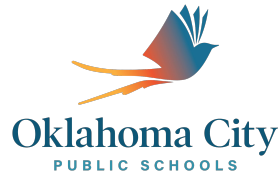


Pre-K and Kindergarten Attendance Interventions

A University of Chicago Research Study

Ariel O'Shields
Attendance Advocacy



Oklahoma City Public Schools' Vision

By providing equitable access to a world class education, every Oklahoma City Public Schools student will **graduate ready** to fulfill their unique purpose in a **healthy, vibrant community**.

Show Up 2 Grow Up II

- ▶ Partnership with the University of Chicago's Behavioral Insights and Parenting Lab
- ▶ Multi-year study intended to identify barriers to early childhood attendance and reduce chronic absenteeism
- ▶ Measures spillover effect of chronic absenteeism on academic performance
- ▶ Expands on Show Up 2 Grow Up– an earlier study pre-Covid that saw success with “low-cost, light touch” interventions



Show Up 2 Grow Up II

- ▶ Goal is for **ALL** Pre-K and Kindergarten families to participate
- ▶ Interventions administered for the 2025-2026 school year
 - Parents/Guardians will receive 3-4 text messages a week focused on topics related to:
 - Parent identity/empowerment
 - Belonging and community
 - Habit/routine building
 - Academic and social-emotional skills
- ▶ Study will track both attendance and achievement outcomes for the SY 2025-2026 and SY 2026-2027 following the program
- ▶ Participation/enrollment– Opt-in approach
 - Parents/guardians will sign an enrollment/consent form online, which will be shared via social media and at Back to School events



Timeline



Recruitment/Consent Process



- ▶ Schools will receive flyers for individual students and posters for the front office
- ▶ Families scan QR code on flyer/poster
- ▶ Families complete short demographic survey
- ▶ Families complete initial attendance perception survey (completed surveys can earn \$10 gift card)
- ▶ School staff **do not** need to collect any information– simply share the information QR code!

What's my Job: Front Office Staff

- ▶ Post flyer in a prominent place in the front office
- ▶ Remind/encourage **PK and K** families to participate/scan QR code when in the office
- ▶ Review FAQ that will be delivered with flyers/posters
- ▶ Request additional classroom flyers from Ariel O'Shields if needed
- ▶ Direct any questions to Ariel O'Shields (OKCPS) or Katherine Crosby (University of Chicago– info on flyer)



What's my Job: Principals & APs

- ▶ Remind PK & K teachers to send QR code flyers home to families
- ▶ Ensure front office has flyer posted
- ▶ Direct any questions to Ariel O'Shields (OKCPS) or Katherine Crosby (University of Chicago– info on flyer)



What's my Job: PK & K Teachers

- ▶ Send quarter page QR code flyers home with all families
- ▶ Request additional flyers from front office, if needed
- ▶ Direct any questions to Ariel O'Shields (OKCPS) or Katherine Crosby (University of Chicago– info on flyer)



Click on the pictures for the links

BIP Behavioral Insights and Parenting Lab
LAB Show Up to Grow Up II

THE CHALLENGE

Chronic absenteeism among school children increased significantly during the wake of the 2020-2021 school year. As a result, reducing chronic absenteeism is a priority of the federal government, as well as states and school districts throughout the country. The Department of the federal attention to reducing chronic absenteeism in K-12, even though the problem is similar in all schools nationwide.

Preschool absenteeism is influenced by individual factors that are more difficult for schools to change, but a significant share of absence is due to factors that preschools can address through family engagement strategies that are low-cost and scalable. We have much to learn about the effectiveness of such interventions in preschool networks nationwide.

THE STUDY

Show Up to Grow Up II is intended to identify barriers to preschool attendance and reduce chronic absenteeism among children from low-income families attending subsidized preschools. This work advances the BIP Lab's prior work that reduced chronic absenteeism and increased attendance days among preschoolers in 2016-17. We will implement and test a 5-month program that sends behaviorally informed text messages to 1200 parents to strengthen preschool-family relationships and helps parents to support their child's attendance. Show Up to Grow Up II will extend our prior work by assessing new barriers to subsidized preschool attendance in the context of COVID-19 and integrating new evidence-based content into the program. Our goal is to produce rigorous and policy-relevant evidence that chronic absenteeism in the early years of schooling can be reduced in a scalable program.

Beneficiaries of the work will be (1) the children most likely to miss out on the benefits of preschool; (2) preschools and similar organizations serving low-income children whose goal is to increase child skill and well-being; and (3) families who will benefit from their children's learning in preschool and stronger preschool-family relationships.

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Using behavioral insights to increase attendance at subsidized preschool programs: The Show Up to Grow Up intervention

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ABSTRACT

We implemented a field experiment called *Show Up to Grow* designed to increase attendance and diminish chronic absenteeism at randomized preschool programs in Chicago. We used personalized text messages to parents targeting malleable factors that potentially drive absences from preschool. Using administrative records from preschools, we found that the intervention increased attended days by 2.5 (0.15 standard deviations) and decreased chronic absenteeism by 9.3 percentage points (20%) over an 18-week period. Our results suggest that the treatment impact is stronger among those in the bottom quantiles of the attendance distribution. Survey data collected at baseline suggest that our intervention made the importance of preschool more salient to parents who initially reported lower expectations for preschool attendance and more support for attendance in their children's development. Preschool owners may save money by implementing low-cost text interventions to meet attendance requirements.

