

Session 1:

Whole School Engagement Strategies for Reducing Student Absenteeism



Professional Learning Series

September 1, 2022



Welcome!



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Three E-Learning Sessions

During these sessions, participants will learn how to work as a team to take a multi-tiered approach to improve attendance in their schools:

- ❖ **Session 1** — Whole School Engagement Strategies for Reducing Student Absenteeism
- ❖ **Session 2** — Early Intervention Strategies: Using Teams to Monitor and Identify Students in Need of Support
- ❖ **Session 3** — Partnering to Make a Difference



Learning Goals for Session 1

Participants will:

- Draw on high leverage, whole school strategies to create
 - positive conditions for learning and
 - strong relationships with students and families that prevent absenteeism
- Be introduced to the framework of multi-tiered attendance strategies that moves schools towards prevention and early intervention
- Learn effective strategies to communicate with families about attendance



Welcome & Introductions

Use the Chat and share:

- ✓ Your name and role
- ✓ Your school and district
- ✓ ***Who or what*** motivated you to attend school every day?

Overview of Chronic Absence

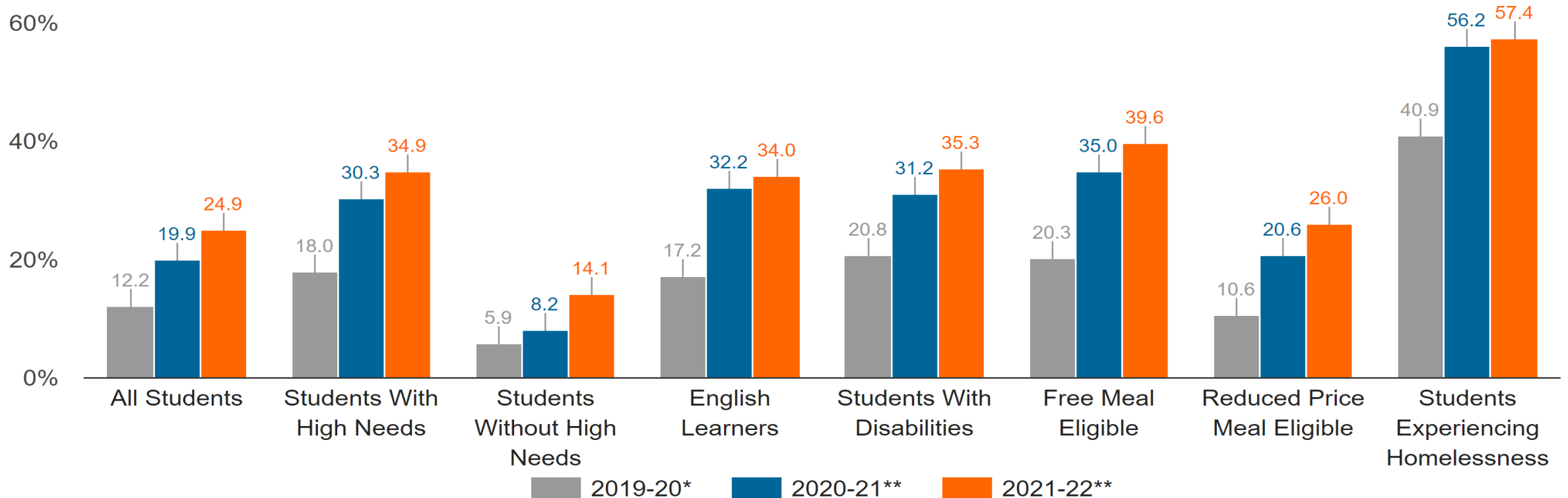


**What is the relationship
between absences & equity?**

**Absenteeism is a *leading*
indicator and a *cause* of
educational inequity**

Chronic Absence almost 2X Higher for SY2021-22

Percentage of Students Chronically Absent by Student Group (YTD as of June 2022 compared to 2020-2021 and 2019-20)

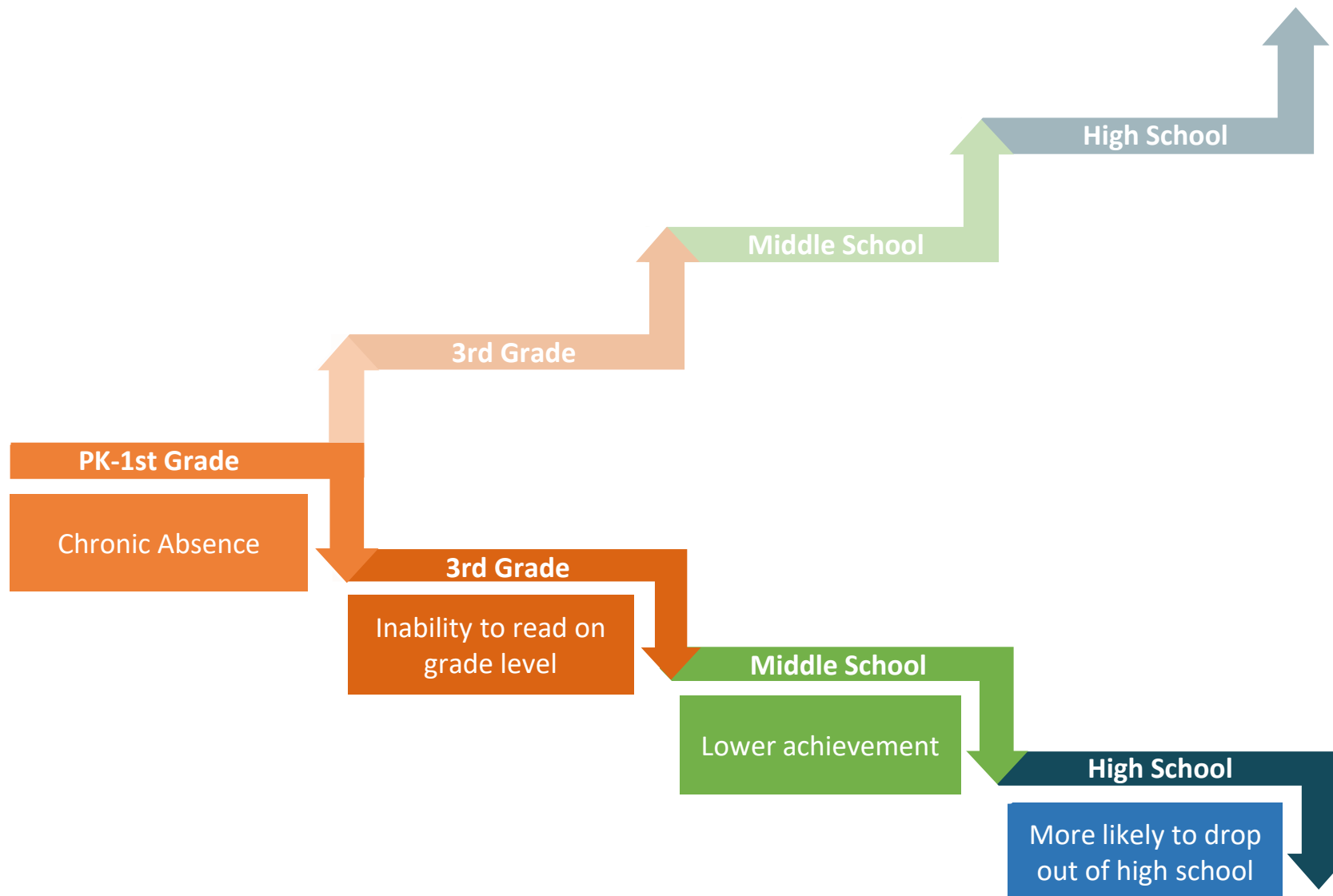


*Calculations are based only on in-person school days until mid-March 2020. **Calculations include both in-person and remote days.

Source: EdSight



Improving Attendance Matters

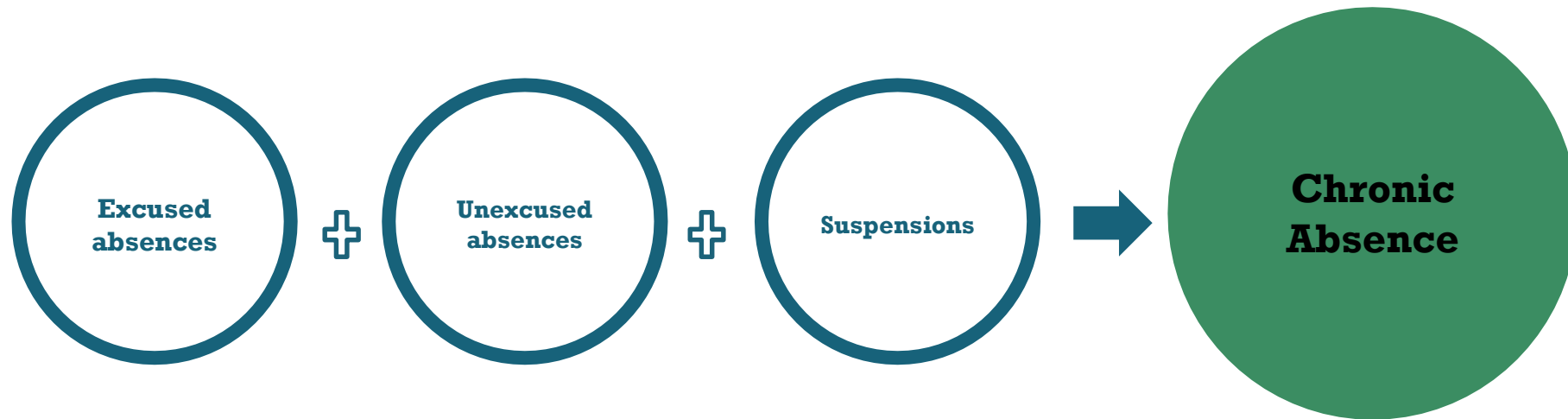




What is chronic absence?

