



## Session 3:

# Partnering to Make a Difference



Professional Learning Series

October 21, 2021



**Welcome!**



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Senior Fellow



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Senior Fellow



## Getting Started: Introductions

### *Use the Chat and share:*

- ✓ Your name, role, community, and state
- ✓ A key community partner for engaging students in school



## 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 3

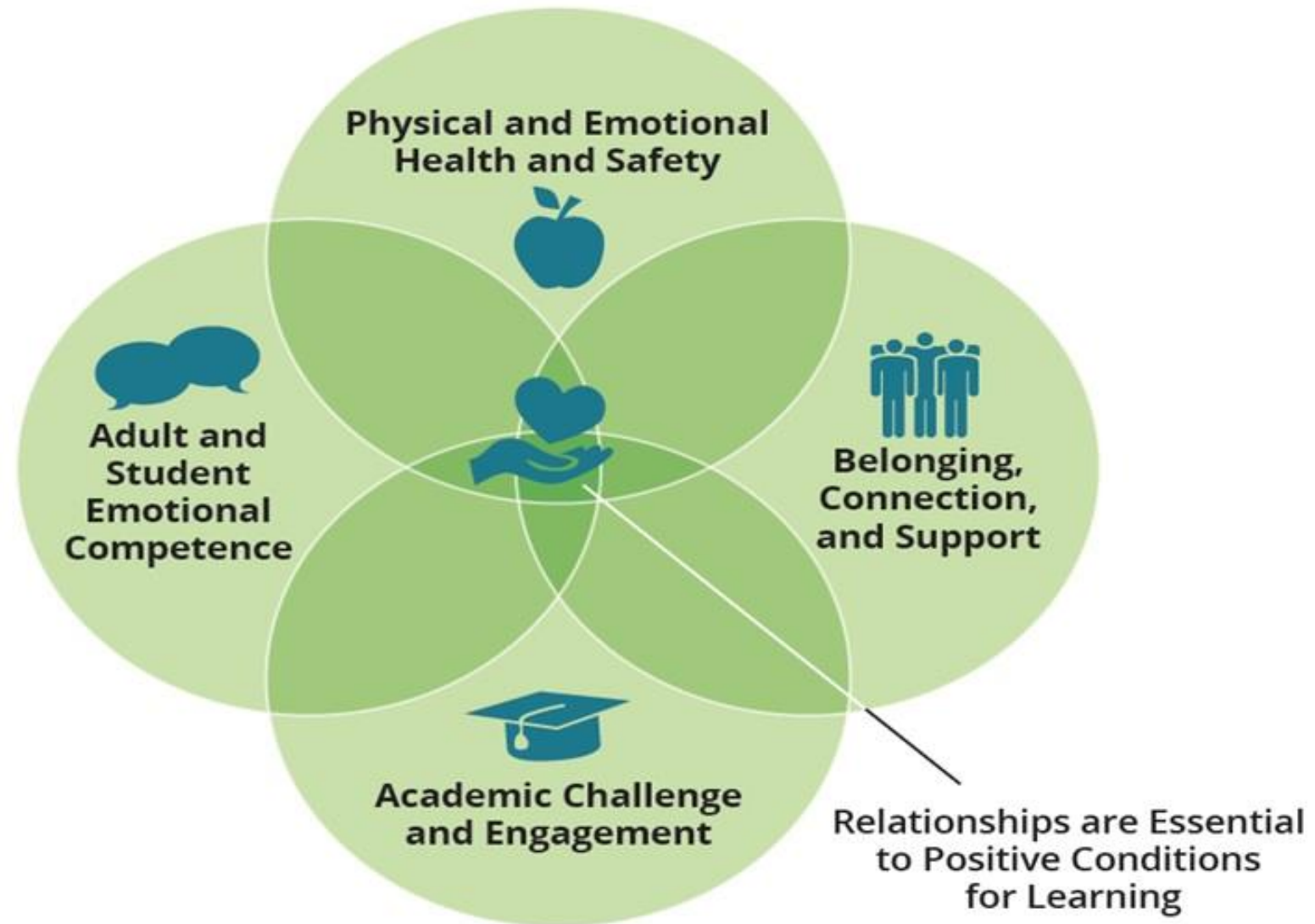
### *Participants will:*

- Learn strategies to mobilize school staff, community and agency partners to provide support
- Determine if their efforts are making a difference

# Review of Sessions 1 & 2



# Absenteeism is a Sign that Positive Conditions for Learning are Missing, Whether Classes are In Person, Distance or Blended





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

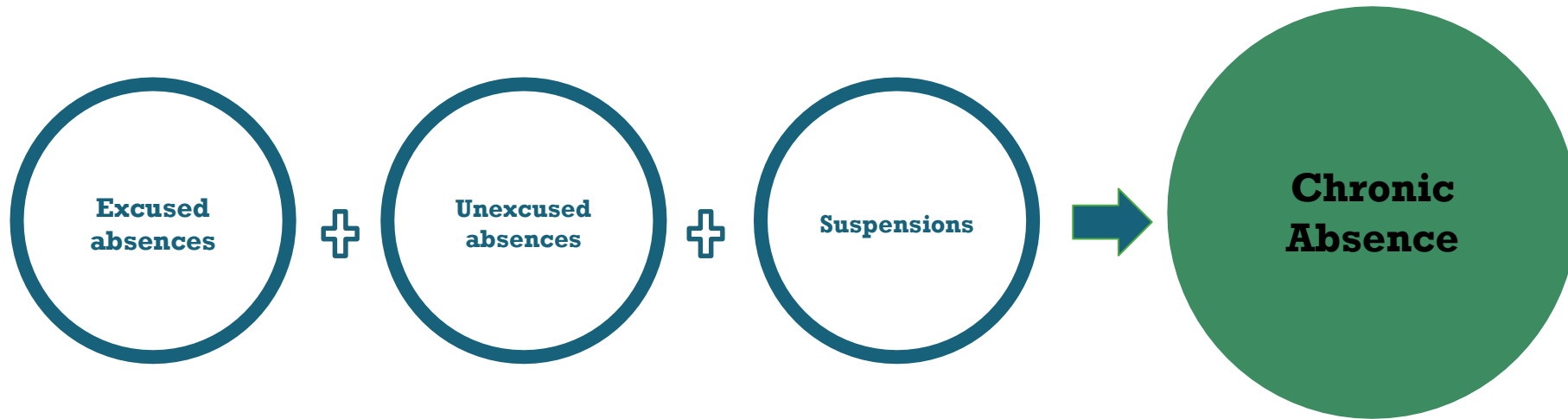
**Absenteeism is a *leading* indicator and  
a *cause* of educational inequity**





## Chronic Absence Measures Lost Opportunity to Learn

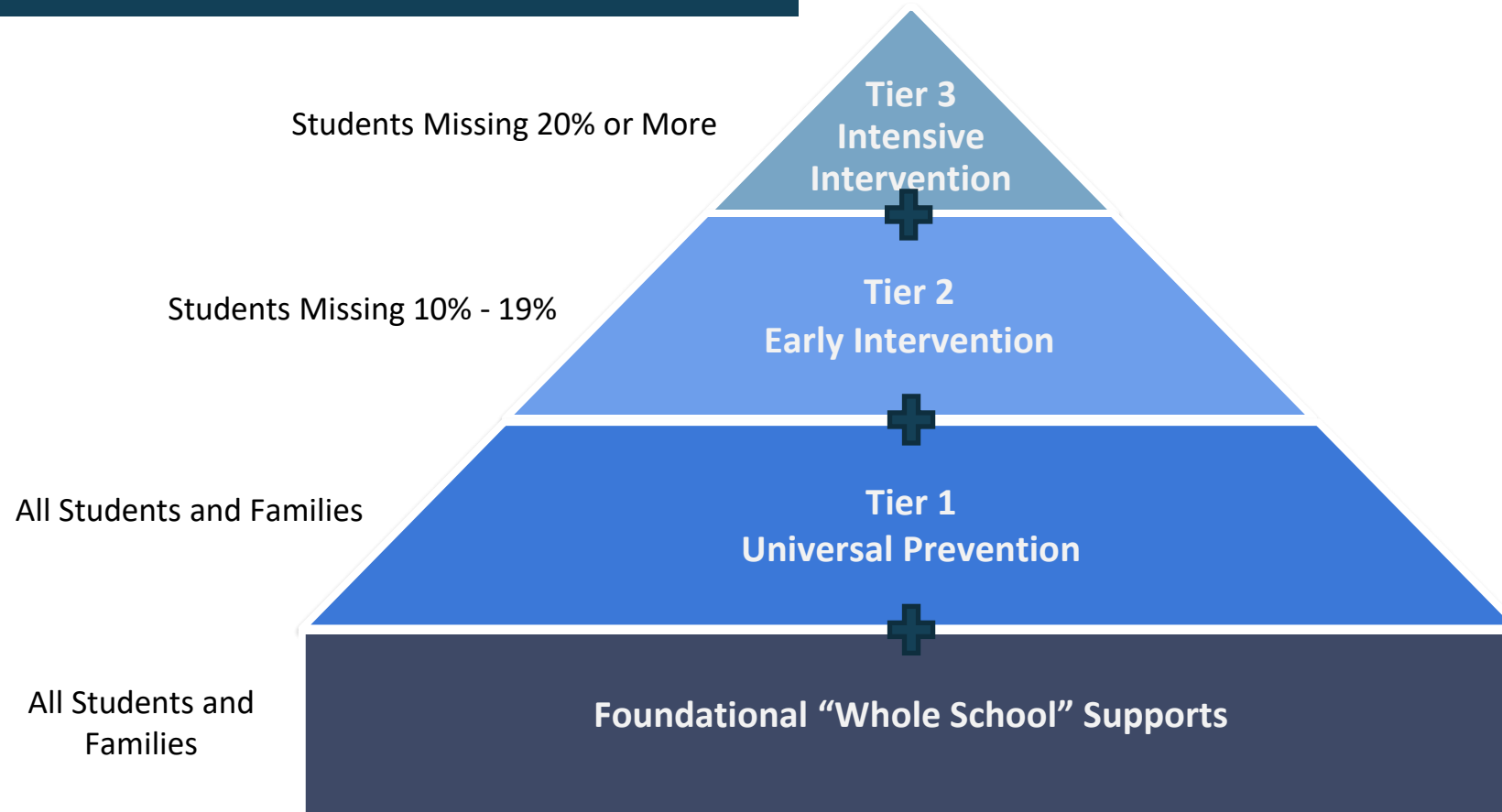
Chronic absence is missing so much school for any reason that a student is academically at risk. Chronic absence is defined as **missing 10 percent or more of school for any reason.**



