

# The Three P's: Prompt, Punctual and Prepared for School Removing the Barriers to Attendance

Linda Howerton  
UTC BSW Candidate  
HCDE Intern  
Fall 2007

## C.A.R.P. Background Information

The **C.A.R.P. Program** is a joint effort of Hamilton County Department of Education and school social workers. **C.A.R.P.** stands for Continued Attendance Reward Program, a pilot prevention program that involves parents, students, principals, teachers, school social workers, UTC interns, and the community in a joint effort to reduce absenteeism in Hamilton County. The main objective is to educate parents about the compulsory attendance laws in Tennessee while giving them innovative parenting skills to help their child succeed in school. The following briefly highlights the four workshops in the **C.A.R.P. program**:

***Focus on Attendance*** - An in-depth study of the laws and regulations regarding attendance

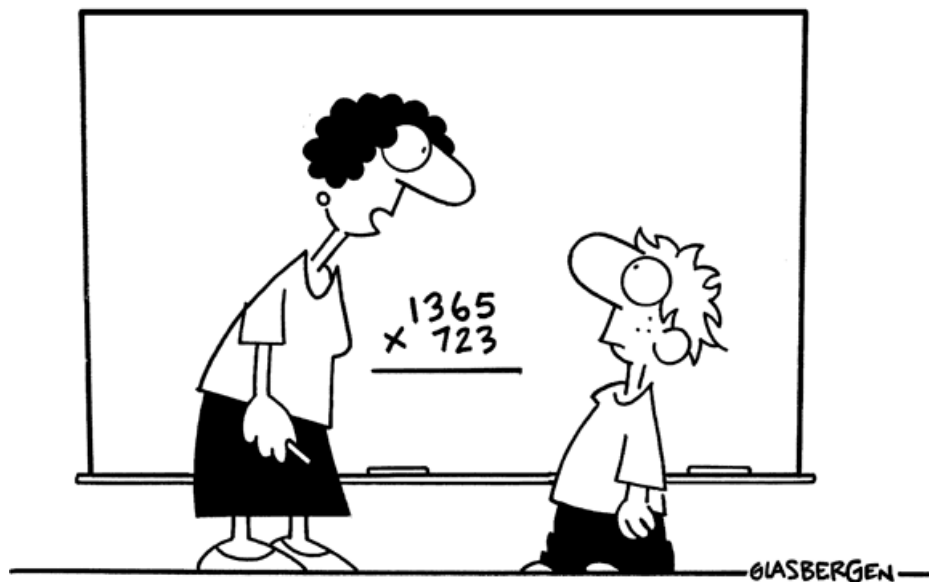
***The Three P's: Prompt, Punctual, and Prepared for School*** - Removing barriers to attendance

***Academic: Help at Home*** – Quick and easy ways to create a proper home learning environment

***Parent Strategies*** – How to improve communication skills with your child or teen

This workshop is second in the series and will address how to remove barriers to attendance.

Copyright 2005 by Randy Glasbergen.  
www.glasbergen.com



**“Pretend you’re starring in a reality show about a kid who can make his dreams come true if he works hard and gets good grades.”**

**The Three P's: Prompt, Punctual, and Prepared for School**  
 Session Two of C.A.R.P. Program

***Workshop Schedule:***

Light refreshments	5:30 to 6:00
Registration	5:45 to 6:00
Program	6:00 to 7:00
General Information	Restrooms, emergency exits, ground rules

***Workshop Agenda:***

Welcome

Mini Lecture Mom, Where's My Other Shoe?

*Role Play* *The Before School Dance*

Mini Lecture I Don't Want to Go to School!

*Role Play* *Just Another Day in the Office*

Mini Lecture Everyone Hates Me

*Role Play* *Last to Class, Again!*

Wrap Up Session Parent Evaluation

Packet: Agenda  
 Class dates  
 Tennessee Compulsory Attendance Law  
 "Punctually Challenged"  
 "5 Rules"  
 Word Search  
 Crossword Puzzle  
 \*\* Workshop Evaluation Form  
 (Please fill out and deposit in Fish Bowl)

## Welcome

Good evening! Welcome to the second session of the **Continued Attendance Reward Program** or **CARP**. The program is presented by the Hamilton County Department of Education School Social Workers and the Soddy Daisy Network Schools. This is a prevention program to reduce absenteeism and give parents information and skills that will help their child be successful in school. Tonight there will be three short lectures and role plays that we hope will offer solutions to help you and your child be prompt, punctual and prepared for school.

## Ice Breaker

How many of you got here at 5:30? Wow, that is fantastic. Now, how many of you forgot tonight was the class, couldn't remember what time it started, forgot why you needed to be here, decided to come at the last minute, didn't have time to eat before coming, got behind someone going the actual speed limit on the way here, couldn't find a parking spot, ran in with seconds to spare, just sat down and don't know what I am talking about? Well, then this class is for you! In your packet you will find the handout entitled "Punctually Challenged". Read over it and see if one of these characteristics fit your personality. Personally, I sometimes fit the producer and simply forget what time it is!