Chronic absence is missing so much school for any reason that a student is academically at risk.

Chronic absence is defined as **missing 10 percent or more of school for any reason.**

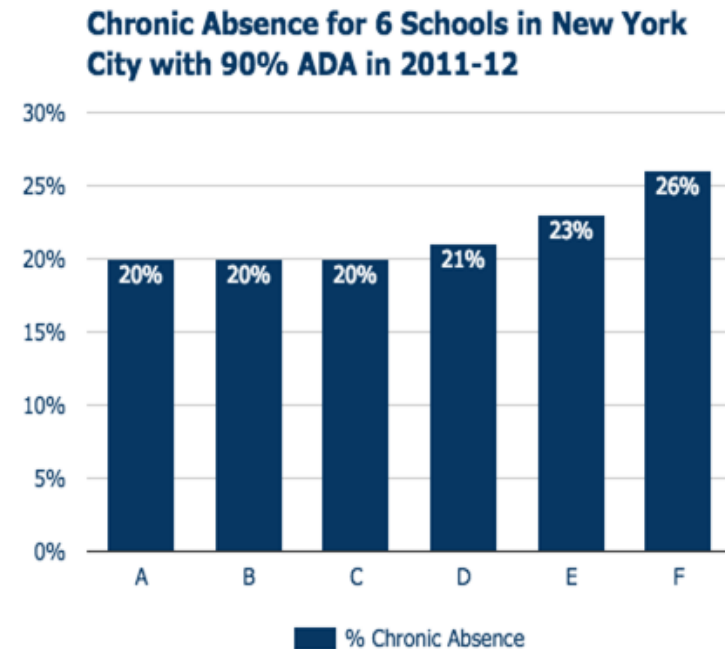
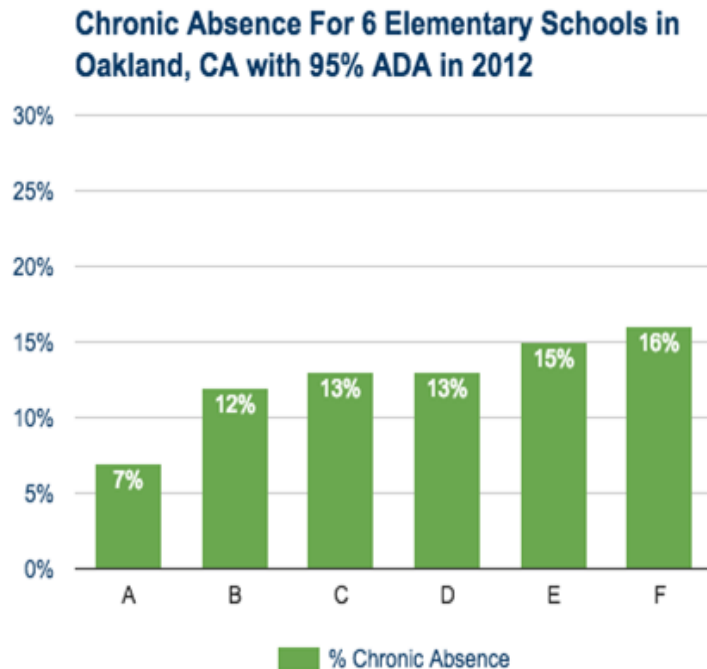


Chronic absence is different from **truancy** (unexcused absences only) or **average daily attendance** (how many students show up to school each day).



Average Daily Attendance (ADA) Can Mask Chronic Absence

90% and even 95% \neq A



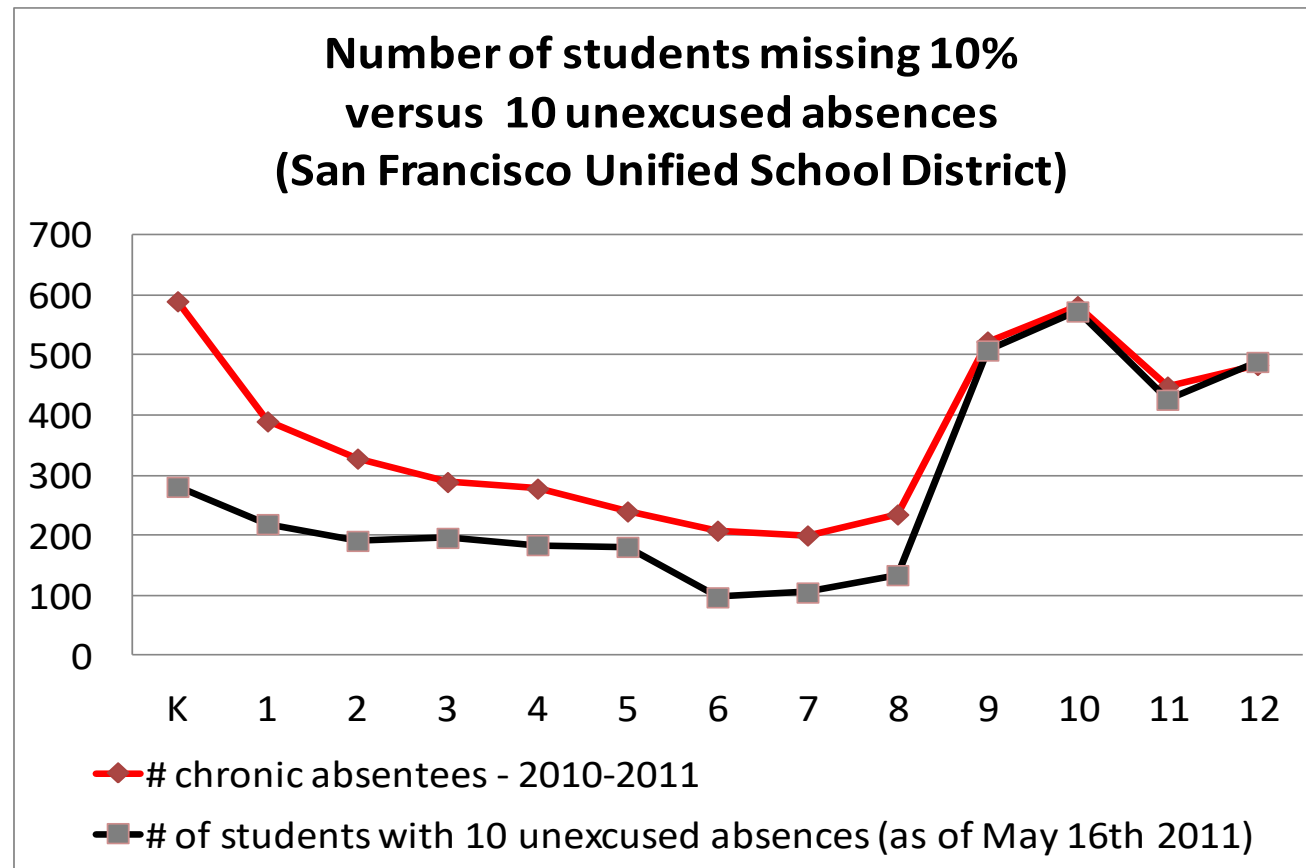
98% ADA = little chronic absence

95% ADA = don't know

93% ADA = significant chronic absence



Chronic Absence vs. Truancy



What's the Difference Between Chronic Absence vs. Truancy?

Truancy

- ▲ Counts **ONLY** unexcused absences
- ▲ Emphasizes individual compliance with school rules
- ▲ Uses legal, typically more blaming and punitive, solutions



Chronic Absence

- Counts **ALL** absences (*excused, unexcused & suspensions*)
- Emphasizes impact of missed days
- Uses preventative, problem-solving, trauma-sensitive strategies
- Cultivates family & student engagement



Reflection

Type in the Chat:

What approach does your school or school system take to improving attendance?