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



## When Tackling Absenteeism, Take a Multi-Tiered Approach Beginning with Prevention





## Poll

**What has been most valuable to you from the first 2 classes?**  
(check all that apply)

- The key functions of an attendance team
- Taking a multi-tiered approach to reducing absenteeism beginning with prevention
- Effective communication strategies
- Expanded measures of attendance
- School climate and culture and attendance
- Matching strategies to root causes of absenteeism
- Other (*type in chat*)



## **Reducing Chronic Absence Requires a Team Approach**



## Primary Purpose of a Team Approach

Organize and facilitate a schoolwide attendance strategy and ensure it is an integral component of the school's plan to improve outcomes for all students.

# Ensuring Attendance Requires A Team



The Attendance Strategy should be led by the school principal and the leadership team.

Teams working on improving student attendance could include the school's:

- \* Nurse
- \* Counselor
- \* Social Worker
- \* Administrative support staff
- \* Special education staff
- \* Teachers
- \* Early education staff
- \* Community School Directors and Coordinators
- \* Expanded Learning program staff
- \* Family Resource Center Directors and Coordinators
- \* Pupil Personnel Workers
- \* Child Welfare and Attendance Officers

Members should be able to bring the perspectives of the student demographics. Teams should incorporate input from families and students along with the community.



Session 2

- 1. Organize a multi-tiered attendance strategy that begins with prevention and early intervention.**
- 2. Examine attendance and absenteeism data to assess which groups of students have higher or lower levels of absence.**

Session 3

- 3. Identify barriers and inequities that prevent students from attending school.**
- 4. Mobilize everyone in the school community to address attendance.**
- 5. Determine if you are making a difference.**

# **Team Function #3:**

*Identify barriers & inequities that prevent students from attending school*





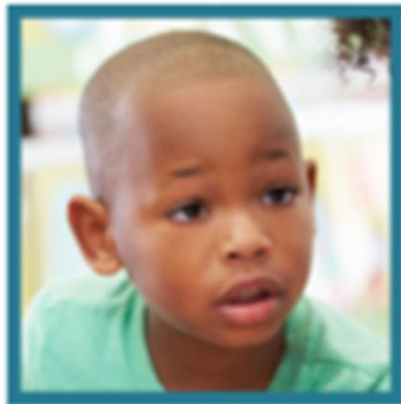


## Perception vs. Reality

### Dillon's Story



Dillon missed 36 days of school last year. That's a lot of instruction time missed.  
*Why is he absent so often, especially in these early years?*



**Dillon Wilson**  
3rd grade

### THE PERCEPTION

Dillon's parents don't care enough to get him to school. Maybe they aren't at home during the day, or have other kids to deal with, but whatever the excuse, they obviously just don't care enough about his education.



## Perception vs. Reality



Dillon missed 36 days of school last year. That's a lot of instruction time missed.  
*Why is he absent so often, especially in these early years?*



### THE REALITY

Dillon was diagnosed with asthma as a baby. He struggles with outdoor activities and relies on a rescue inhaler many days at school. He lives with his widowed grandmother. When the air quality is bad, his grandmother keeps him home.



## Solutions Require Understanding What Factors Contribute to Chronic Absence

### Barriers

- Chronic and acute illness
- Family responsibilities or home situation
- Trauma
- Poor transportation
- Housing and food insecurity
- Inequitable access to needed services
- System involvement
- Etc. and many more!

### Aversion

- Struggling academically and/or behaviorally
- Unwelcoming school climate
- Social and peer challenges
- Biased disciplinary and suspension practices
- Undiagnosed disability and/or disability accommodations
- Parents had negative educational experiences

### Disengagement

- Lack of challenging, culturally responsive instruction
- Bored
- No meaningful relationships to adults in the school
- Lack of enrichment opportunities
- Lack of academic and behavioral support
- Failure to earn credits

### Misconceptions

- Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused
- Missing 2 days per month doesn't affect learning
- Sporadic absences aren't a problem
- Attendance only matters in the older grades
- Suspensions don't count as absence



## The Social & Emotional Impact of Covid-19 on Student Attendance

\* Students who lost loved ones

\* Covid anxiety (about getting sick or spreading covid to family members)

\* Students who disengaged academically during remote learning who now feel behind or unprepared and avoid school or classes

\* Students who increased their amount of time they were working or care-taking during the pandemic (secondary school)

\* Students who suffered mental health impacts from remote schooling/pandemic

# Align Interventions to Reasons for Absences

Reason for Absence	Possible Interventions
Anxiety About In-Person School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enlist trusted messengers (e.g. doctors) to talk with families</li><li>• Review health and safety protocols</li><li>• Hold a virtual open house to answer questions and address concerns</li><li>• Make school counselors available for consultation</li></ul>
Misunderstanding the impact of absences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create an education campaign that connects academic achievement with attendance</li><li>• When working with individual families, explore their hopes for their child and help connect them to school and attendance</li></ul>
Schedules Out-of-Sync	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Offer before or after school programming</li><li>• Organize a walking school bus</li><li>• Provide a modified schedule that aligns school and family schedules</li></ul>
Transportation Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b><i>Share ideas in the chat...</i></b></li></ul>

# Asking Powerful Questions

## 5 Whys Worksheet

### Define the Problem:

A large number of middle schoolers are tardy or absent the first month of school.

### Why is this happening?

1. Middle school students are not waking up early enough to get to school.

Why is that?

2. Middle school students have not been in the routine of showing up in person every day for the past year and a half.

Why is that?

3. They haven't had the opportunity to practice daily routines or allow extra time for unexpected issues such as the bus being late.

Why is that?

4. Many students do not have adults or peers to help them develop and stick to positive routines.

Why is that?

5. Adults overestimate a student's ability to organize himself/herself or plan for issues.

Use the 5 Whys to understand a problem and the system that produces it.

**Caution:** do not use it to lay blame on students or families.

### Blank worksheet:

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Five-Whys-Worksheet.pdf>

### Identified Root Cause:

*Students have not been taught, coached and supported in developing successful routines for getting to school on time.*

# Validate Your Insights – Gather Information About Why Students Miss School


Common barriers students shared:



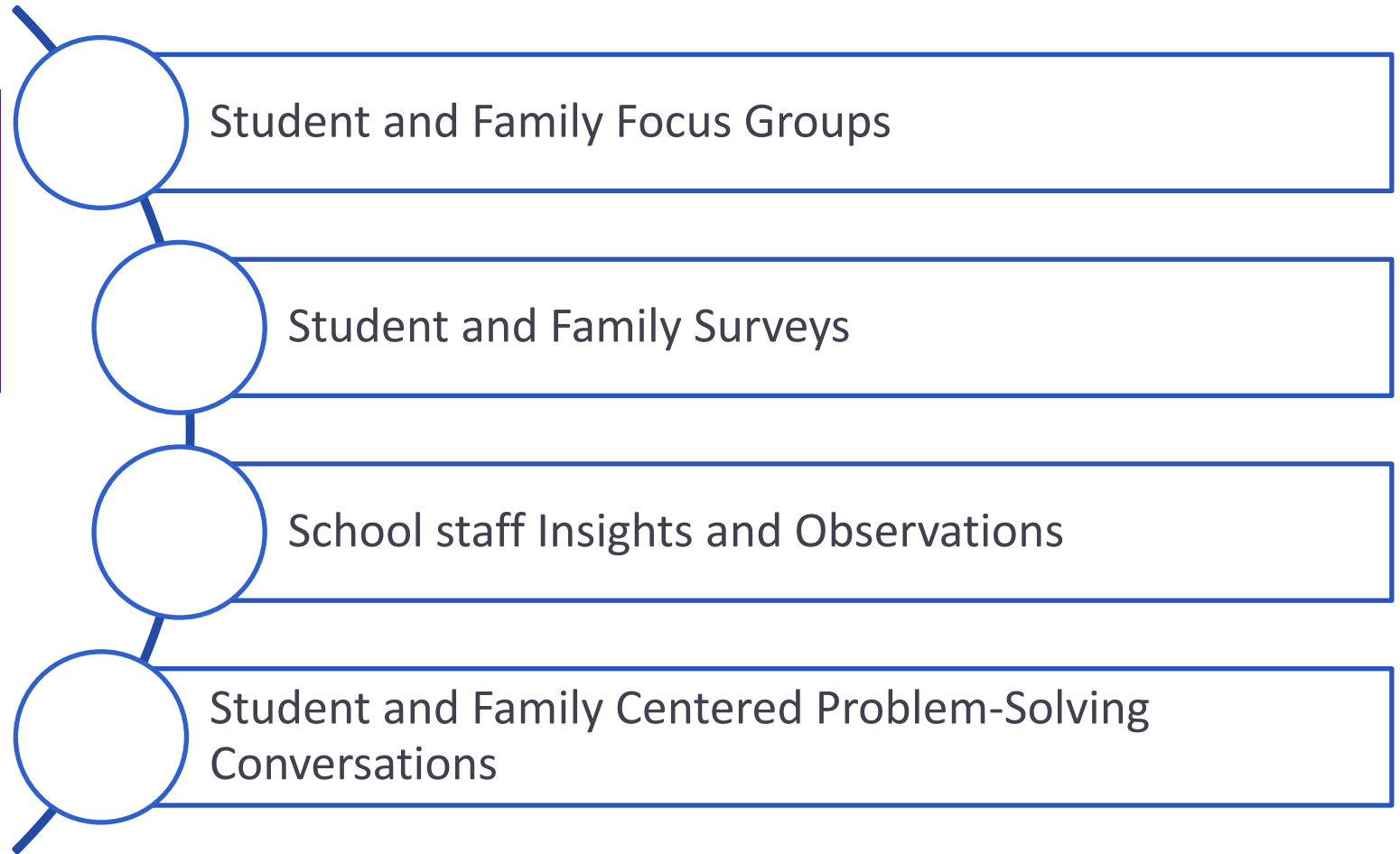
**Stress**      **TIRED**      **family issues**

