

# Five Steps to Address Chronic Absence at the Start of School

Student chronic absence has become a national crisis we can and must address. Messaging and positive engagement strategies raise awareness about why showing up to school matters and also help build the universal positive conditions for that motivate all students to attend school. Below are five key steps with linked resources communicators can use with their school communities:\*

- 1. Welcome and connect.** Attendance and participation improve when a school community offers a warm and welcoming environment that engages students and families.
  - a. Teachers can send a welcome call using the [Flamboyant Welcome Call Strategy](#)
  - b. Principals can send families a [welcome letter](#)
  
- 2. Convey the value of showing up to school.** Families and students often aren't aware of the benefits of being in school and how chronic absenteeism can present challenges to realizing their hopes and dreams.
  - a. [Posters and social media resources](#)
  - b. Use [talking points](#) from the Attendance Works Showing Up Matters for R.E.A.L. toolkit
  - c. [Share videos](#) from Children's Aid, or create your own video that helps people understand the value of being in school
  
- 3. Encourage preparation for school.** Developing routines or making back up plans for getting to school make daily attendance easier especially when challenges come up.
  - a. [My Family's Help Bank](#)
  - b. [Ready Set Go for Prek or Kindergarten](#)
  - c. [Family handouts for Prek-12](#)
  
- 4. Offer clear health guidance.** Reducing unnecessary health-related absences is critical to improving attendance.
  - a. [Health handouts for families](#)
  
- 5. Host special events.** Back-to-school nights, assemblies, teacher conferences and special exhibits all provide opportunities to educate families about the value of regular attendance. Use these opportunities to orient parents/caregivers to school policies and connect them to helpful resources. If you have data for your school or community, share the information with parents.
  - a. [Talking points for school leaders and educators](#)
  - b. [Interactive parent/caregiver exercises](#)
  - c. [Bringing Attendance Home video](#)
  - d. [Parent Teacher conference handout](#)

\* Please consult the Attendance Works usage policy if you would like to add a logo or make wording or other changes to the linked resources: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/usage-policy-customizing/>