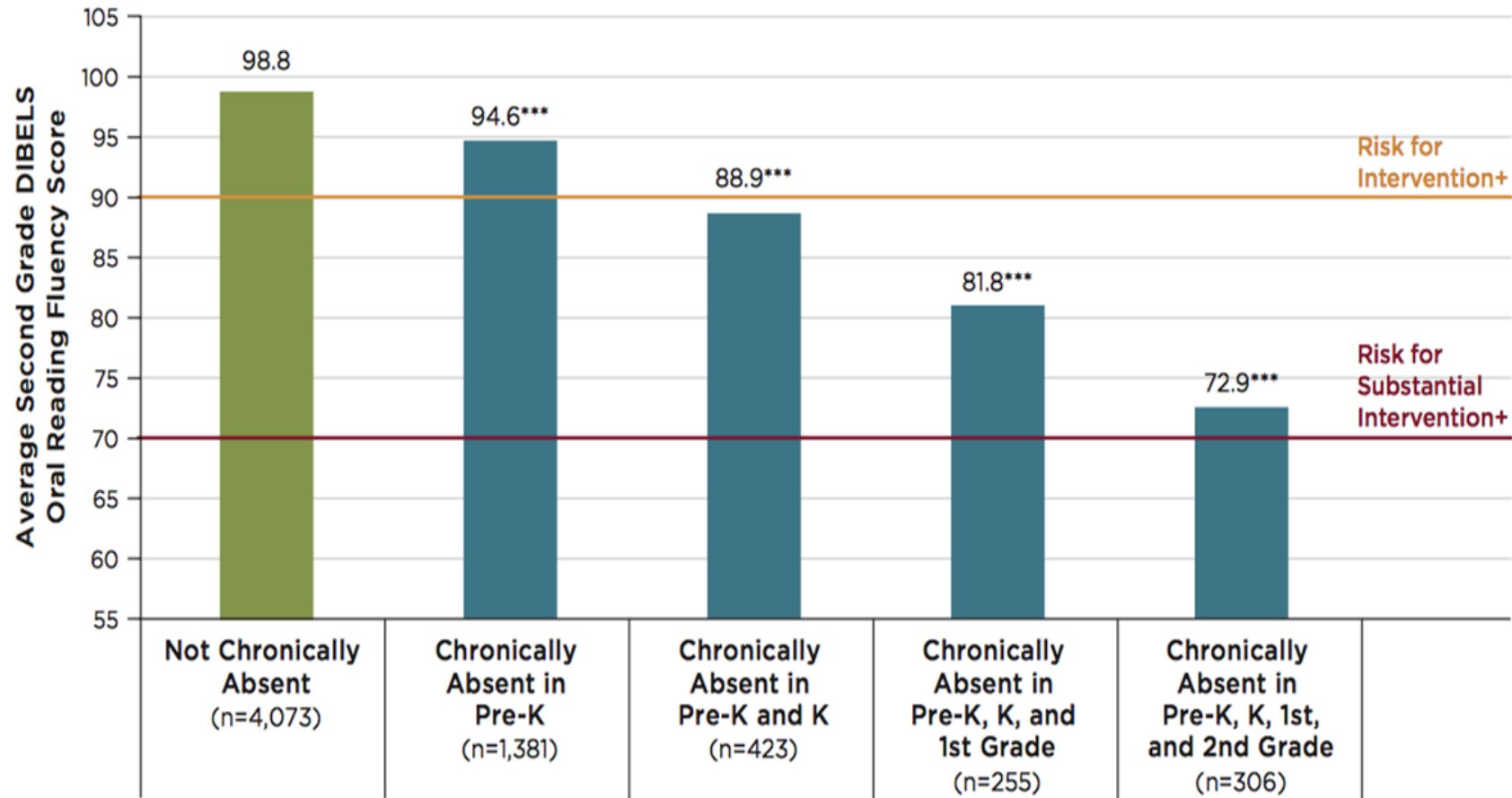
*Sources: M. Romero and Y.S. Lee, A National Portrait of Chronic Absenteeism in the Early Grades, The National Center for Children In Poverty, Columbia University, October 2007. ; Ready, Douglas D., Socioeconomic Disadvantage, School Attendance, and Early Cognitive Development, The Differential Effects of School Exposure, Sociology of Education, October 2010.*