unstable housing      **NEED TO WORK**

*"We do the work to get grades, we don't learn anything"*



Teachers lecture, we take notes. Then do it again the next day - in 6 classes. There's no time to learn the material. If you miss one day, you're behind & your grade drops.



Used with permission from Butte County Office of Education

# Addressing Reasons for Absences

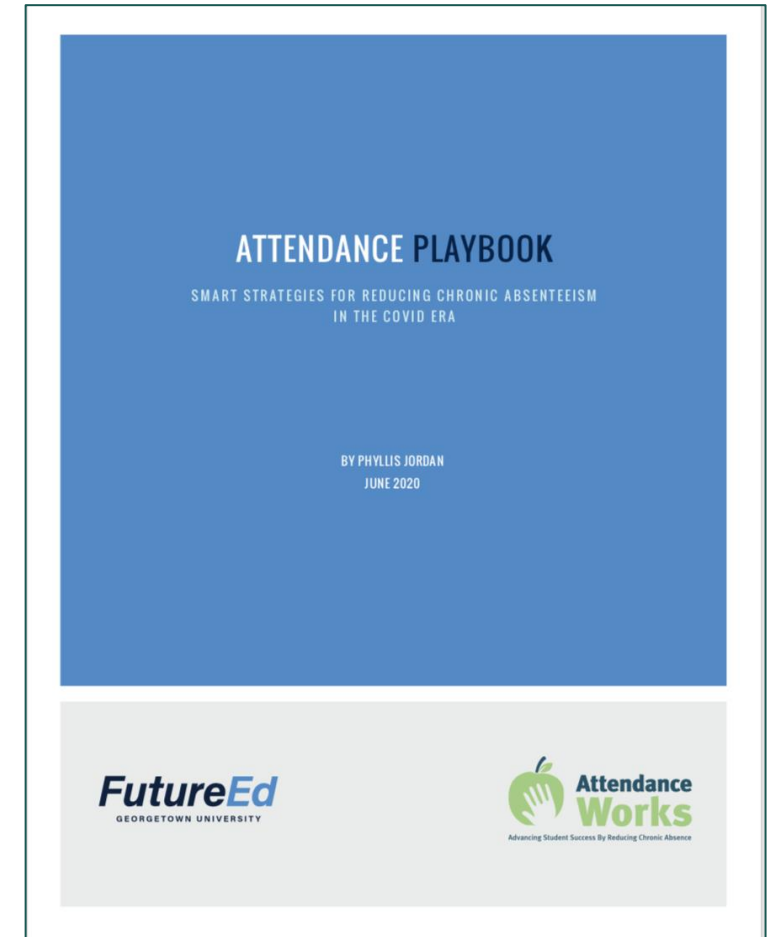
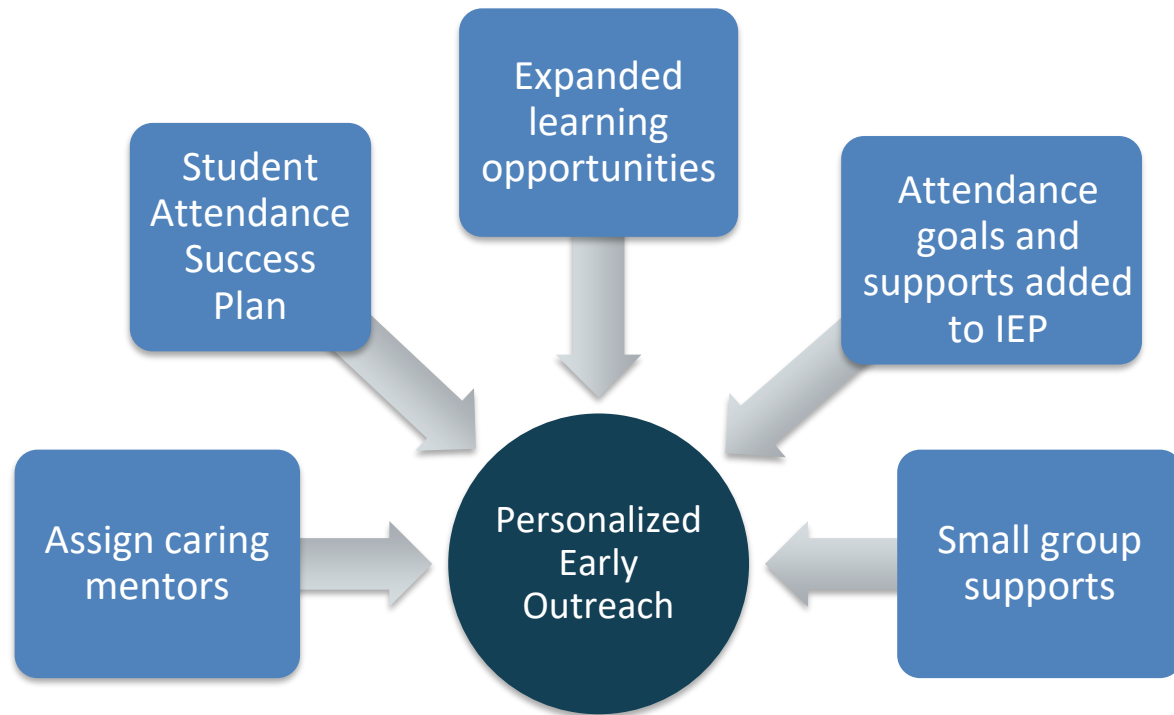


<https://vimeo.com/260324362>





## Tier 2: Early Intervention Strategies



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

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

## **Team Function #4:**

*Mobilize everyone in the school community  
to address attendance*





## Mobilize the School Community to Address Attendance

Involve the Whole School Staff

Engage External Partners

# We All Have a Role



<https://vimeo.com/230451908>



## School Self-Assessment

Sample question #1

***Our entire school staff has bought into an “all hands-on deck” approach to attendance.***

- Strongly in Place
- Measurable Progress
- Needs Improvement
- Urgent Gap

School Team Self-Assessment tool: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/self-assessment/>