1. Introduction

Absenteeism is a problem in most organizations. In the workplace organization literature, absenteeism, along with lateness and turnover, are often referred to as "withdrawal behaviors" because they represent physical removal from the organization that signals disorientation and lack of commitment to the organization, or a preference for doing something else rather than attending (for some combination of these potentially interrelated factors; Berry, Leitch, & Clark, 2012; Kelloway, 2019). No matter the origin, absenteeism imposes significant costs (both financial and nonfinancial; e.g., diminished morale) to organizations, the person who is absent, and others in the organization (Navarro & Bass, 2006).

Preschools are important organizations in part because they help establish norms of behavior including consistent attendance (Bewley & Gintis, 1976). Preschools serving low-income families in particular suffer from problems of chronic absenteeism and lateness³ on the part of the young children who attend them. Children's chronic absenteeism

from preschool imposes costs on the schools, the do show up, and the absent children themselves (2012; Connelly & Olson, 2012; Ehrlich, Gwynne, Ehrlich, Gwynne, Pareja, & Allenworth, 2012), which is partly why regulations for public attendance targets and mandate plans for cause preschool children's attendance is poor. Parents make, the problem of chronic absence offers an opportunity to understand the influence absenteeism and the extent from modifiable factors.

One important similarity between preschools and absenteeism in other some share of absenteeism may be due to transportation problems, lengthy commutes, or other share may be due to potentially factors for or commitment to attendance that shape decisions. Attendance in kin-

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² The percent of thirdlessly absent children in Head Start programs is 25% in Washington, DC, 25.4% in Baltimore, 36% in Chicago (Adams, & Johnson, 2015). The percentages cited here consider students in "chronically absent" if they miss 10% or more of the school definition across states and districts for older students (Gershenson et al., 2017). Khetach et al. (2018) analyze different thresholds of school absence in Chicago, given the more volatile nature of enrollment and attendance for younger children. In this paper, we provide statistics on absences: below 90% and below 80% attendance over the period of our field experiment.

³ See Head Start Program Performance Standards, Program Operations, part 1302.16 on attendance. Retrieved from <https://eefhs.hhs.gov/hsn/hsn-ops/1302.16>

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**In-press
article from
previous
study**

Only if you're interested!

Click on the pictures for the links

**DRAFT
Consent
Form**

Show Up 2 Grow Up Consent Form IRB25-0599

Question 1: Are you the parent or legal guardian of a child enrolled in pre-K or Kindergarten at [school_district]?
• Yes
• No (Screen Out)

PAGE BREAK

**Welcome to Show Up 2 Grow Up!
Consent for Participation**
Principal Investigator: Ariel Kall (IRB25-0599).
This study is sponsored by Arnold Ventures and the Overdeck Foundation

You are invited to participate in a project called Show Up 2 Grow Up (SUGU), a research study conducted by the University of Chicago that aims to support parents in decision making about their child's education.

What is the study about?
The University of Chicago's Behavioral Insights and Parenting (BIP) Lab is partnering with [name] to conduct a project called Show Up 2 Grow Up. The goal of the project is to support parents in decision making about their child's education.

What will I be asked to do if I participate?
Participation in the project involves the following components:
• You may be asked to complete two surveys.
• You may receive three to five text messages per week related to your child's education. You may receive different materials than other parents in the program.
• The Show Up 2 Grow Up research team will receive identifiable information about you and your child that is collected by the school district, including attendance records, academic test scores, information about child behavior, and demographic information.

Program Length
Your active participation in the program will last for eight months during the 2025-2026 academic year. Your child's information will be accessed starting with the 2024/2025 academic year through their first-grade year.

What are the benefits of participating?
While there may be no direct benefit to you or your child from participating, your involvement contributes to important research on education and school attendance. This information may help us better understand challenges to attendance and school decision making and develop more effective support strategies. This has the potential to improve educational outcomes for your child and other students in the future.

Program Incentive

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IRB25-0599

Parents of 3-6-year-olds!

Show Up 2 Grow Up

You Can Participate In A Research Study!

OKCPS is partnering with the University of Chicago on Show Up 2 Grow Up (SUGU), a research project designed to support parents like you!

You will receive \$10 to complete a survey and contribute to research dedicated to improving education.

Scan the QR code and fill out the form to participate.

For more information, contact Katherine at the phone or email below.

773-648-7181 | biplab@uchicago.edu

Oklahoma PUBLIC SCHOOLS
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
BIP BEHAVIORAL INSIGHTS AND PARENTING LAB

**DRAFT
Flyer- final
copies will be
delivered to
you!**



Thank you!

Any questions?



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Attendance Advocacy Coordinator

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587-HERE (4373)