# Lower Preschool Attendance = Lower Kindergarten Readiness Scores



**Note:** (1) The sample for these analyses include four-year-old students who took both the Woodcock-Johnson III at the beginning of the school year and the KRT at the end of the school year in 2010-11 (n=1,265); \* p<.05; \*\*p<.01; \*\*\*p<.001.

# Multiple Years of Chronic Absenteeism = High Risk for low 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading Skills



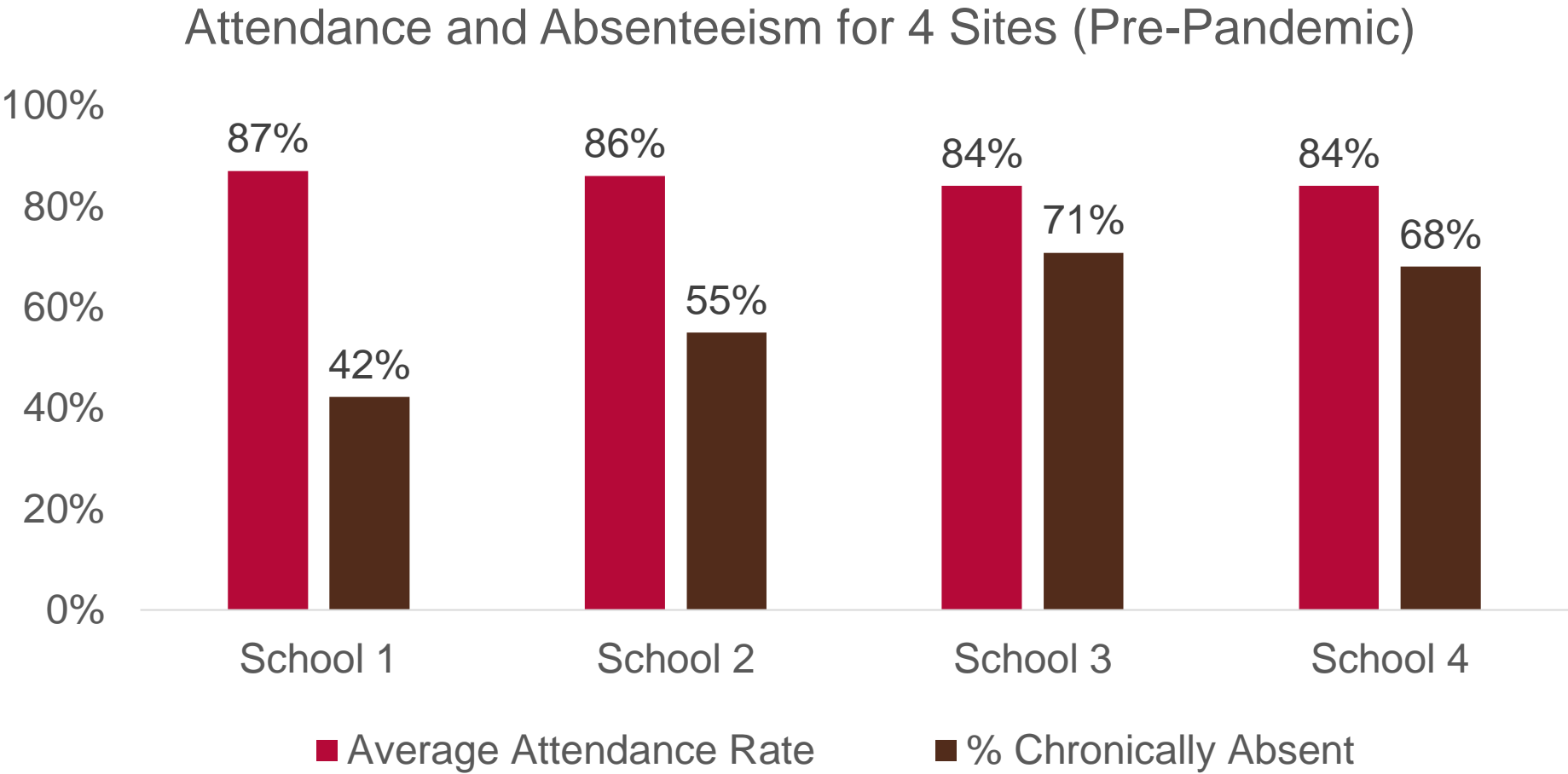
**Note:** \*\*\*Indicates that scores are significantly different from scores of students who are never chronically absent, at  $p < .001$  level. + In the DIBELS 6th Edition Assessment and Scoring Guide (Good & Kaminski, 2002), these are labeled as "Some Risk," indicating the need for additional intervention and "At Risk," indicating the need for substantial interventions.