## Chat

***Share what you did (or plan to do)  
to get all hands-on deck.***

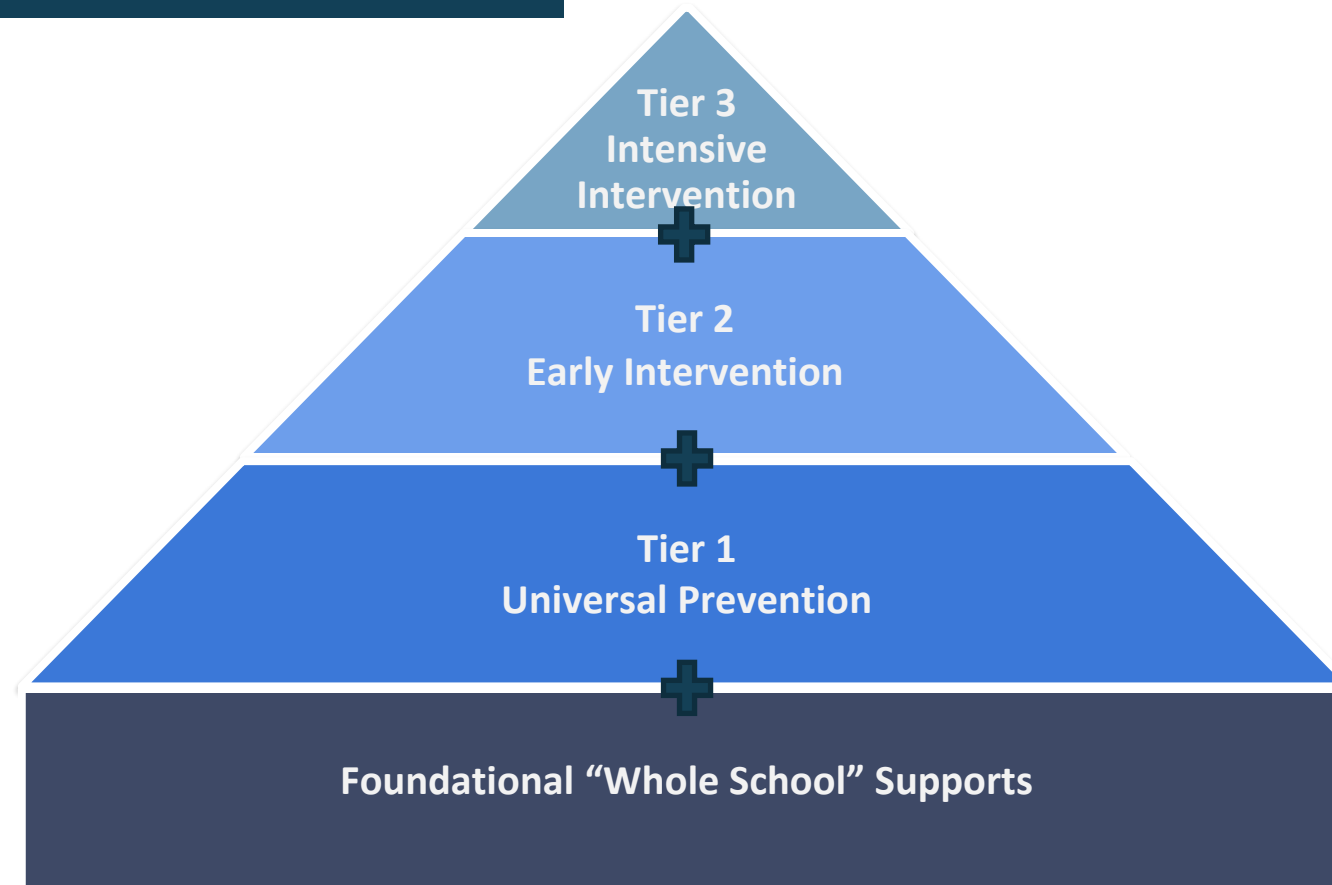


# **Involve the Whole School Staff in Caring Conversations**



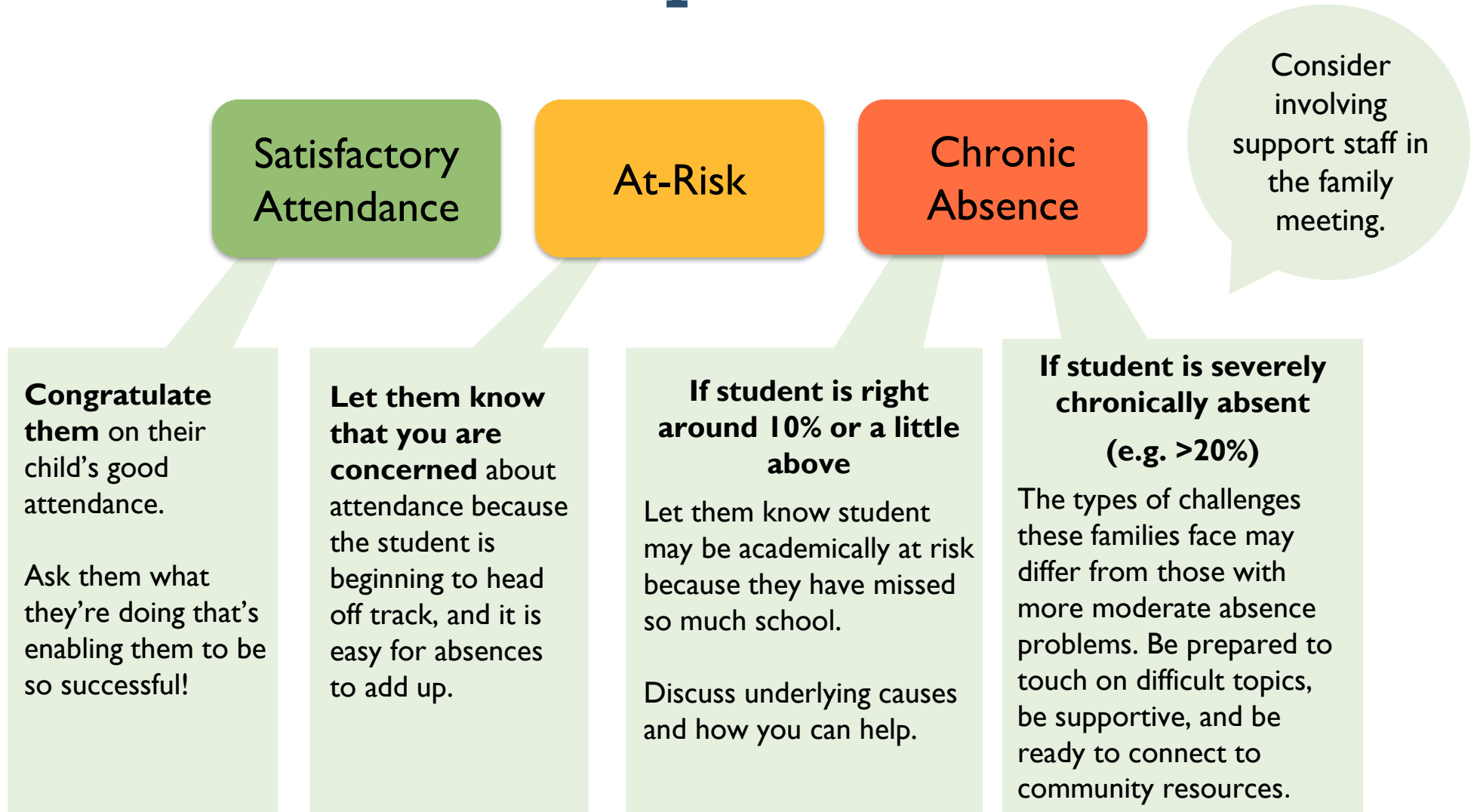


## Caring Conversations are a Key Component of Every Tier





# Tailor Conversations to Students' Attendance and Participation Level





## How to Determine Level of Absenteeism

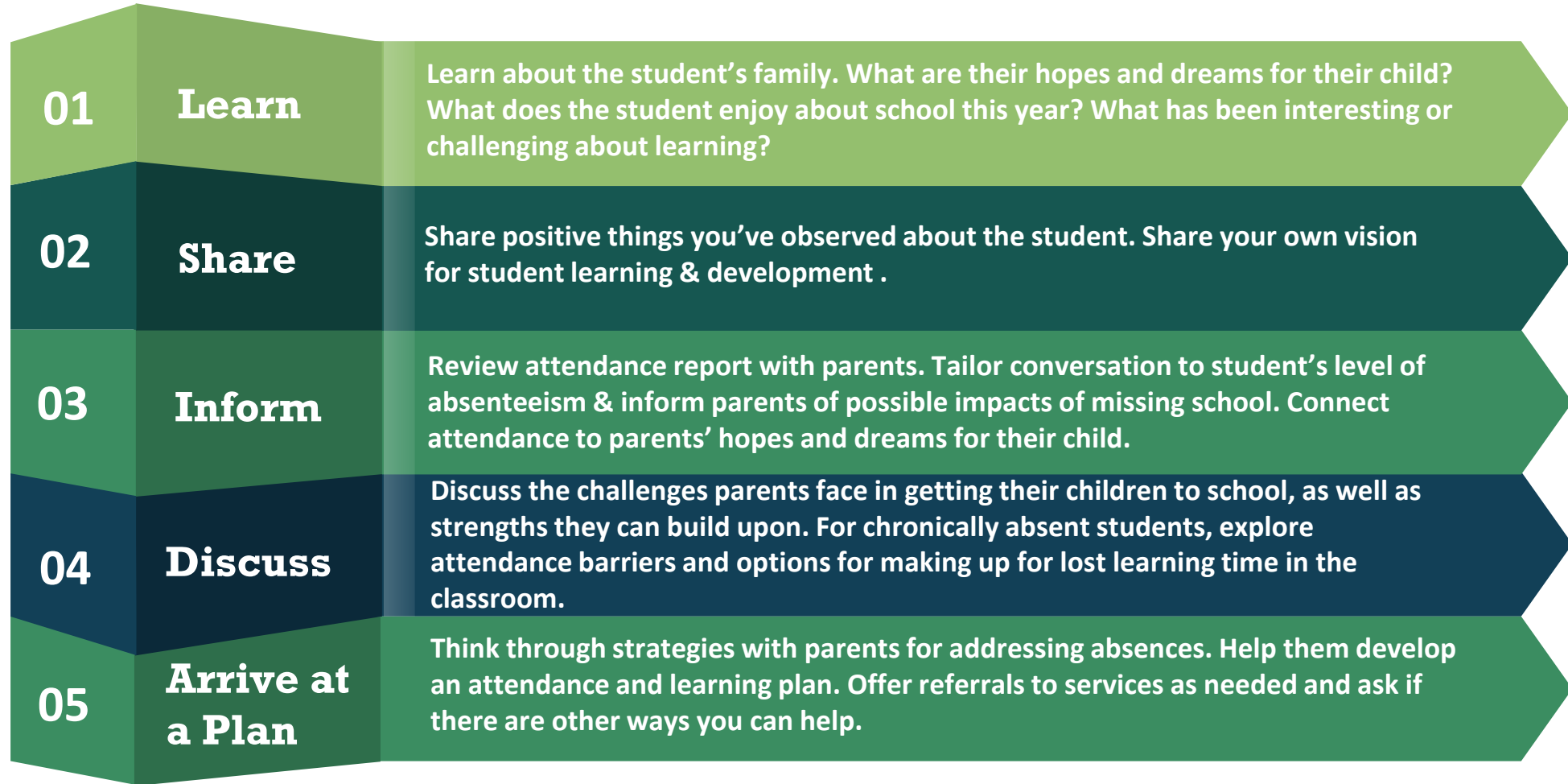
DAYS MISSED IN SCHOOL YEAR
<b>Satisfactory Attendance</b> Missed less than 5% (fewer than 9 days in a 180-day year)
<b>At-risk</b> Missed 5-9% (9-17 days in a 180-day year)
<b>Moderate Chronic Absence</b> Missed 10-19% (18-35 days in a 180-day year)
<b>Severe Chronic Absence</b> Missed 20% or more (36 or more days in a 180-day year)



