

Indiana Legal Services, Inc

www.indianalegalservices.org

Daily Attendance at School

In Indiana, children generally must attend school from the time they are 7 until they are 18 or until they graduate, whichever happens first. Children can attend kindergarten when they are 5; however, school is not required until the child turns 7.

By state law, the child must be 5 by July 1st in order to attend kindergarten. However, schools can allow students who are younger to attend kindergarten. Check with your school to determine the age requirement for kindergarten.

My son wants to quit school. Can he do this?

Generally, children must stay in school until they are 18. However, if your son is 16 or 17, he might be able to quit school. Your son, you (as the parent) and the school principal must agree that your son can quit school. You all must attend a meeting at school called an “exit interview” to discuss this matter.

If your son quits school, he may not be able to get a driver’s license. If he quits school and the principal does not think that he quit because of “financial hardship,” your son will not be able to get a driver’s license until he is 18.

What happens if my child misses a lot of school?

Your child is supposed to attend school all the days the public school is in session (or an equal number of days if the child is not attending a public school. If your child misses a lot of school without a good reason, both you and the child could face criminal charges. Your child could be found to be a “habitual truant.” Additionally, if your child is found to be a “habitual truant,” your child may not be able to get a driver’s license or learner’s permit until your child turns 18.

If your child has missed school for medical reasons and the school wants you to provide a doctor’s statement, you must do so.

I want to teach my child at home. Can I do this?

Yes, you may be able to do this. You must be able to provide an “equivalent individual instruction” to what your child would have received in a public school. You also have to provide 180 days of instruction (the number of days required for public schools) and keep attendance records.

LSC Code 1110099

Last revised: 1-03

Printed: October 23, 2021

<http://www.indianalegalservices.org/node/458/daily-attendance-school>

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