UChicagoCCSR

**Students who are chronically absent in preschool are five times more likely to be chronically absent in second grade.**

**Source:** Ehrlich, Stacy et al, *Preschool Attendance in Chicago Public Schools: Relationships with Learning Outcomes and Reasons for Absences*, May 2014, <https://consortium.uchicago.edu/publications/preschool-attendance-chicago-public-schools-relationships-learning-outcomes-and-reaso-0>

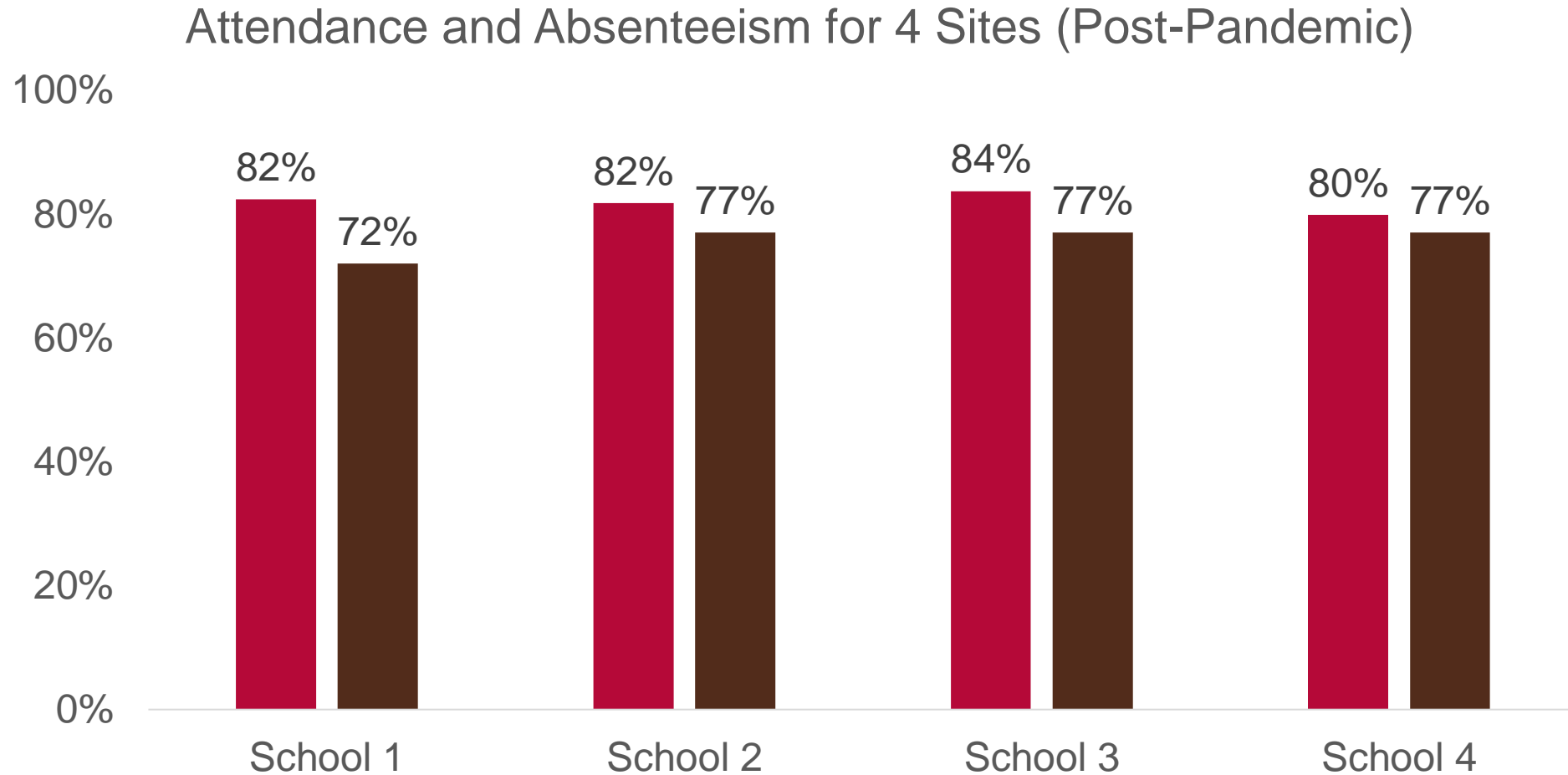
**Pre-pandemic: Average attendance rates can mask levels of chronic absence.**