Effective Practice Pathway

Mindset

Actionable
Data

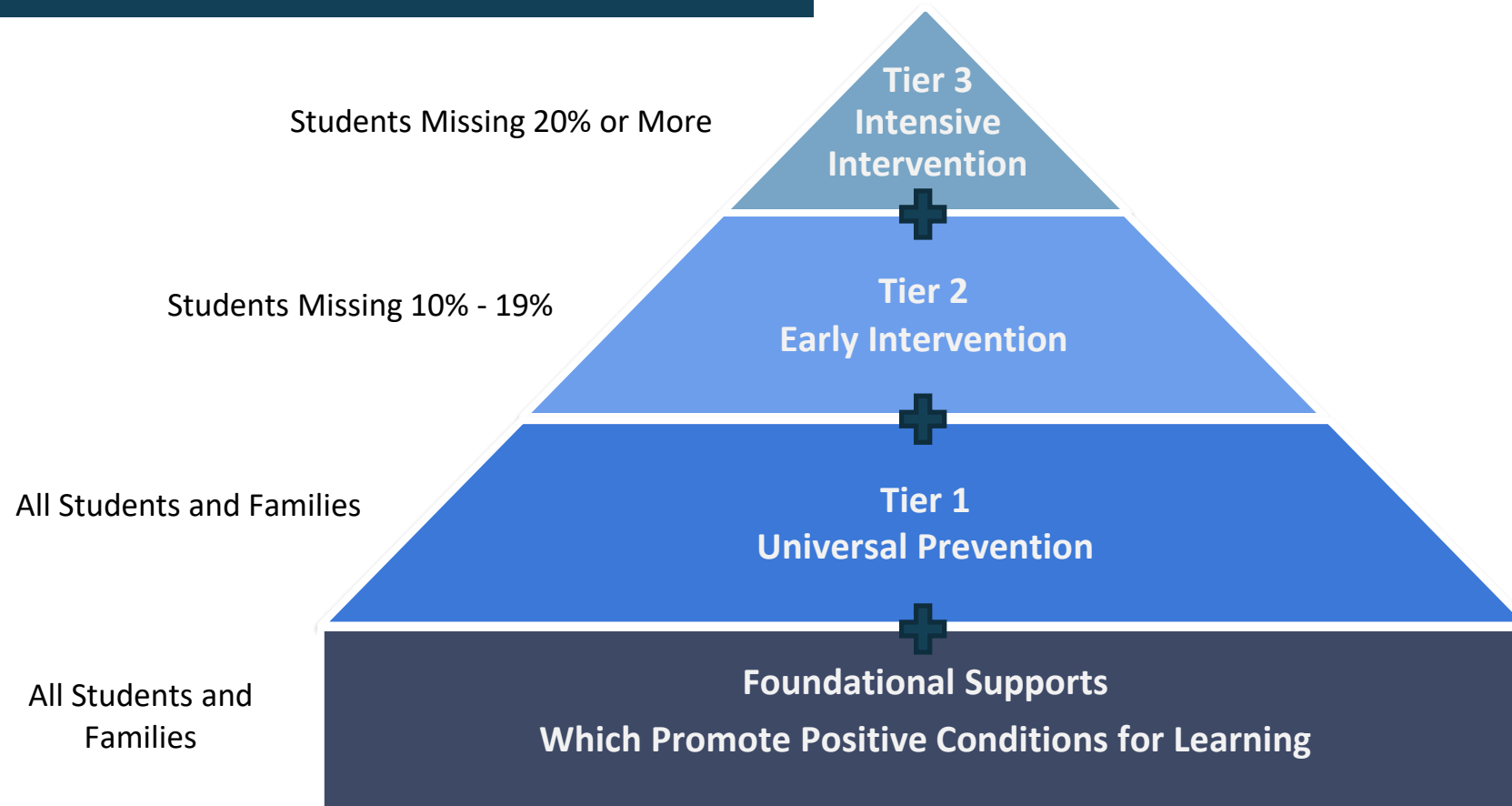
Capacity

Strategies

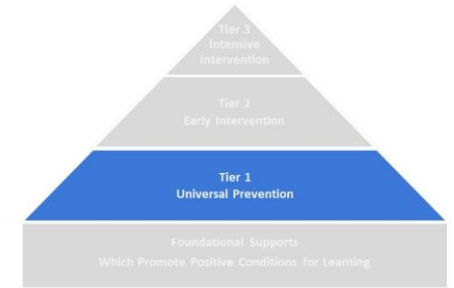
The Key to Improving Attendance is a Tiered Approach



Multi-tiered System of Support for Attendance



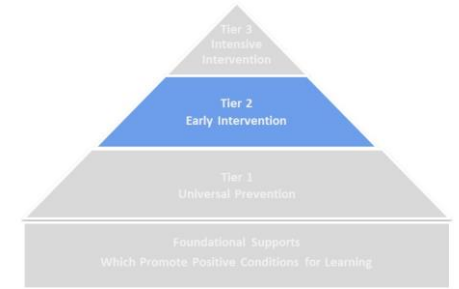
Tier 1: Universal Attendance Supports



- ❖ Clear, concise and consistent communication about schedules and expectations
- ❖ Routines, rituals and celebrations related to attendance and engagement
- ❖ Personalized communication to families when students are absent
- ❖ Recognition of good and improved attendance
- ❖ Impact of attendance on whole child widely understood
- ❖ Connection to a caring adult in the school
- ❖ Every child and their family encouraged to develop a success plan that includes attention to attendance

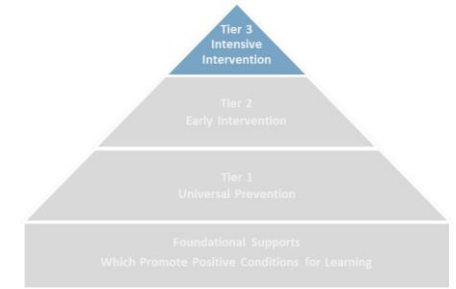
Share in Chat: In your experience, which Tier 1 attendance supports have been most essential at your school or in your district?

Tier 2: Early Interventions Layer in Support and Remove Barriers to Attendance



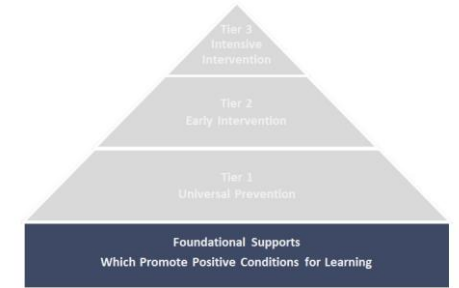
- ❖ Common community and school barriers identified and addressed
- ❖ Individualized student success plan that includes attention to attendance
- ❖ Attendance strategies added to IEP
- ❖ Family visit
- ❖ Mentors
- ❖ Intensive tutoring
- ❖ Check in, check out
- ❖ Expanded learning opportunities
- ❖ Small group interventions and supports for students
- ❖ Restorative alternatives to discipline and suspension

Tier 3: Intensive interventions

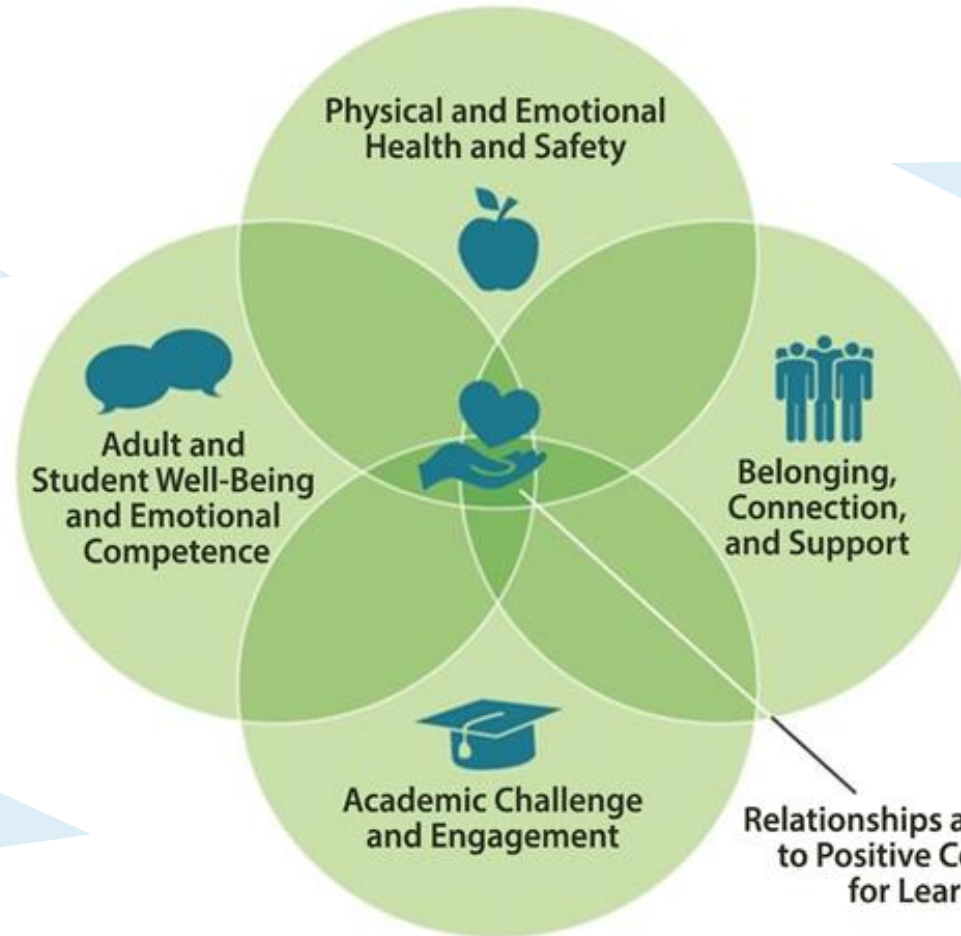


- ❖ Educational support champions / advocates
- ❖ Interagency case management
- ❖ Housing stability supports
- ❖ Student attendance review board
- ❖ Community-based, non-criminal truancy court
- ❖ Individualized learning and success plan leading to graduation
- ❖ Legal Intervention (*as a last resort*)

