

Lay a Foundation: Engage Families to Address Chronic Absence in the Early Years

Webinar Discussion Guide

Below are a suggested set of key questions to prompt discussion about what communities might do to engage families to address attendance given insights shared during the webinar. Feel free to use some or all to prompt a rich conversation about how to take action.

1. The 2019 Attendance Awareness Campaign theme is “We Belong in School.” The speakers on the webinar shared a myriad of strategies to assure families of entering kindergartners that they and their children feel that they belong in school.

Which ones might work for families and the youngest learners in your community so that they feel safe, connected, supported, and are engaged in school? Which strategies might be particularly helpful for groups that traditionally don’t feel they belong in school?

2. Explore the idea of Perception versus Reality.
 - a. Part 1: How much do families or students in your community understand about the impact of missing just two days a month over the course of a school year on student success? What steps do you want to take to correct misperceptions?
 - b. Part 2: We often hear that students are missing school because their parents don’t value education. What are the perceptions of parents in your community? Are they accurate? What are some ways you can do a “reality” check?
3. How might the materials in the Early Matters toolkit augment these strategies?
<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkits/integrating-attendance-into-kindergarten-transition/>
4. Explore the 2019 Count Us In toolkit and the Key Messages for the 2019 Attendance Awareness Campaign. You can find them at: <http://awareness.attendanceworks.org/>
How might you tailor the free resources in the toolkit to address your community’s realities in your local 2019 Attendance Awareness Campaign?