\*2018-19 data



## Post-pandemic: The same 4 Educare schools experienced increases in the % of children who were chronically absent.

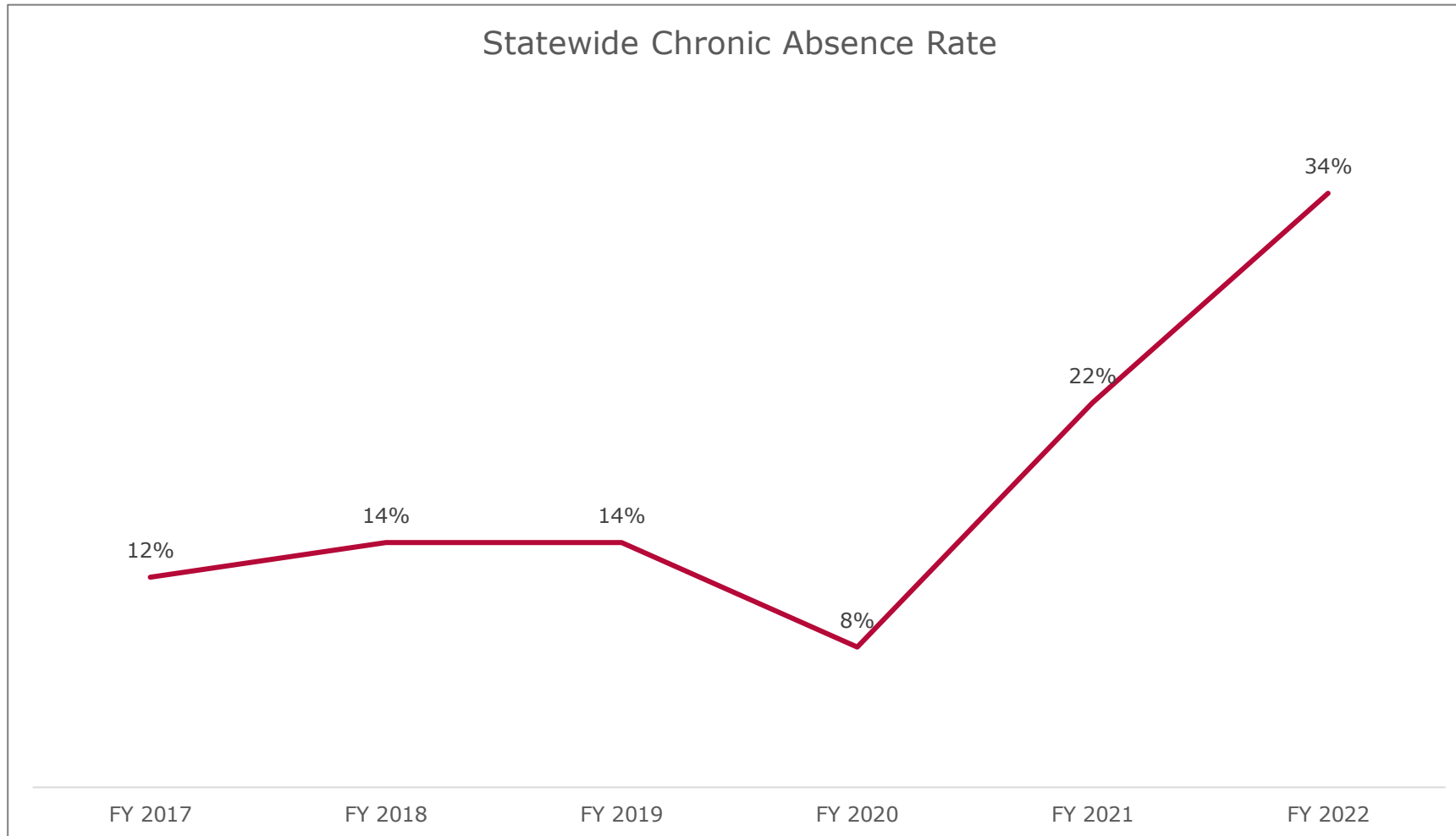


\*2021-22 data   ■ Average Attendance Rate   ■ % Chronically Absent

# FY22 Chronic Absence Data: AZ Head Start

Chronic Absence	Number	Percentage
Total number of children cumulatively enrolled in the center-based or family child care program option.	5,426	--
*1a. Of these children, the number of children that were chronically absent.	4,294	79%
Of the children chronically absent, the number that stayed enrolled until the end of enrollment.	3,172	74%

# In Arizona, K-12 chronic absence has increased dramatically 2017- 2022





## Head Start Attendance Policies & Requirements

Head Start Performance Standards require providers to:

- ☐ Ensure a monthly attendance of at least 85%
- ☐ Track attendance for each child
- ☐ Implement strategies that promote attendance
- ☐ Engage families in understanding the benefits of good attendance
- ☐ Take action to address individual patterns of 10% absence
- ☐ Submit data on the number of enrolled children who were chronically absent (PIR)

*In addition, under ESSA, states must report on chronic absence to the USDOE. 36 States plus DC included a chronic absence metric as part of school accountability.*



## Requires Nurturing a New Data Mindset

*Expands focus from*

**Attendance = Compliance**

to

**\*Attendance = Opportunity to Learn**

**\*Attendance Data = Action Alert**

# **III. Getting Your Data**



## Finding Reports in your Data Management System

Several major program management information systems offer Chronic Absence Reports building of a report originally created by Attendance Works:

- ✓ **ChildPlus** – In the “Attendance” section, see reports 2335 and 2336
- ✓ **COPA** – In the “Attendance & Meal Count” section, see reports 24I and 24IS
- ✓ **myHeadStart (PROMIS)** – In the Manager’s Dashboard, locate “Chronic Absence” and click under the “Score” column

## **IV. Engaging Families Around Attendance: What Can We Do?**







## Solutions must reflect an understanding of why children are absent

### Barriers

- Chronic and acute illness
- Trauma
- Poor transportation
- Housing and food insecurity
- Conflicts with caregiver work schedule
- Inequitable access to needed services
- System involvement
- Lack of predictable schedules for learning
- Lack of access to tech
- Community violence
- Etc. and many more!