## Sample Scenario: *Modeling Caring Conversations*

- Charlotte Brown is a 7<sup>th</sup> grader who performs on an average level. She struggles to keep up with some of her more challenging classes.
- Since the first of the year, Charlotte has been unusually quiet and distracted in class. She has been sitting alone during recess. In the first twelve weeks of school, she has missed 8 days.
- Charlotte's mother is divorced, and Charlotte's father is not present in her life. Charlotte has a younger brother in 2nd grade. Whenever her younger brother is sick, Charlotte's mom asks her to stay home to take care of him.

# The “Caring Conversations for Attendance” Process



*Adapted with permission from materials created by © High Expectations Parental Service, 2011*



## Steps 1 & 2: Learn and Share

### *Share in Chat:*

1. What excellent questions can you ask to learn about a student's family?
2. What are some positive observations about a student you might share with the student or family?

01

**Learn**

Learn about the student's family. What are their hopes and dreams for their child? What does the student enjoy about school this year? What has been interesting or challenging about learning?

02

**Share**

Share positive things you've observed about the student. Share your own vision for student learning & development.



# Step 3: Inform

03

## Inform

Review attendance and participation report with parents. Tailor conversation to student’s level of absenteeism & inform parents of possible impacts of missing school. Connect attendance to parents’ hopes and dreams for their child.

1. Show absences marked on a school calendar
2. Identify patterns
3. Share what key concepts a student missed relating back to the hopes and dreams that the student or parents shared

2021-2022 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

September 2021						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			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		

October 2021						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					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						

November 2021						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	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				

December 2021						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			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	

January 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						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					

February 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				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	

March 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		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		

April 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					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

May 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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				

June 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			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		

July 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					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						

August 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	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			



## Step 4: Discuss

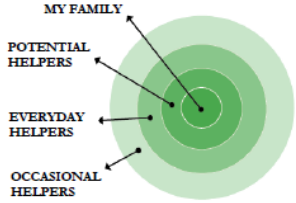
04

### Discuss

Discuss the challenges parents face in getting their children to participate at school or from home, as well as strengths they can build upon. For chronically absent students, explore attendance barriers and options for making up for lost learning time in the classroom.

1. Learn about student motivations.
2. Discuss reasons for absenteeism.
3. Explore what would help reduce absences and increase engagement.
4. Identify opportunities to make up for lost learning in the classroom.
5. Use help bank to identify support systems.

**MY FAMILY'S HELP BANK**  
CREATE BACKUP PLANS FOR GETTING TO SCHOOL



1. **My Family:** List who lives in your house.
2. **Everyday Helpers:** Identify who you can call on to help drop your child off or who can pick your child up when you cannot. These are people like friends, neighbors and relatives who can help regularly.
3. **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 stunts.
4. **Potential Helpers:** Identify people who are part of your school community, church or neighborhood who are able to help—if you ask.

1. My Family: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Everyday Helpers: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Occasional Helpers: \_\_\_\_\_

4. 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: _____




## Step 5: Arrive at a Plan

05

### Arrive at a Plan

Think through strategies with parents for addressing absences including difficulties in participating online or completing schoolwork. Work with them to develop a plan. Offer referrals to services as needed and ask if there are other ways you or others can help.

1. Work with the family to identify specific steps that will help to prevent absenteeism in the future.
2. Develop and complete a plan for attendance and learning
3. Ensure that the plan includes any support that the school will offer as well
4. Provide a copy of the plan to the student/parent
5. Agree on a timeline to check in and see how things are progressing

  
© Attendance Works

### MY CHILD'S ATTENDANCE SUCCESS PLAN

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES TO REACH MY CHILD'S ATTENDANCE GOALS AND HELP MY CHILD GAIN THE SKILLS TO DO WELL IN SCHOOL AND TO READ BY 3<sup>RD</sup> GRADE.

- Keep an attendance chart at home to track absences. Consider using the attached calendar.
- At the end of the week, I will recognize my child for attending preschool every day with \_\_\_\_\_ (i.e., a visit to the park, a new book, a special treat, a hug, etc.)
- Make sure my child is in bed by \_\_\_\_\_ p.m. and the alarm clock is set for \_\_\_\_\_ a.m.
- Find a relative, friend or neighbor who can take my child to or from preschool if I can't. I can list who can help on the Help Bank (attached).
- Set up medical and dental appointments for weekdays after preschool.
- If my child has a slight stomachache, headache or allergy, and is not sick with a contagious illness including Covid-19, I will send my child to school. I will call the school or a health provider for advice if my child complains regularly.

To improve \_\_\_\_\_'s attendance, I commit to the following:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_


To improve \_\_\_\_\_'s attendance, the program commits to:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

*We will review progress to meet this goal in one month.*

Family Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

 To learn more, please visit [www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)  
Adapted from materials created by Early Works at East Boyles Elementary School in Portland, Oregon (<http://www.dshsnet.org/connections/early-works>)



# Breakout Groups: Discuss Caring Conversations

1. How might Caring Conversations be helpful for your school?
2. Who could be involved with Caring Conversations?
3. What would it take to increase capacity at your school to have Caring Conversations?




## 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.




Small group handout: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Caring-Conversation-Worksheet-v3.docx>

# Caring Conversations Worksheet (example)

**Practicing Caring Conversations for Attendance** 





**Role #1: Facilitator**



**Instructions**

**Break out into groups (3 min)**

- In small groups of 4, introduce yourself (name, position, school/district, state)
- Count off from 1-4 on who will take on each role

 **FACILITATOR-1**    **TEACHER-2**    **STUDENT-3**    **PARENT-4**

**Prepare (5 min)**


- Open the small group handout.
- Read the scenario for your role.
- Consider the factors that contribute to chronic absence. Write down 2-3 factors.

**Roleplay Activity (5 min)**

- Do the roleplay, following the Caring Conversations worksheet at the end of this handout