Positive Conditions for Learning Lead to Students Being Engaged and Attending Regularly



- Restorative check-ins
- Access to health care & mental health supports
- Trauma-informed practice
- Staff self-care



- Healthy learning environments
- Welcoming, safe school climate
- Access to food & other basic needs
- Restorative circles

- Access to tech & internet
- Learning supports
- Project-based learning
- Credit recovery opportunities
- Internships/community service
- Alternative scheduling options

- Active student & family engagement
- Advisories/meetings to build community
- Enrichment & clubs
- Positive peer connections

What promotes positive conditions for learning?

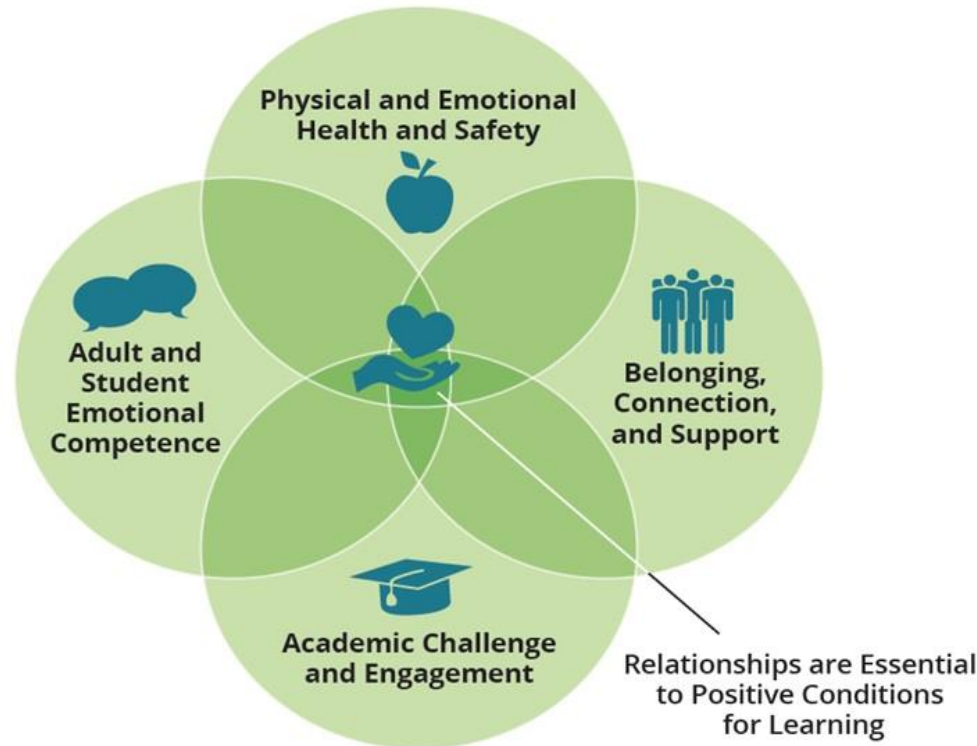


<https://vimeo.com/260252509>



Reflection

How did the video illustrate positive conditions for learning?



Conditions for Learning: Physical and Emotional Health and Safety

Select the conditions you see in your school

Challenging Condition

- ☐ Threats/acts of violence
- ☐ Unwelcoming environment
- ☐ Bullying and harassment
- ☐ Unsafe physical environment

Positive Condition

- ☐ Physical safety
- ☐ Emotional safety
- ☐ Psychological safety
- ☐ Identity safety
- ☐ Cultural respect and responsiveness
- ☐ Low risk learning environments

Conditions for Learning: Belonging, Connection and Support

Challenging Condition

- ☐ Limited support provided
- ☐ Weak relationships between students and staff
- ☐ Negative peer relationships

Positive Condition

- ☐ Meaningful connection to adults in the school
- ☐ Adults emotionally attuned to students
- ☐ Care and inclusivity
- ☐ Cultural respect and responsiveness
- ☐ Positive peer relationships
- ☐ Equitable, effective and available support

Conditions for Learning: Adult and Student Well-Being & Social/Emotional Competence

Challenging Condition

- ☐ Adult dispositions that are not developmentally responsive
- ☐ Adults who do not manage their own emotions
- ☐ Adults' beliefs that limit students' potential

Positive Condition

- ☐ Adults attuned to student development
- ☐ Resources for adults to practice self-care
- ☐ Adult belief in the potential of all students to learn
- ☐ Opportunities for students to develop self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships skills, and responsible decision-making

Conditions for Learning: Academic Challenge and Engagement

Challenging Condition

- ☐ Low expectations for some or all students
- ☐ Minimally challenging curriculum / instruction
- ☐ Curricula of little relevance to students' lives
- ☐ Instructional activities focused mainly on low-level skills (knowledge and comprehension)

Positive Condition

- ☐ High expectations
- ☐ Connection to life goals
- ☐ Engaging and culturally responsive curricula and instruction
- ☐ Robust opportunities to learn

Small Group Discussion

About your school:

- In your experience, what creates a sense of belonging, connection and support at the beginning of the school year?
- How do you reach students and families who've been disconnected?



Ground Rules

- Turn on your video camera
- Briefly introduce yourself
- Raise your hand to speak
- Ask clarifying questions
- Explore differences of opinion
- Create space for everyone to speak (*and use the chat to express ideas*)
- The person whose first name is closest to the letter "A" should facilitate.



Report Out

Share in Chat:

What is a strategy you've heard about today that you'd like to strengthen or adopt?

**Relationships are Essential at
Every Level of Intervention**

how-to guide to relationship mapping

MAKING
CARING
COMMON
PROJECT



GRADES
K–12

IMPLEMENTED BY
School Administrators

TIME & RESOURCE INTENSITY

low → high

CAPACITIES PROMOTED
Relationship-building; Student confidence; Shifting school norms

Key Elements

See all students at-a-glance.

See who is well-supported and who needs support by adults.

Involve *all* adults in relationship mapping.

Key Benefits

Connect all students to at least one school adult.

A *Relationship Map* lists *all* students in a school (or grade, team, etc.).

A *Relationship Map* allows adults in a school to have a quick and visual snapshot of students who are well supported and who most need support. Knowing this, adults can then strategize about how to best reach out to students who most need positive and supportive relationships with adults.

A *Relationship Map* is most effective if *all* adult stakeholders with a connection to students participate in its creation. This includes administrators, teachers, counselors, sports coaches, mentors, community partners, and other school staff.

A *Relationship Map* helps identify students who do not already have adult connections and provides opportunities for adults in school to build positive relationships with those students.

Download in-person and virtual versions of this guide at:

<https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/resources-for-educators/relationship-mapping-strategy>



Encourage Focus on High Leverage Relationship Activities

What is a high leverage activity?

A high leverage activity...

- ☐ Lays a foundation for caring and positive relationships
- ☐ Can be used with staff and with students and families
- ☐ Offered universally with extra attention and tailoring to ensure it reaches chronically absent students

(Examples: Greeting By the Door, Giving Thanks, Individual Learning Plans, Restorative Circles, etc.)