### Aversion

- Struggling academically and/or behaviorally
- Unwelcoming climate
- Social and peer challenges
- Anxiety
- Biased disciplinary practices
- Undiagnosed disability and/or disability accommodations
- Parents had negative educational experiences

### Disengagement

- Lack of challenging, culturally responsive instruction
- No meaningful relationships to adults in the preschool/school (especially given staff shortages)
- Lack of enrichment opportunities
- Lack of academic and behavioral support

### Misconceptions

- Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused
- Missing 2 days per month doesn't affect learning
- Lose track and underestimate TOTAL absences
- Sporadic absences aren't a problem
- Attendance only matters in the older grades



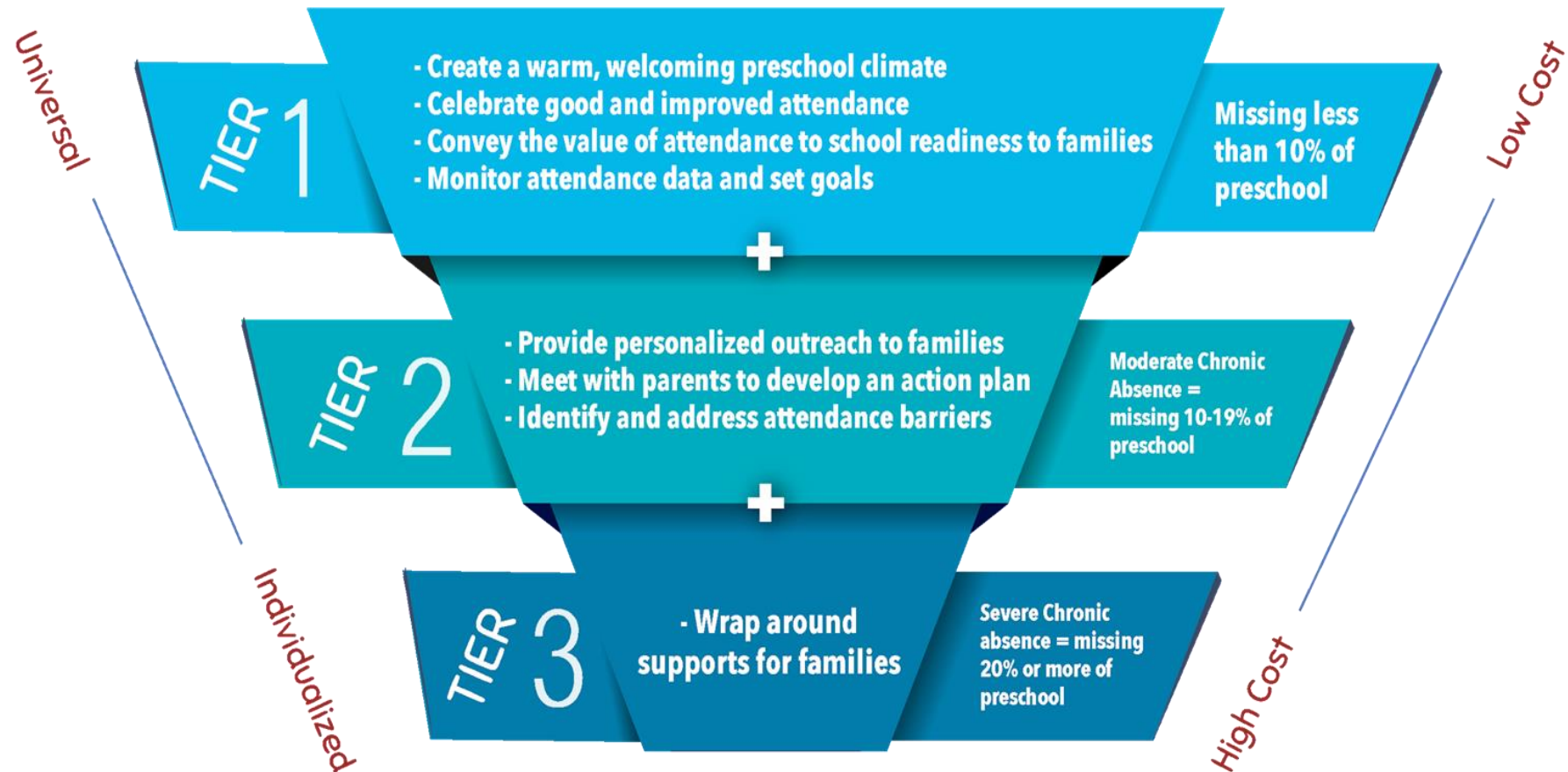
## Reflection

**How does this relate to what you see  
and experience in your own program?**

*(Write in chat)*



## Invest First in Prevention, Engagement and Early Intervention





## Key Actions for Tier 1

### TIER 1

- Create a warm and welcoming school climate
- Celebrate good and improved attendance
- Convey the value of attendance to school readiness
- Monitor data and set goals



## Get ready for one of the biggest adventures of your child's life!

School will be starting soon. These tips can help your children look forward to attending school every day.

Did you know that missing just one or two days of preschool or kindergarten every few weeks can make it harder for children to develop reading skills, and to be prepared for kindergarten or first grade?

### Adventure Time!

**Take your child to visit the school to see the building**

- If possible, meet their teacher and visit their classroom!
- Visit with neighbors to see who is going to the same school. It's always fun to have a buddy.
- Explore a pick-up and drop off sharing plan with neighbors, or a "Walking School Bus."
- Respond right away to outreach from your child's teacher. Ask any questions you have!



### Story Time!

**Tell your child positive stories from when you were a young student**

- Make up silly songs about everyday routines: getting up, eating breakfast and going to school.