**The rationalizer** has a hard time acknowledging responsibility for lateness and tends to blame outside circumstances.

**The producer** wants to squeeze as much into every minute as possible; they are always busy.

**The deadliner** subconsciously enjoys the last-minute sprint to the finish line; they feel more alive when running out of time.

**The indulger** exercises less self-control; tends to procrastinate.

**The rebel** resists authority and everyday rules; might run late as a form of control.

**The absent-minded professor** is easily distracted, forgetful and caught up in their own introspection.

**The evader** feels anxiety about his or her environment and tries to control it; their own needs or routine come before being on time.

*Author Diana DeLonzor, "Never Be Late Again: 7 Cures for the Punctually Challenged."*

Did you see yourself on the list? Now that you know which type of personality you exhibit you can work to change those habits and create routines that will instill punctuality into your child's lives. This is a lifelong positive personality trait that can be learned.

I know, you're looking at those people sitting next to you who got t-shirts and thinking "Why didn't I get one of those?" That was their reward for being here on time. You too, can have one of those nice shirts if you arrive on time for the next class. Exciting isn't it? A goal to be reached. Schools, like businesses, must set time limits and goals in order to accomplish their job, which is to educate your child and prepare them for the work environment. What would happen to you if you at your place of employment if you were late for work three days in a row? As parents, we have to set good examples and model the kind of behaviors we want our children to follow. Getting your child to school on time with all the tools necessary for success is your job. And tonight we will give you some skills and easy ideas to accomplish this task.

**Mini Lecture/Role Play*****Mom, Where's My Other Shoe?***

Parents, how many mornings has this happened to you?

*Two students playing siblings trying to get ready for school:*

*Student 1: (Hopping around holding one shoe) "MOM!! MOM!! Where's my shoe?"*

*Student 2: (Dragging a book bag) "Mother! I can't find my math book! And I need you to sign my Agenda-mate. Do you know where it is? MOM?"*

*Mom enters: "Come on kids, we are late! Where are my car keys? Find your shoe! I signed the agenda mate last night. Where did you put it?"*

*Actors leave stage or sit down.*

Studies show that the key to avoiding this before school dance is to get organized the night before and create a central location for things that you need everyday...like those all important keys! Once you establish this routine, your mornings will be less stressful and you and your child will have a better day.

*Actors stand or re-enter.*

*Student 1: (All dressed) "Mom, I'm ready to go."*

*Student 2: (Has backpack on) "Everything's in my backpack, Mom, let's go I don't want to be late!"*

*Mom: (Looking at her watch and dangling her keys) "Hey, we are on time! That's five times this week. Let's celebrate tonight with pizza."*

*Students: "Yeah!"*

*Actors leave stage or sit down.*

How do you create this warm and pleasant morning? It will take only five simple things and one family meeting to change your "before school dance" from chaos to calm. Let your child

know that you are going to be changing the routine. Then post the five new rules up where they can be seen everyday. Give consequences if these rules are not followed and make them fit. For example, if you set bedtime at 9:00 and they do this every night then on Friday they can stay up later. But if they do not follow the bedtime rule then you must be willing to take something away such as one hour of television privilege. You can use the five rules that we created that are in your information packet or you can create your own. You are the parents; it is up to you to set the limits and to enforce them. You must also explain all the new rules and consequences to your child so everyone understands what to do. I know you are thinking I don't have time to do this. But you do! It will only take a few minutes every night to make your morning routine easier and set a positive tone for the day. Also, involve your child in setting the rules and they will be more likely to follow them. Teenagers will need different rules (such as later bedtimes) but just like younger children they need limits.

**FIVE RULES**  
**TO BREAK THE “*BEFORE SCHOOL DANCE*” ROUTINE**

1. Create a central location for car keys, backpacks, shoes, etc. This could simply be a table or closet near the door.
2. Check your child’s backpack every day for communications from the school. Sign the necessary papers/Agenda-mate and return to their backpack.
3. Help your child set out clean clothes, shoes and socks the night before so their morning is not chaotic looking for items.
4. Set time limits on doing homework, playing video games, watching television, surfing the internet, talking to friends on the phone. And stick to them!
5. Set a bedtime and put an alarm clock in their room. This way if your alarm doesn’t go off theirs will!

You can add, delete, or completely write your own. But setting ground rules and creating a routine is the only way you will be able to change your morning routine from chaos to calm

**Mini Lecture/Scenario*****I Don't Want to Go to School!***

Okay, so you have the rules in place and your morning routine is running smooth. Then you load the kids in the car and notice the front tire is flat. By the time you call work, get the tire changed, change clothes, and reload the kids you are running forty-five minutes late. You don't have time to write a note for the school and there is no way you can park and go in to the office, right? WRONG! Even if they are teenagers you need to come in and sign them in. As explained in session one, the school office is required to keep attendance records for Hamilton County Department of Education and for the state. Your cooperation in following the school guidelines for documenting tardies and early dismissals will provide each of you with complete records should a question arise about your child's attendance. If you have questions about the proper procedures at your child's school you may go to the office or refer to the school handbook for clarification.