Re-establish Routines & Rituals

1. **Daily Wellness Check**
(e.g. [Zones of Regulation](#),
[Mood Meter](#))
2. **Whole Group Greeting**
(e.g. Go-around Questions,
Circle Games)
3. **Mindfulness/Grounding Exercises** (e.g. Collective
Breath)
4. **Greetings at the Door**
(e.g. Smile, Call person by
name)



Starting Each Class With a Warm Welcome: <https://www.edutopia.org/video/starting-each-class-warm-welcome>
Making Connections With Greetings at the Door: <https://www.edutopia.org/video/making-connections-greetings-door>



Evidence-Based Programs

Relational Home Visits

- ✓ Goal is to create positive relationship between educators and parents *before* any issues arise.
- ✓ Example of model program: Parent Teacher Home Visits
<http://www.pthvp.org/what-we-do/pthv-model/>
- ✓ Offers in-person and online *training*
- ✓ Offers in-person and online *visiting* options

Mentoring

- ✓ Goal is to create positive connection between mentor and student(s) to support student success in school
- ✓ Example of programs: MENTOR, Peer Group Connections, Success Mentor
- ✓ Virtual options for different age groups, <https://www.mentoring.org/virtual-mentoring-portals/>

Resources for Intentional Relationship-Building

- How to Guide Relationship Mapping: Download in-person and virtual versions of this guide at <https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/resources-for-educators/relationship-mapping-strategy>
- 2x10 Relationship Strategy Bank
https://www.scoe.net/media/e4olyyjr/sesion_2_relationship_strategy_bank.pdf
- Edutopia – Relationship Building From Day 1
<https://www.edutopia.org/article/relationship-building-day-1>
- National Partnership for Student Success
<https://www.partnershipstudentsuccess.org/>

Strategies and Tools to Communicate About Attendance

Toolkit: Showing Up Matters for R.E.A.L.

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkits/showing-up-matters-for-real/>

It is an opportunity to...

- ✓ **Build Routines**

Daily attendance routines can reduce stress and create a sense of safety and security especially after chaotic transitions.

- ✓ **Increase Engagement**

Being in school helps build relationships with peers and school staff that nurture engagement.

- ✓ **Provide Access to resources**

Schools provide access to meals, health and mental health services, tutoring, mentoring, technology, extracurriculars (sports, clubs, music, etc.), afterschool and summer programs.

- ✓ **Support Learning**

Showing up to school regularly helps students become proficient in reading and math and graduate from high school.

Share in Chat: Do the messages in this toolkit resonate?



Forging Partnerships with Families to Support Engagement and Attendance

- ✓ Communicate supportive messages (*Stay Connected and Keep Learning*) throughout the school year
- ✓ Provide tailored, personalized and caring messages to students and families who are chronically absent
- ✓ Offer actionable steps to improve attendance
- ✓ Make sure families know what resources are available for basic needs as well as learning at home



Utilize Research about Effective Attendance Messaging to Improve Your Communications

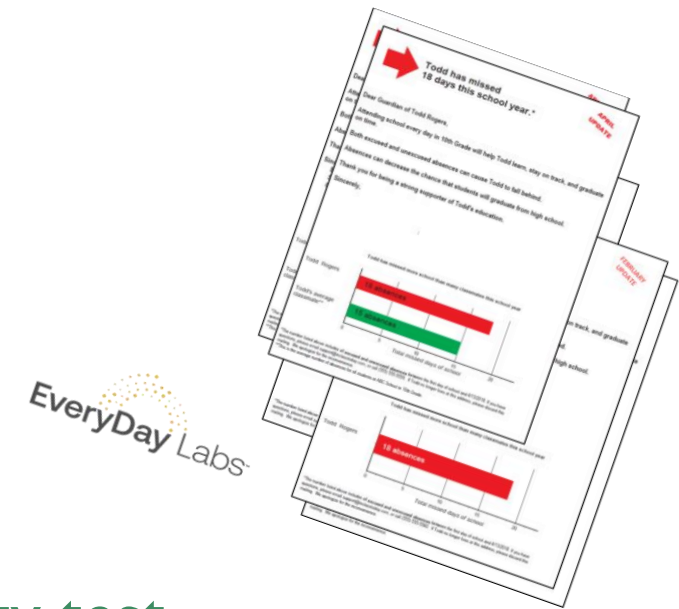
1. Readable

- Fewer words
- Accessibility: Flesch-Kincaid readability test
- Skimmability: bullets, format reinforces message

2. Programmatic

- Planned (*personalized to audience*)
- Timely
- Routinized

3. Easy to locate and multiple modes



Let's Practice.

Which of these flyers aligns with research? Why?

HOW TO TALK TO CHILDREN

With the widespread news coverage about the coronavirus, known as "COVID-19", children may develop fears about the risk to their own health and safety. It is important for parents to listen to these fears, and learn some of the basic facts themselves.

Be aware of your own behavior

It can impact how your child may feel. If you're anxious, they could take their cues from you.

Stay up-to-date with information

This can help you understand and share the facts about COVID-19 with your children.

Know whether or not to talk about COVID-19 with them

It is important to know what children have heard about COVID-19 already. It is likely that they are talking about it in school, so just because your child doesn't bring it up, doesn't mean they aren't thinking about it.

Explain what is currently being done to contain COVID-19

Reassure children that the measures put in place are the best ways to keep them safe. The U.S. is carefully monitoring the situation and currently the risk in Chester County remains low. Health Departments, such as the Chester County Health Department, are encouraging personal preparedness and prevention tips to keep the community healthy.

Know what information your children are exposed to

Be mindful about where your children are being exposed to information about COVID-19. For example, they may overhear conversations, or pick up on the continuous news headlines that adults have on as background.

For teenagers and tweens who have access to news online and via social media, ask them what they are seeing and hearing about COVID-19. Help correct misinformation, and if you don't know the answer, be honest. You can research the answers together.

Validate their feelings and reassure them

Parents should listen to their child's fears and try to understand what they are feeling. Avoid saying things like "you'll be fine" or "don't worry about it."

Give them action items

Remind them of the importance of washing hands often (for at least 20 seconds), avoid touching their eyes, mouth, and nose, and keeping their areas clean by wiping down things that are used often. If your preparedness plans include stocking up on groceries and toiletries, like you would before a big snowstorm, ask your child to help. Invite them to go the store with you. Having a stash of their favorite snacks in the pantry may help them feel more prepared.

For more information, please visit the Chester County Health Department's website

[Chesco.org/Health](https://chesco.org/Health)

If you are active on social media, we recommend following these sources:

[@ChesterCountyHealthDepartment](https://www.facebook.com/ChesterCountyHealthDepartment)

[@CDC](https://www.facebook.com/CDC)
[@ChescoHealth](https://www.facebook.com/ChescoHealth)

SHOULD MY KID STAY HOME FROM SCHOOL TODAY?

KEEPING SICK KIDS AT HOME IS IMPORTANT
For their health. For preventing the spread of illness.

SIGNS THAT YOUR CHILD SHOULD STAY HOME FROM SCHOOL

FEVER
Feels warm
Appears flushed
Has a temperature higher than 100.4 °F or 38 °C

PERSONALITY CHANGES
Doesn't seem like herself
Has no appetite
Is acting clingy

STOMACH SYMPTOMS
Nausea
Vomiting
Diarrhea

LETHARGY
Was up coughing all night and appears tired
Didn't wake up on her own as usual
Seems too fatigued to participate in school activities

PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS

WHEN SOMEONE IN YOUR FAMILY IS SICK, YOU CAN HELP KEEP YOUR CHILD HEALTHY BY:

- Teaching her to wash her hands often
- Encouraging her not to touch her eyes, nose, and mouth
- Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces that may be contaminated with germs

FLU FACTS TO KNOW

Kids with the flu should not go to school

Flu season usually begins in October in the U.S.

Thousands of kids under age 5 are hospitalized each year due to flu complications

Common flu symptoms include headache, fever, extreme fatigue, sore throat, dry cough, muscle aches, runny nose, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea

The CDC recommends that individuals older than 6 months receive annual flu vaccinations

PROVIDED BY: GOOD SAMARITAN HOSPITAL

SOURCES:
Good Samaritan Health System
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
American Academy of Pediatrics
National Health Service (NHS) UK
World Health Organization (WHO)

Part of Good Samaritan Health System
[GOODSAMSANJOSE.COM](https://goodsamsanjoose.com)

Getting Started

First, understand that your role as a parent is unique. No one knows and loves your child the way that you do. You are the expert on your child. And, while you may not have all the answers, you want your child to be successful in school and in life. Your passion, as a parent, can help you communicate brilliantly, and sometimes, it can overtake you.

Step 1 BE MINDFUL OF YOUR EMOTIONAL PRESSURE GAUGE AS YOU WORK WITH YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL.

If you expect to have difficulty when meeting with school personnel, your mind and body will be primed for battle. How can you communicate successfully if you are on the verge of overflowing in anguish and outrage? Don't let your mind go there. Keep thoughts of past (or present) problems at school, worst fears, and other negatives from creeping into your mind. Focus positively on your goals and the view that the school wants to do their best for your child. Keep telling yourself that you and your child will succeed.



Step 3 ACTIVELY LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND THE OTHER PERSON'S PERSPECTIVE.

If you don't understand what someone is saying, tell him or her. Be direct:

"I just don't understand what you are saying. Can you explain it in a different way or give me some examples?"
"Is there something you can show me, in writing, so I can fully understand?"

Keep asking and wait for responses until you do fully understand. Resist any temptation to answer your own questions or put words into someone else's mouth.