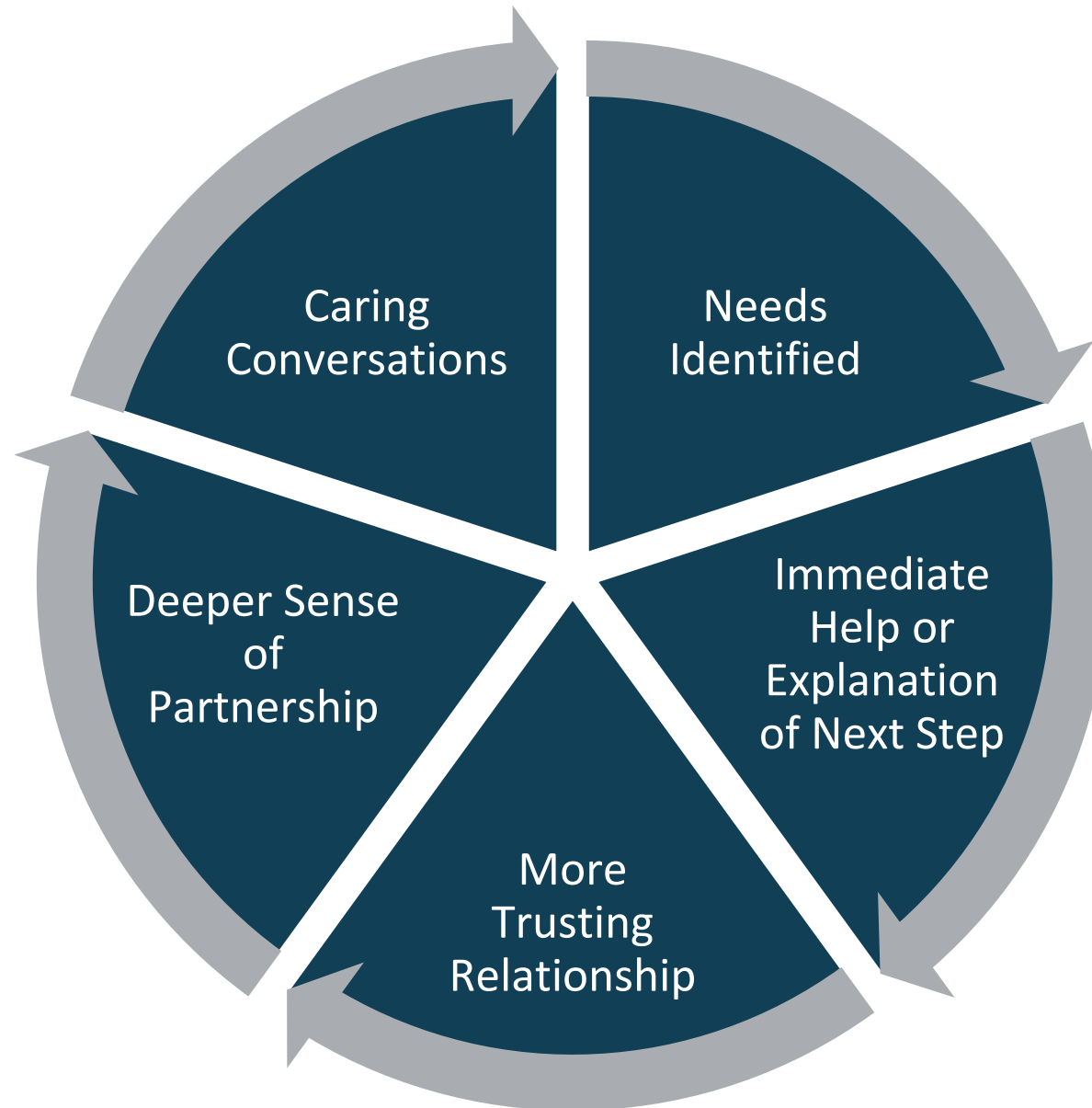
**Debrief (2 min)**

- For those in the role play, how did you feel during the discussion?
- For the observers, what did the teacher do well in the discussion?
- Are there any other observations?

 1

	Key Points	Questions and Messages
<b>1. Learn</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather information</li> <li>• Ask open-ended, supportive questions</li> </ul>	<i>What is your vision for <u>student's</u> future? (ask parent and student)</i>
<b>2. Share</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive observations about student so far</li> <li>• What you want students to accomplish this year</li> <li>• One goal is helping students acquire good habit of attendance</li> </ul>	<i>_____ is such a good listener. We love having her (you) in our class.</i>
<b>3. Inform</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress you've seen (start positive)</li> <li>• Areas where child is struggling</li> <li>• Review report card &amp; update parents on child's attendance</li> <li>• Deliver appropriate attendance messages</li> </ul>	<p><i>_____ is excelling at math! and is making progress with reading. Reading remains the area that needs work.</i></p> <p><i>_____ has been late five times and has missed two days during this first month of school. Absences impede reading and overall learning progress.</i></p>
<b>4. Discuss</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges, attendance barriers</li> <li>• Learning at home activities</li> <li>• How to stay connected</li> </ul>	<p><i>What makes it hard for _____ to get to school?</i></p> <p><i>What helps _____ catch up on learning given their absences?</i></p>
<b>5. Ask &amp; Arrive at a Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any questions?</li> <li>• Is there anything you can do to support a partnership between home and school?</li> <li>• Make referrals to community resources</li> </ul>	<p><i>What questions do you have?</i></p> <p><i>How can I help you?</i></p> <p><i>Would it help you to work with...?</i></p>

# The Cycle of Effective Relationship Building



# Listening to Parents



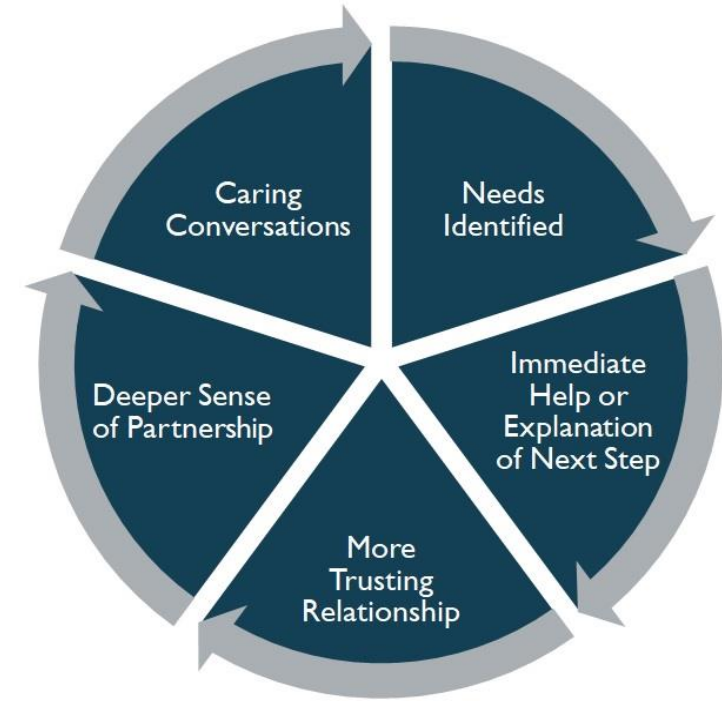
**Lorri Hobson, Director of Attendance**  
Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) in Cleveland, Ohio

<https://youtu.be/f93RjyYvHb0>

[www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)



## Let's Chat



### *Type in chat:*

- What might cause the cycle to break down?
- What can school teams do to keep it going?

# Engage External Partners





## School Self-Assessment

### Sample Question #3

**Community partners and public agencies are partners in providing support to students and families in my school.**

- Strongly in Place
- Measurable Progress
- Needs Improvement
- Urgent Gap

School Team Self-Assessment tool: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/self-assessment/>



## Partners for Change

The greater the size of the challenge, the more partners are needed. Many different types of partners can be enlisted, but local government and public agencies are especially important. Tap into existing initiatives and coalitions to engage potential partners.

- Businesses
- Community Schools Initiatives
- Family Support Organizations
- Early Childhood Providers
- Faith-Based Organizations
- Health / Mental Health Providers
- Housing Agencies
- Hunger Relief Organizations
- Institutes of Higher Education
- Local / Tribal Governments
- National Service / Volunteers / Mentors
- Out of School Time providers
- Social Emotional Learning Providers
- Social Services
- Population-Specific Service or Civic Organizations
- Philanthropy (including foundations and United Ways)



# Align Interventions to Reasons for Absences

Reason for Absence	Possible Interventions	Potential Partner
Anxiety About In-Person School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enlist trusted messengers (e.g. doctors) to talk with families</li><li>• Review health and safety protocols</li><li>• Hold a virtual open house to answer questions and address concerns</li><li>• Make school counselors available for consultation</li></ul>	Local pediatricians Promotoras ( <i>community health workers</i> ) Public health clinic
Not understanding the impact of absences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create an education campaign that connects academic achievement with attendance</li><li>• When working with individual families, explore their hopes for their child and help connect them to school and attendance</li></ul>	Mayor's Office United Way Family Resource Center
Schedules Out-of-Sync	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Offer before or after school programming</li><li>• Organize a walking school bus</li><li>• Provide a modified schedule that aligns school and family schedules</li></ul>	Parks & Rec program Boys & Girls Club
Transportation Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Share ideas in the chat...</b></li></ul>	




## Let's Chat

- 1. In your community, what barriers could be addressed with help from external partners?**
- 2. What external partners would you like to recruit?**

# List of External Partners

- ❖ Use this worksheet to help keep track of your external partners
- ❖ Be sure to update the list on a regular basis

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/List-of-External-Partners.docx>



## External Partners

School \_\_\_\_\_ District \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary School / District Contact**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Title/Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Partner	Contact Info. <small>(name, email, phone)</small>	What is being provided?	Who is being served?	Time Period of Partnership	Who established this partnership? <small>(name, email, phone)</small>	Last updated on <small>(mm/dd/yyyy)*</small>
<i>EXAMPLE: Springfield County Food Bank</i>	<i>name, email, phone#</i>	<i>food</i>	<i>all students</i>	<i>SY 2021-2022</i>	<i>name, email, phone#</i>	<i>8/1/21</i>

\*Update the information for each partner at least annually.

# **Team Function #5:**

*Determine if you are making a difference*





## Measuring Progress

### ***Answer these four key questions:***

1. How much did we do? (*quantity*)
2. How well did we do it? (*quality*)
3. What difference did we make for the students who received support?
4. What was the impact on the school as a whole?





## **Review:** *Learning Goals for Session 3*

### ***Participants will:***

- Learn strategies to mobilize school staff, community and agency partners to provide support
- Determine if their efforts are making a difference



## Evaluation Survey

Please let us know how we can improve:

[https://app.upmetrics.com/data\\_collector/ckf2oltbqlt8k0759tfdbfybj](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](http://www.attendanceworks.org)

# Resources



## Sample Letters



***Reach out to families throughout the school year!***

- ❖ Tailor the content for your school community
- ❖ Add links to district-wide guidance and resources
- ❖ Sample templates include a principal letter and one for families of early ed students

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/welcome-students-to-school/>



# Attendance Works Resources Updated for Covid-19



## Handouts for Families

- ✓ Pre-K
- ✓ Elementary & Secondary Grades
- ✓ English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Tagalog and Creole versions

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

## Sign up for the 2021 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?**

	<b>CHRONIC ABSENCE</b> 18 or more days
	<b>WARNING SIGNS</b> 10 to 17 days
	<b>SATISFACTORY</b> 9 or fewer absences

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

Visit Attendance Works at [www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org) for free downloadable resources and tools!