But what if your reason for being late involves more than a flat tire?

Elementary school scenario:

*Actors stand or re-enter for school office scene: A parent, one student, and the school secretary*

*Student: "I don't want to go to class. I'm sick. I want to go to work with you! I don't like this place."*

*Parent: "You have to go to school. Let go of my arm. I am late for work. You will be okay, your teacher likes you."*

*Secretary: "Honey, lets get you signed in and I'll walk you to class. Come on now. Dry your tears and let Mom/Dad get to work. We are having an assembly today that is going to be fun."*

*Student: "NOOOOO!! I don't want to stay. I am leaving!"*

*Actors leave stage or sit down.*

Sometimes children take longer to adjust, they may be new to the school, there could be family turmoil causing the child anxiety, they could be having trouble keeping up because of excessive absences, or they may be having conflicts with other students. If tardiness or excessive absence is the norm for your child because he/she just does not want to attend, then you need to notify the school. The school counselor and school social worker are there to help you and your child have a positive educational experience. Call them, set up an appointment, and work together to find out why your child is having school anxiety. Then collaborate on a workable solution.

Tennessee compulsory attendance law allows for five days of unexcused absences per school year. Don't wait until your child has more than five unexcused absences to let the school know that you believe there is an issue. You can contact the school social worker anytime with attendance related questions or issues. If your child has a medically documented health problem, the school will work with you to ensure that their educational needs are being met. But they can't do anything if you are not willing to be a part of the solution.

**Mini Lecture/Role Play*****Everyone Hates Me***

We have all felt like this at one time or another, even as adults. If your child has an established pattern of absence from school, you have probably heard them express this feeling. They do feel left out when new assignments are given because they have missed valuable instruction time.

*Actors stand or re-enter.*

*Five students sitting in a mock class with a teacher at the front. Students are participating in a math lesson. Tardy student enters loudly.*

*Tardy Tim/Dilly Dally Sally: "Hey, why are ya'll doing math?"*

*Teacher: "Tardy Tim/Dilly Dally Sally, please put your things away, get your math book and join the class."*

*Tardy Tim/Dilly Dally Sally: "I've got my lunch money and my mother signed my Agenda-mate. Want to see it?"*

*(Other students groan. Start to fidget. Child at the chalkboard stops working on problem and turns to watch.)*

*Teacher: "Tardy Tim/Dilly Dally Sally please take your lunch money to the cafeteria I have already turned that in. Hurry now. You are missing math and we are going to the library next.*

*Do you have your library books?"*

*Tardy Tim/Dilly Dally Sally: "Library books?" (Tardy dumps out their book bag as all the students start to laugh).*

*Actors exit or sit down.*

Every time your child is late to class it not only causes them to miss important instruction time but it disrupts the whole class. This means that if the teacher plans to spend forty minutes

on math they have lost ten minutes of that time to the tardy student's entrance. Now, not only will the tardy student not know how to do the homework assignment but the entire class may be missing a key piece of the puzzle. When a child is excessively tardy or absent, they fall behind. Each new assignment causes them to feel anxious and inadequate compared to their peers. This can manifest as feelings of inferiority and they start to have negative responses to school. But I can assure you that no one dislikes your child. We are all here to help your child have a positive educational experience and succeed as an adult in the world of work. To do this, we need your help. Here is what you can do:

1. If your child is absent or frequently tardy find out what assignments they have missed, make sure they complete them and return them to the teacher as soon as possible
2. If they need assistance tutoring and credit recovery are available
3. Set aside a time each night to discuss assignments with your child and review their agenda mate for teacher notes
4. READ with your child for at least twenty minutes a night
5. Stay connected with the school-come for parent conferences, PTA meetings, return teacher notes signed, and ask your child every day these two questions:  
“How was your day? Can you tell me one thing that you learned today?”

This will get a conversation going with your child so you can understand what they are thinking and feeling about school. The best way to assist your child is to be informed and in touch. Contact the school social worker if you have concerns or questions about your child's school experience whether it relates to attendance or grades. We are here to help.

**Wrap up Session/Parent Evaluation**

I would like to wrap up the session with discussion or comments. We'll take about ten minutes because I know you have had a long day and you are ready to get home. Please raise your hand and stand when recognized to ask your question or comment on tonight's session. Also, in your packet of information, there is a parent evaluation form. Please take a minute to fill this out and place it in the fish bowl by the exit. We hope you will attend session three *Academics: Help at Home* which will aid you in creating a proper learning environment in your home and assist you with helping your child with homework assignments. This session will be held Soddy Daisy High School on March 31, 2008 from 5:30 to 7:00.

*Facilitator will give parents ten minutes to ask questions or make comments.*

Thank you for taking the time to attend session two of the Continued Attendance Reward Program. Have a great evening and don't forget to pick up your child at the free child care!