Step 4 CLARIFY YOUR STATEMENTS IF YOU SEE A PUZZLED EXPRESSION ON SOMEONE'S FACE AND ASK FOR CLARIFICATION IN RETURN.

Paraphrase, or restate so that you and others are clear in your understanding.

To be understood:
"I must not be explaining this clearly, what I'm trying to say is..."
"Here's a copy of... Let's look at this together. It shows that..."

So that you understand:
"It sounds like you're saying..."
"If I understand you correctly, you're saying... Is that right?"
"Is that written down anywhere so I can read it?"

Often, the process of clarifying one's understanding provides an opportunity to clear up a misconception or correct misinformation that could be critical to finding a satisfactory solution for your child. So, don't overlook the value of this technique.

Step 2 PRIORITIZE AND PLAN.

What's the most important thing that needs to be accomplished for your child? Make a list of the issues, questions, and possible solutions. Rank them. Decide if there are any you can pass on and which one(s) must be addressed. Plan how you are willing to give and take in order to achieve the higher goal. Map out what you need to say and practice, if that helps:

"What's most important for Jordan right now is..."
"We really need to focus on..."

Referring to these few notes, with key phrases jotted down, can help keep you and the meeting on track.

2

Steps to Success: Communicating with Your Child's School

Example A

Example B

Example C



Additional Resources from Attendance Works



Handouts for Families

- ✓ Preschool, Elementary & Secondary Grades
- ✓ Available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Tagalog and Creole

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/handouts-for-families/>

Sign up for the 2022 Attendance Awareness Campaign

<https://awareness.attendanceworks.org/contact/aam-updates/>



Help Your Child Succeed in School: Build the Habit of Good Attendance Early

DID YOU KNOW?




- Starting in preschool and kindergarten, too many absences can cause children to fall behind in school.
- Missing 10%, or about 2 days each month over the course of a school year, can make it harder to learn to read.
- Students can still fall behind if they miss just one or two days every few weeks.
- Being late to school may lead to poor attendance.
- Absences and tardiness can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up.

Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school—and themselves. Start building this habit in preschool so they learn right away that going to school on time, every day is important. Eventually good attendance will be a skill that will help them succeed in high school and college.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Find out what day school starts and make sure your child has the required shots.
- Introduce your children to their teachers and classmates before school starts.
- Develop backup plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.
- Avoid medical appointments and extended trips when school is in session.
- Keep in mind that complaints of a stomach ache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home. If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, school counselors and other parents for advice on how to make your child feel comfortable and excited about learning.
- If your child must stay home due to illness, ask the teacher for resources and ideas to continue learning at home.

When Do Absences Become a Problem?

	CHRONIC ABSENCE 18 or more days
	WARNING SIGNS 10 to 17 days
	SATISFACTORY 9 or fewer absences

Note: These numbers assume a 180-day school year.

Visit Attendance Works at www.attendanceworks.org for free downloadable resources and tools!

Better Truancy Notifications

- ✓ Started with positive language and moved punitive language to the end
- ✓ Fewer words
- ✓ Written at 5th grade reading level
- ✓ Formatted to help readers skim
- ✓ Makes connection between absences and achievement

Condition A (Control)
Standard Notice

School Name
Address
City, State Zip

Date:

Parent Name
Parent Address
R.E. Student Name
City, State Zip

Student ID#: XXXXX

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Good attendance is required for academic excellence. [STATE] Education Code determines what types of absences are excused or unexcused. When a child is absent from school and/or tardy in excess of 30 minutes on three (3) occasions in one school year without a valid excuse, the law considers that child to be truant. The law and district policy requires all schools to notify parents when this occurs. The [district name] central office automatically sends these letters based on school records so that parents are aware of absences and can address these concerns.

School records indicate that your child was absent from school without a valid excuse on occasions, beginning with the following dates:

Thursday, September 12, 2015
Thursday, September 19, 2015
Thursday, September 27, 2015

Our goal is to partner with families to ensure that students are attending school every day. Although the following consequences may appear harsh we are mandated by Education Code Article 48260.5 to inform you of the following:

- That the parent or guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the pupil at school.
- That parents or guardians who fail to meet these obligation may be guilty of an infraction and subject to prosecution pursuant to Article 6 (commencing with Section 48290) of Chapter 2 or Part 27.
- That alternative education programs are available in the district.
- That the parent or guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the pupil's truancy.
- That the pupil may be subject to prosecution under Education Code Section 48264.
- That the pupil may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of the pupil's driving privilege pursuant to Section 13202.7 of the Vehicle Code.
- That it is recommended that the parent or guardian accompany the pupil to school and attend classes with the pupil for one day.

Please recognize that we are required to monitor attendance and notify parents of potential problems with student attendance. If you have concerns about your child's attendance, or if you believe there is an error in this notice, contact the school at «SCHOOL_PHONE_NUMBER». The designated attendance personnel will work with you to resolve this issue. We look forward to assisting you.

Sincerely,

Principal Signature

Principal Name

Condition D
Add-up Notice

We need your help. [STUDENT NAME]'s absences from school are concerning, and your partnership is critical. Students who miss just one or two days of school each month can fall seriously behind.

[STUDENT NAME] is now "truant" because [SHE/HE] missed school (or was more than 30 minutes late) without a valid excuse on:

Thursday, September 12, 2015
Thursday, September 19, 2015
Thursday, September 27, 2015

Being absent can lead to doing poorly in school. Students who miss many days of school are more likely to:

- Fail their classes
- Drop out from high school
- Have poor relationships with parents and teachers

We are required by [STATE] law to send you this letter and to warn you of the consequences of additional unexcused absences (see sidebar).

Please remember that every absence matters and just a couple days each month adds up. You are key to improving [STUDENT NAME]'s attendance.

Sincerely,
Principal X

Truancy- [STATE] Education Code School administrators determine what types of absences are excused or unexcused based on state law and on the facts of the pupil's circumstances. When a child is absent from school and/or tardy in excess of 30 minutes on three (3) occasions in one school year without a valid excuse, the law considers that child to be truant.
Education Code Section 48260.5 requires us to inform you of the following:
• That the parent or guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the pupil at school.
• That parents or guardians who fail to meet these obligation may be guilty of an infraction and subject to prosecution pursuant to Article 6 (commencing with Section 48290) of Chapter 2 or Part 27.
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• That the parent or guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the pupil's truancy.
• That the pupil may be subject to prosecution under Education Code Section 48264.
• That the pupil may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of the pupil's driving privilege pursuant to Section 13202.7 of the Vehicle Code.
• That it is recommended that the parent or guardian accompany the pupil to school and attend classes with the pupil for one day.

If you have concerns about your child's attendance or if you believe our records are inaccurate contact the school at «SCHOOL_PHONE_NUMBER».

[Writing Truancy Notices That Can Improve Attendance](#)

[Using Behavioral Insights to Improve School Administrative Communications: The Case of Truancy Notifications](#)



Developing a Communications Plan

Identify Your Audience:

- Students
- Families/caregivers
- Teachers
- Community partners

- ✓ What does each group need to know?
- ✓ What do you want them to do?
- ✓ How will you communicate it?

Communications Tips: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/transition-guide/communication-tips-for-your-transition-attendance-plan/>


Strategies for Connecting with Students & Families: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Strategies-for-Connecting-with-Students-and-Families-rev-8-27-20.pdf>

Year-Round Planning

Plan activities and events that keep a focus on improving attendance all year long.

- ❖ See sample activities for PreK, K-12 and district teams
- ❖ Use blank calendars to customize the plan for your community
- ❖ Remember to specify who is responsible for leading and how to measure the results

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES for K-12: rev. 5-19-21



Attendance Activities School Year Plan (K-12)

School Name	School Year					
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Activities in the grid are examples. You can customize the plan for your school or program. For each activity, specify who is responsible for leading and how to measure the results. You can also recreate this chart in a larger format and use post-it notes to add activities as a group exercise. See the 3 Tiers of Intervention (<https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/>)