## Tips for Finding and Re-Engaging Students

- Update contact information multiple times a year
- Use multiple modes of outreach (text, US mail, calls)
- Try various media (social, radio, multiple languages, trusted messengers)
- Leverage personal and social networks
- School marquees and sign boards
- Engage public and private partners
- Home visits

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>



# Chronic Absence Surveys

## A variety of surveys to help track reasons for chronic absence

- ❖ For in-person, blended or virtual school
- ❖ Designed for parents and secondary students (6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade)
- ❖ Developed by Harvard Proving Ground: Center for Education Policy Research

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Reasons-for-Chronic-Absenteeism-Survey-Blended-or-Virtual-Version.pdf>

For the parent version and additional resources, visit: [http://www.floridarti.usf.edu/resources/topic/chronic\\_absenteeism/index.html](http://www.floridarti.usf.edu/resources/topic/chronic_absenteeism/index.html)

### Reasons for Chronic Absenteeism- Blended or Virtual (RCA-BV)

Chronic absenteeism, commonly defined as missing 10% or more of instructional days per school year, has significant impact on student outcomes. It is associated with decreased reading levels, overall academic performance, on-time graduation rates, and post-secondary enrollment as well as increased dropout rates.<sup>1,2</sup> Fortunately, chronic absenteeism rates are alterable at the student and system level when interventions are appropriately targeted and matched to student needs.

In order to efficiently and effectively match interventions to student needs, there is a need for reliable and valid data that provide sufficient information to understand the various challenges students experience. The Reasons for Chronic Absenteeism (RCA) Survey was developed and underwent extensive validation processes including an expert panel review, student reviewers, and a national validation study to ensure the technical adequacy of the items and instrument.

The RCA is designed for secondary students (6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade) who have missed 10% or more instructional days. The survey is comprised of 14 demographics and perception of absences questions; 28 items measuring multifaceted reasons for absences; and three open-ended questions asking about other reasons for missing school, the reasons they do come to school, and what would help them come to school more often. Students respond to each of the items that ask why they missed school using a 0-3 scale with response options of Never, Rarely, Sometimes, or Usually. Students may take the survey via an online survey platform (e.g. SurveyMonkey®, Qualtrics®, etc.) or hardcopy. Survey administration takes approximately 10 minutes and multiple students may take the survey at one time. Students may be provided the explanation that they are taking the survey so school staff better understand why students miss school. Please allow students privacy to independently answer questions.

Demographic Items
What is the name of your school?
What ways have you attended school this year? (check all apply: in-person, virtual, blended (in-person some days, virtual other days of the week))
How old are you? (10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21)
What is your gender? (male, female, non-binary, prefer not to say)
What grade are you in? (6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12)
Do you get free or reduced price lunch? (yes/no)
What is your Race? (*if more than one race select multi-racial)?
Multi-racial
Asian
Black/African American
Hispanic/Latino
White
American Indian or Alaskan Native
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander



# Year-Round Planning



BLANK FORM for K-12 Activities: rev. 2-23-21

## Attendance Activities School Year Plan (K-12)

School Name		School Year	
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For each tier and time frame, fill in activities for your school or program. For each activity, you might specify who is responsible for leading and how to measure results of the activity. You can also re-create 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/>)

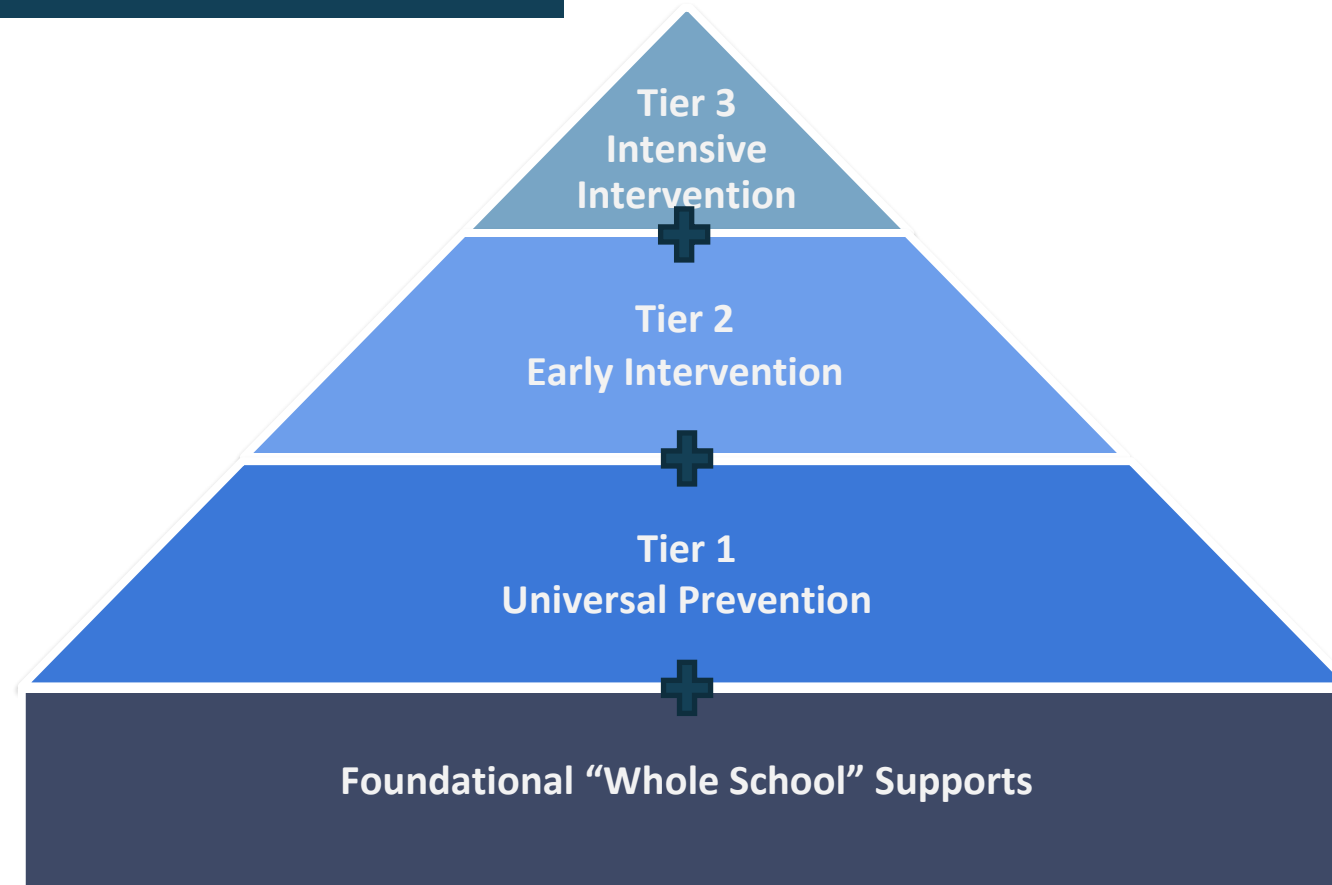
Timing	Before Start of School Year (July/August)	Welcome Back (August/September)	Ongoing (Weekly/Monthly)	Fall Semester (October - November)	Winter Semester (December - February)	Spring Semester (March-April)	End-of-Year (May/June)
School Staff							
Tier 1 (universal)							
Tier 2 (targeted – moderate chronic absence)							
Tier 3 (targeted – severe chronic absence)							