- Read to your child each night in your home language.
- Books can address children's concerns in playful ways and support conversations.

1



## Get ready for one of the biggest adventures of your child's life!

### Habit Time!

**Set a standard bed and wake up time a few weeks in advance**

- Let children choose what clothes they'd like to wear the next day.
- Routines make everyone feel in control, and that's a good feeling.



### Good Health Time!

**Make sure your child has the right shots to attend school**

- Ask your child's teacher about health and safety procedures.
- Ask questions about any concerns you have related to Covid-19.
- Schedule non-Covid-19 medical appointments and extended trips when school is not in session.



Preschool through first grade establishes the foundation for relationship building and life-long learning. Help your child gain comfort, self-confidence and delight in these milestone events.

Revised October 2021

Visit Attendance Works [www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org) for strategies and resources

2



## Playful activities with a serious mission



- ❖ ***Routines that Rock!*** workshops build on parent creativity and promote family engagement
- ❖ Encourage parents to think about their own routines
- ❖ Making charts for and/or with the children
- ❖ Creating songs and jingles to familiar tunes that children can sing at home and in classroom

# **V. Tips on Attendance Teams and Site Planning**





## What Does an Attendance Team Do?

### Key responsibilities

1. **Leverage data** to implement and evaluate strategies for improving attendance practice as an agency.
2. **Use data** to ensure children and families receive assistance.
3. **Ensure key stakeholders** are involved and consulted in identifying barriers and implementing solution.
4. **Create a plan** for moving forward including setting year long calendar of Tier I activities.





## Who should participate?

### Possible team members include:

Representative(s) from...

- ☐ Family Service Staff
- ☐ Teaching Staff
- ☐ Data Manager or Data Lead (Admin Staff)
- ☐ Director or Director's Office
- ☐ Parent Policy Council or Other Family Representatives
- ☐ "Front Office" Staff