Timing	Before Start of School Year (July/August)	Welcome Back (August/September)	Ongoing (Weekly)	Fall Semester (October – November)	Winter Semester (December – February)	Spring Semester (March-April)	End-of-Year (May/June)
School Team	Establish school team to address attendance. Develop a yearly attendance plan and goals. Agree on metrics to monitor for in-person and distance learning. Utilize start of school year PD days for teachers and school staff to discuss yearly plan and whole school strategies.	Conduct team meeting by the second week of school.	Hold team meetings.	Review early warning data. Ensure staff are prepared to discuss attendance in a caring manner in parent-teacher conferences, outreach calls and home visits.	Revisit data to measure progress and revise school-wide strategies as needed. Expand team as needed to address reasons for absence.	Ensure staff are prepared to discuss attendance in parent-teacher conferences. Assess strategies and write school improvement plan.	Review data. Share data with student's next teacher for smooth transitions and trouble shooting.
Tier I (Universal)	Promote attendance messaging during registration/enrollment. Have home visits/phone calls to build relationship and remind families about the first day of school. Plan welcoming traditions for incoming early grades, transition grades and new students and their families. Ensure there is attention paid to students with disabilities and other student groups with historically high levels of absenteeism.	Disseminate in-person health and safety protocols. Share back-to-school messaging about the importance of attendance for in-person and distance learning. Establish good and improved attendance recognition schedule/ process. Conduct welcoming traditions for students and families. Promote immunization activities.	Promote and maintain a positive school climate. Ask staff to establish daily, weekly and monthly routines to build relationships in the classroom and connection to the school. Hold weekly/monthly recognition. Ensure positive, regular communication with families about student attendance.	Provide a warm welcome for students who start later in the school year. During parent-teacher conference recognize good attendance and express concerns in a supportive manner if needed. Anticipate and plan activities/supports to minimize dips in attendance during holidays. Conduct a resource fair for students and their families.	Share messaging and engaging activities around winter holidays. Use data to identify attendance dips and align events to mitigate low attendance days. Schedule mid-year activities to remind school community about attendance.	Hold parent-teacher conference student attendance check-in. Plan engaging activities and messaging to avoid the spring slump.	Establish or amplify end of year traditions to keep the school community engaged and to maintain student attendance in last weeks of school. Acknowledge attendance successes.

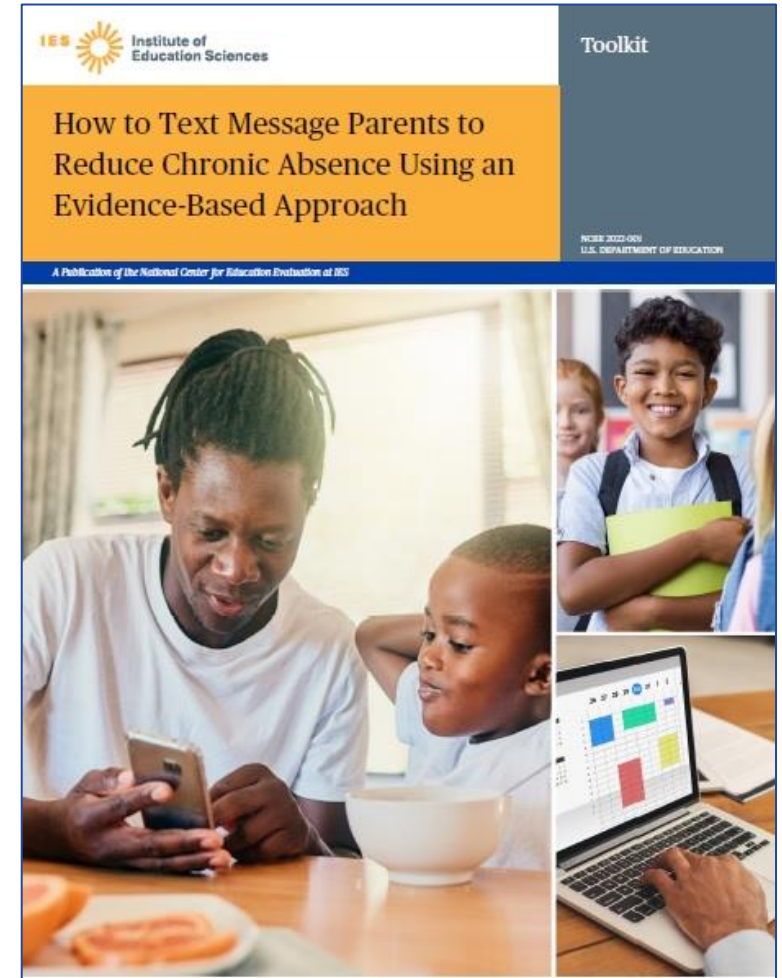
<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/year-long-planning/>



Communicating with Families

Use these resources to help your communications with families be clear and supportive:

- ❖ Principal Welcome Back to School Letter
<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/welcome-students-to-school/>
- ❖ Chronic Absence letter Updated for Covid-19
<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/welcome-students-to-school/>
- ❖ Holiday Messaging
<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/messaging/holiday-messaging/>
- ❖ How to Text Message Parents to Reduce Chronic Absence Using an Evidence-Based Approach
<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/2022001/pdf/2022001.pdf>



Encourage All Students and Families to Create a Success Plan

MY FAMILY'S HELP BANK

MY FAMILY

EVERYDAY HELPERS

OCCASIONAL HELPERS

POTENTIAL HELPERS

- My Family:** List who lives in your house.
- Everyday Helpers:** Identify who you can call on to help drop your child off or who can pick him or her up when you cannot. These are people like friends, neighbors and relatives who can help regularly.
- Occasional Helpers:** Identify people who probably cannot help every day, but can help in a pinch. Maybe it's a godparent, a relative or a friend who lives outside your neighborhood but can be there for short stints.
- Potential Helpers:** Identify people who are part of your school community, church or neighborhood who are able to help if you ask.

- My Family:**
- Everyday Helpers:**
- Occasional Helpers:**
- Potential Helpers:**

If I need help getting my child to and from school, I will ask the following people to be our back-up:

Name: _____	Best Contact Number: _____
Name: _____	Best Contact Number: _____
Name: _____	Best Contact Number: _____

- ✓ Set attendance goals
- ✓ Make backup plans
- ✓ Track absences
- ✓ Recognize success!

MY CHILD'S ATTENDANCE SUCCESS PLAN

My child was present _____ days.
My child was absent _____ days.
My goal is to improve my child's attendance. I will ensure my child arrives no more than _____ for the rest of the year. (1 or four absences = satisfactory attendance)

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES TO REACH MY CHILD'S ATTENDANCE GOALS

- I will talk to my child about how going to school every day will help them do well in school and achieve their hopes and dreams.
- I will keep an attendance chart at home. At the end of the week, I will recognize my child for attending school every day with _____.
- I will take my child to the park, a new book, a hand-drawn drawing, a special treat.
- I will make sure my child is in bed by _____ p.m. and the alarm clock is set for _____ a.m.
- If my child complains of a headache or headache, and medical concerns have been ruled out, I will not take her to school anyway and will _____ so that he/she can check in with my child during the day.

2017-2018 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

August 2017							September 2017						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31					1	2	3	4	5	6	7

October 2017							November 2017						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31					1	2	3	4	5	6	7

December 2017							January 2018						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31					1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/student-attendance-success-plans/>



Attendance Awareness Campaign 2022

Stay Connected, Keep Learning!



<https://awareness.attendanceworks.org/>



Questions from the Audience





Learning Goals for Session 1

Participants will:

- Draw on high leverage, whole school strategies to create
 - positive conditions for learning and
 - strong relationships with students and families that prevent absenteeism
- Be introduced to the framework of multi-tiered attendance strategies that moves schools towards prevention and early intervention
- Learn effective strategies to communicate with families about attendance



Evaluation Survey

Please let us know how we can improve:

https://app.upmetrics.com/data_collector/ckf2oltbqlt8k0759tfdbfybj

Thank you!



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About Us

Attendance Works advances student success and closes equity gaps by reducing chronic absence. Operating at the local, state, and national level, Attendance Works:

- ✓ Advances better **policy**
- ✓ Nurtures proven and promising **practice**
- ✓ Promotes meaningful and effective **communication**
- ✓ Catalyzes needed **research**

Since our launch in 2010, we have become the nation's “go-to” resource for improving student attendance. To learn more, visit our website: www.attendanceworks.org

Appendix



Showing Up Matters for R.E.A.L.

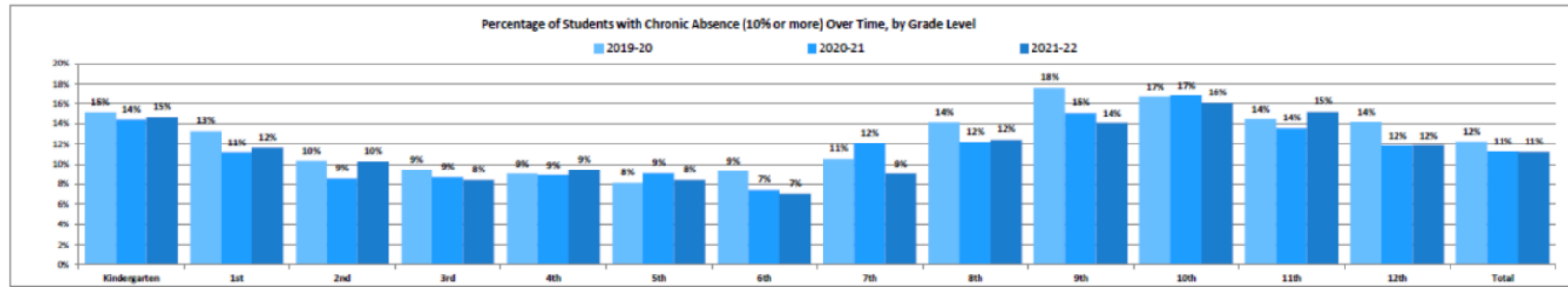
A Toolkit for Communicating with Students and Families

April 2022

Four Key Steps

1. **Explain Why Attendance Matters.** (*Showing up matters because it builds **R**outines, increases **E**ngagement, provides **A**ccess to Resources, Supports **L**earning.*)
2. **Cultivate a Culture of Engagement and Attendance With Students and Families** (*NEW resources for Back-to-School!*)
3. **Use Data to Determine Need for Intervention and Additional Support**
4. **Engage Community Partners** (*Updated materials!*)

Find it here: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkits/showing-up-matters-for-real/>



UPDATED! Data Tracking Tools

What? Attendance Works District and School Attendance Tracking tools!