# Appendix

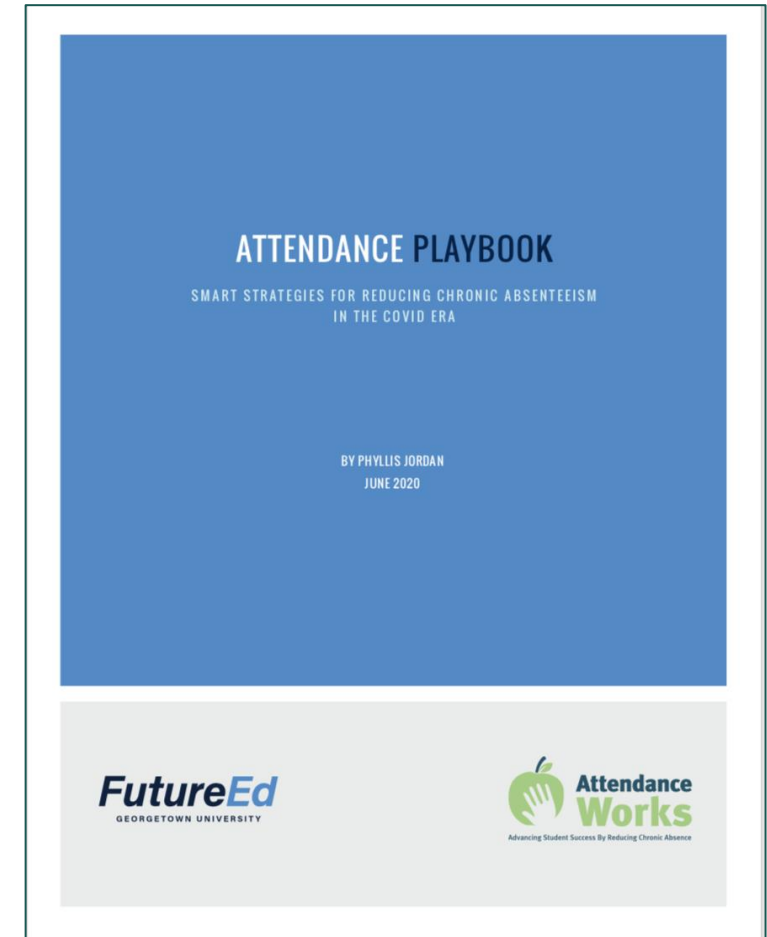
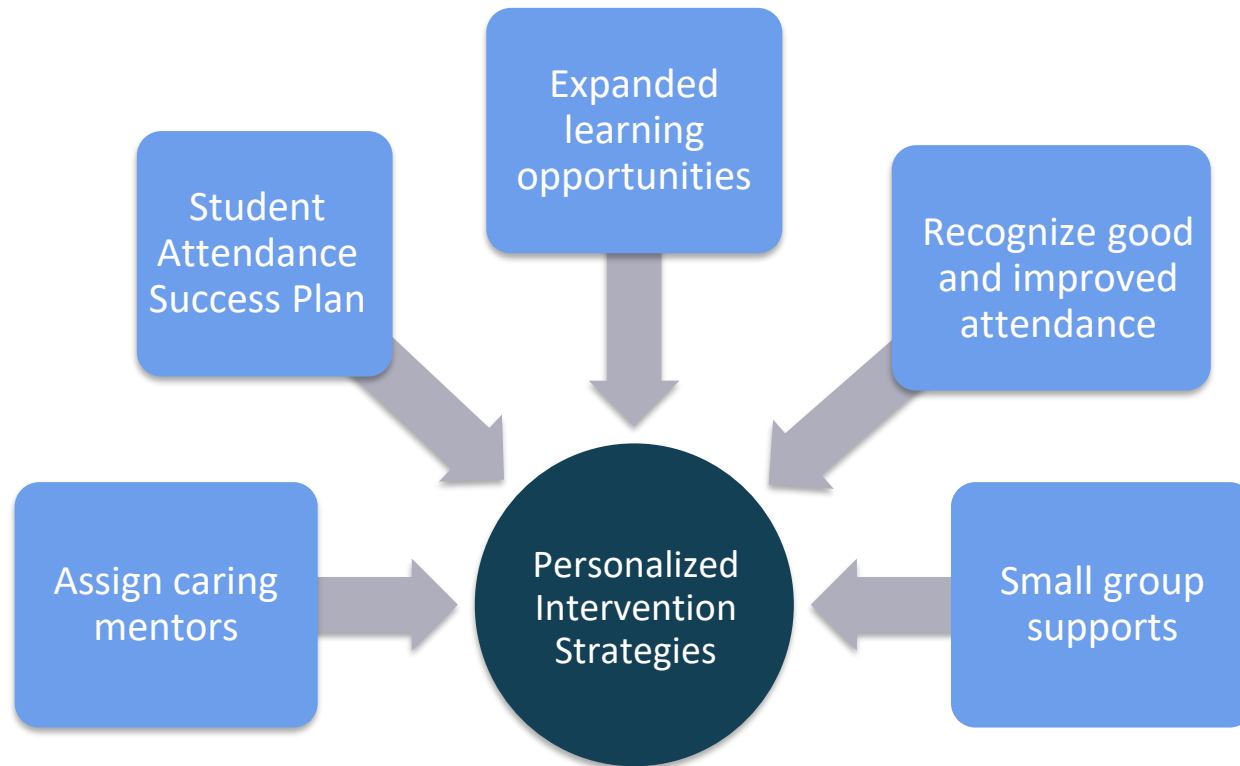


## When Tackling Absenteeism, Take a Multi-Tiered Approach Beginning with Prevention





## Tier 2: Strategies Layer in Support, Strengthen Relationships and Take a Problem-Solving Approach

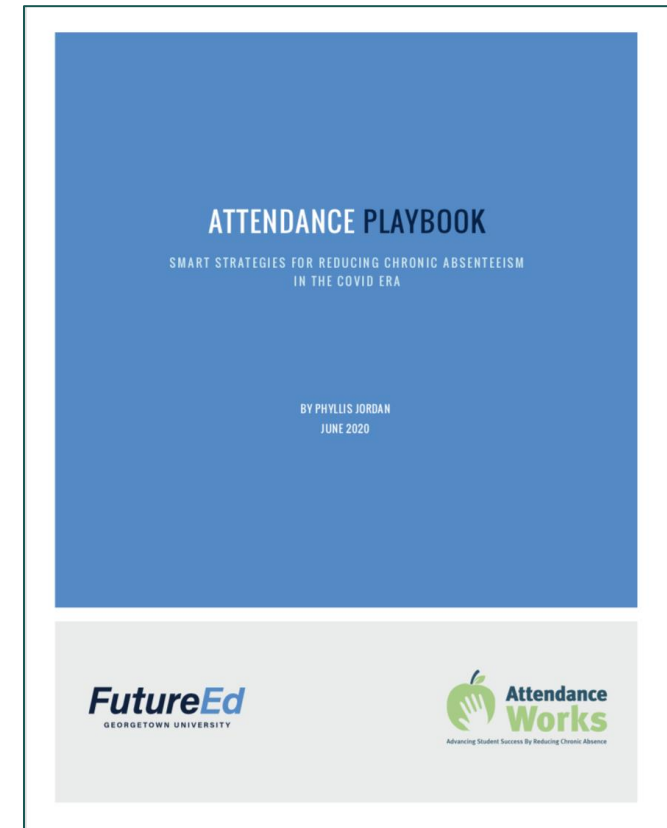
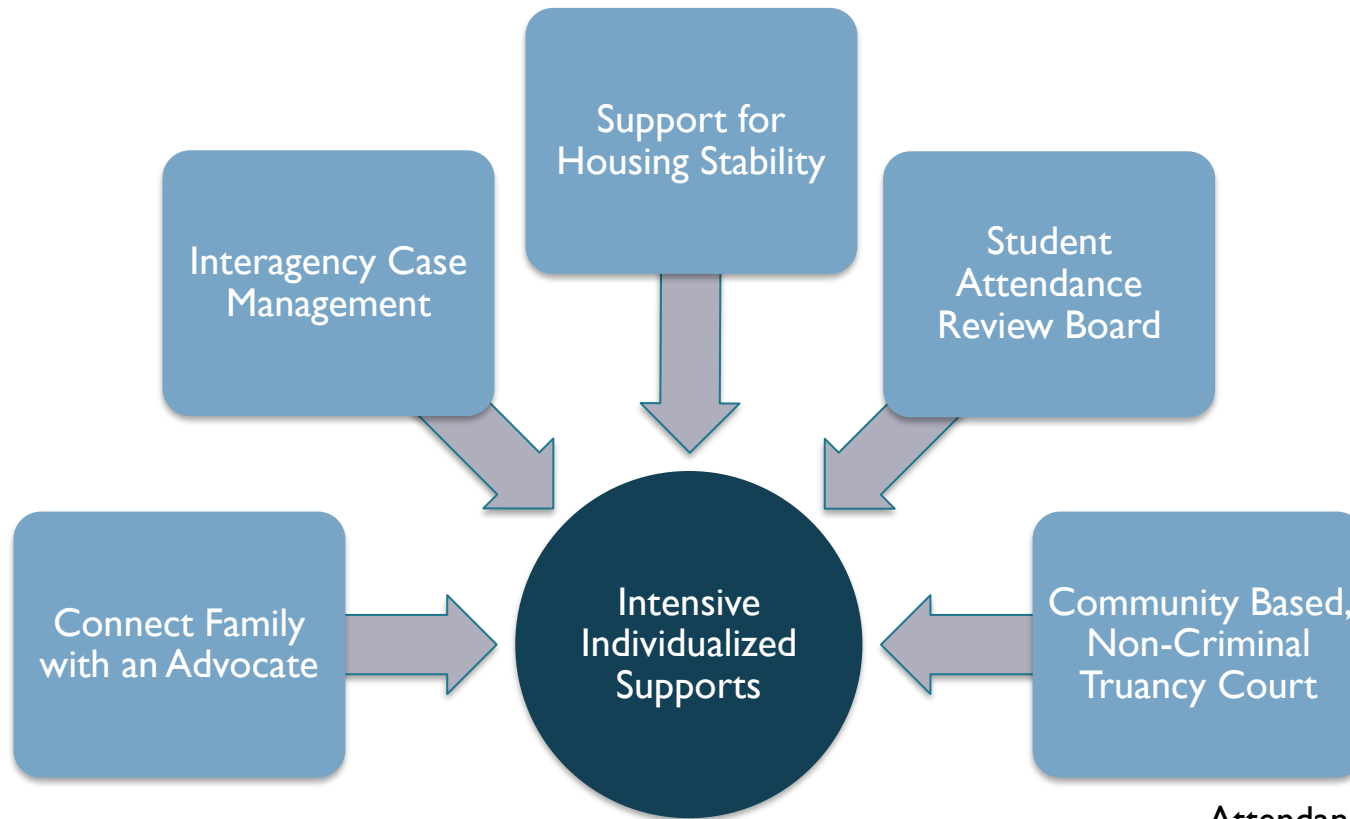


Attendance Playbook: <https://www.future-ed.org/attendance-playbook/>

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



## Tier 3: Strategies Involve Public and Community Partners and Integrated Case Management



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