Why? These tools will help you analyze your local data. This new version now captures information about students experiencing extreme chronic absenteeism (missing 50% or more of school).

When? Before the new school year begins is an excellent time to examine who was chronically absent last year.

Find it here: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/data-tools/calculating-chronic-absence/>



Student Attendance Success Plans - Help parents/caregivers track their student's attendance and work with teachers to set appropriate goals.

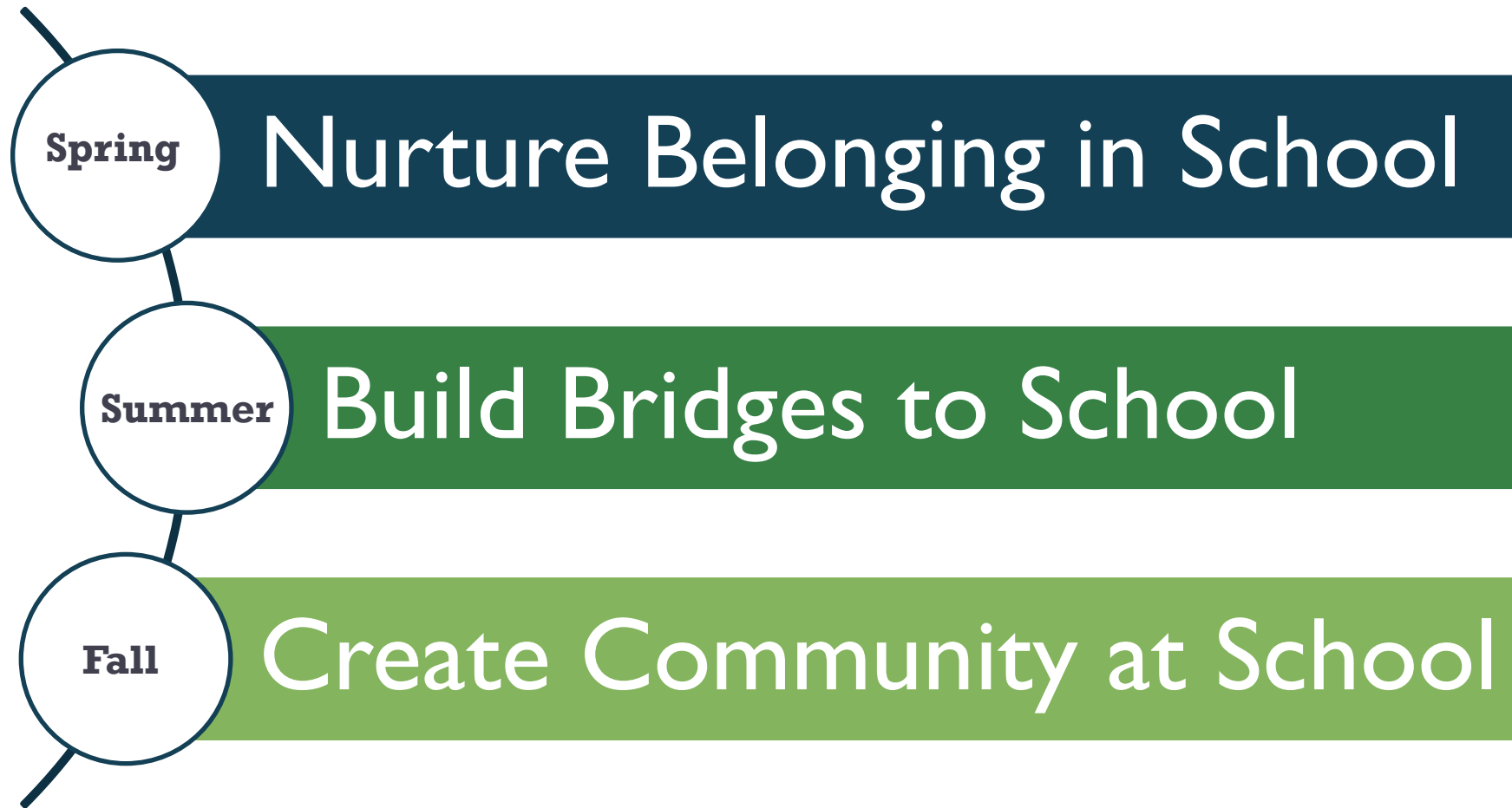
My Family's Help Bank - Encourage families to think about their back up plans for getting to school even when challenges come up.

Both handouts tailored for PreK – 12!

Each comes with a 2022-23 school year calendar!

Find it here: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/student-attendance-success-plans/>

Pathways to Engagement: A Toolkit for Covid-19 Recovery Through Attendance



<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkits/pathways-to-engagement-a-toolkit-for-covid-19-recovery-through-attendance/>



Pathways to Engagement: A Toolkit for Covid-19 Recovery Through Attendance

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkits/pathways-to-engagement-a-toolkit-for-covid-19-recovery-through-attendance/>

Step 1: Establish Your Team

- ❖ *Convene a small group of leaders if you are just starting or integrate into the work of an existing team.*

Step 2: Review Data and Establish Priority Groups

- ❖ *Use data to identify which group(s) of students or schools most need additional engagement and better understand their strengths and challenges.*

Step 3: Craft Engagement Strategies

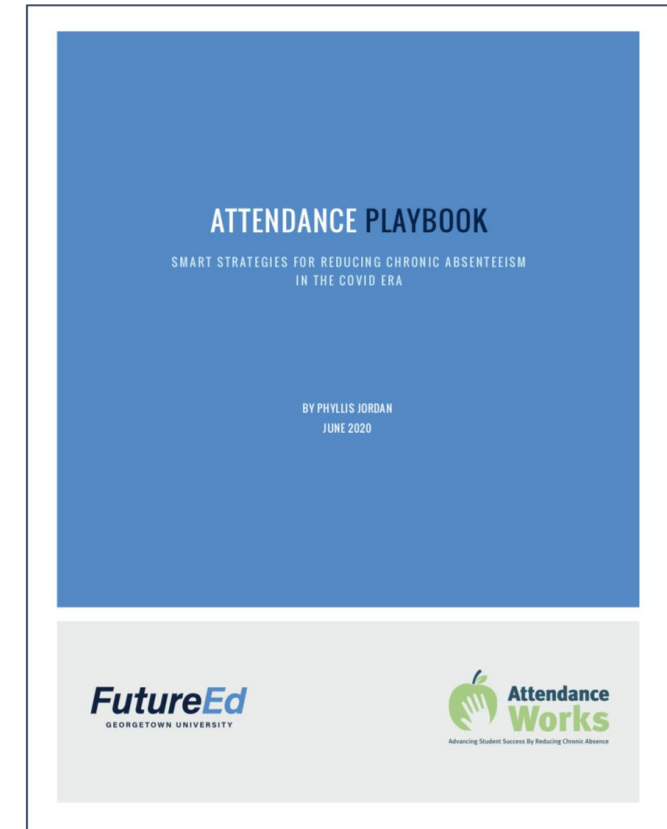
- ❖ *Take a multi-tiered approach to engagement, especially for priority populations, that starts in the Spring, persists in the Summer and is amplified in the Fall.*

Step 4: Reflect, Learn and Improve

- ❖ *After each phase of work, invest in taking stock to assess what worked and what can be improved for the future.*

Attendance Playbook: Covid Edition

- Evidence-based interventions to improve attendance
- Links to effective programs and resources
- Listed by tiers for use
- A section on monitoring attendance in distance learning
- Covid-19 modifications for interventions
- Added guidance on clean environment



Attendance Playbook: <https://www.future-ed.org/attendance-playbook/>

Implementation Guide: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/attendance-playbook/>



How to Use the Attendance Playbook

The Guide to the Attendance Playbook offers practical tips for:

- Forming a team
- Using attendance data to determine the number of strategies
- Analyzing why students are absent and selecting strategies that address those reasons
- Realistically assessing your team's capacity to implement each strategy
- Selecting strategies that are likely to have the greatest impact for the lowest effort
- Making an implementation plan
- Assessing how well the strategies worked

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/attendance-playbook/>