



## Session 1:

# Whole School Engagement Strategies for Reducing Student Absenteeism



CT E-Learning Professional Learning Series

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# Welcome!



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## 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?



## 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 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

# **Overview of Chronic Absence**



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

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

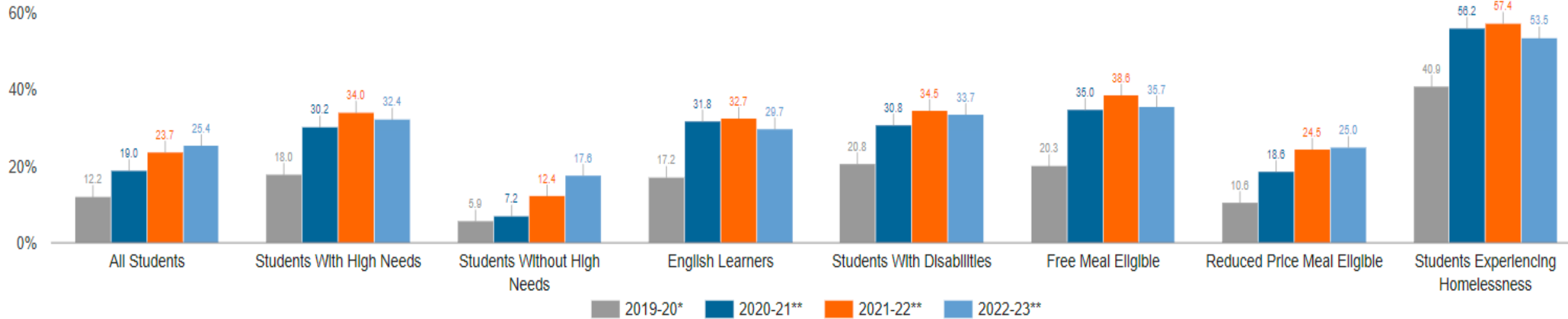
# What do we know from national and local data?

- ✓ **Pre-pandemic: 8 million students were chronically absent**  
*(missing 10% or more of school for any reason)*
- ✓ **SY 2021-22: chronic absence has at least doubled**
- ✓ **Early data from 2022-23 show rates remain high**
- ✓ **Higher than ever, especially in early elementary and high school**
- ✓ **The risk is greatest for students with more remote learning**



# Chronic Absence almost 2X Higher for SY2021-22 and Still High

Percentage of Students Chronically Absent by Student Group (YTD as of November 2022 compared to 2021-22, 2020-2021, and 2019-20)



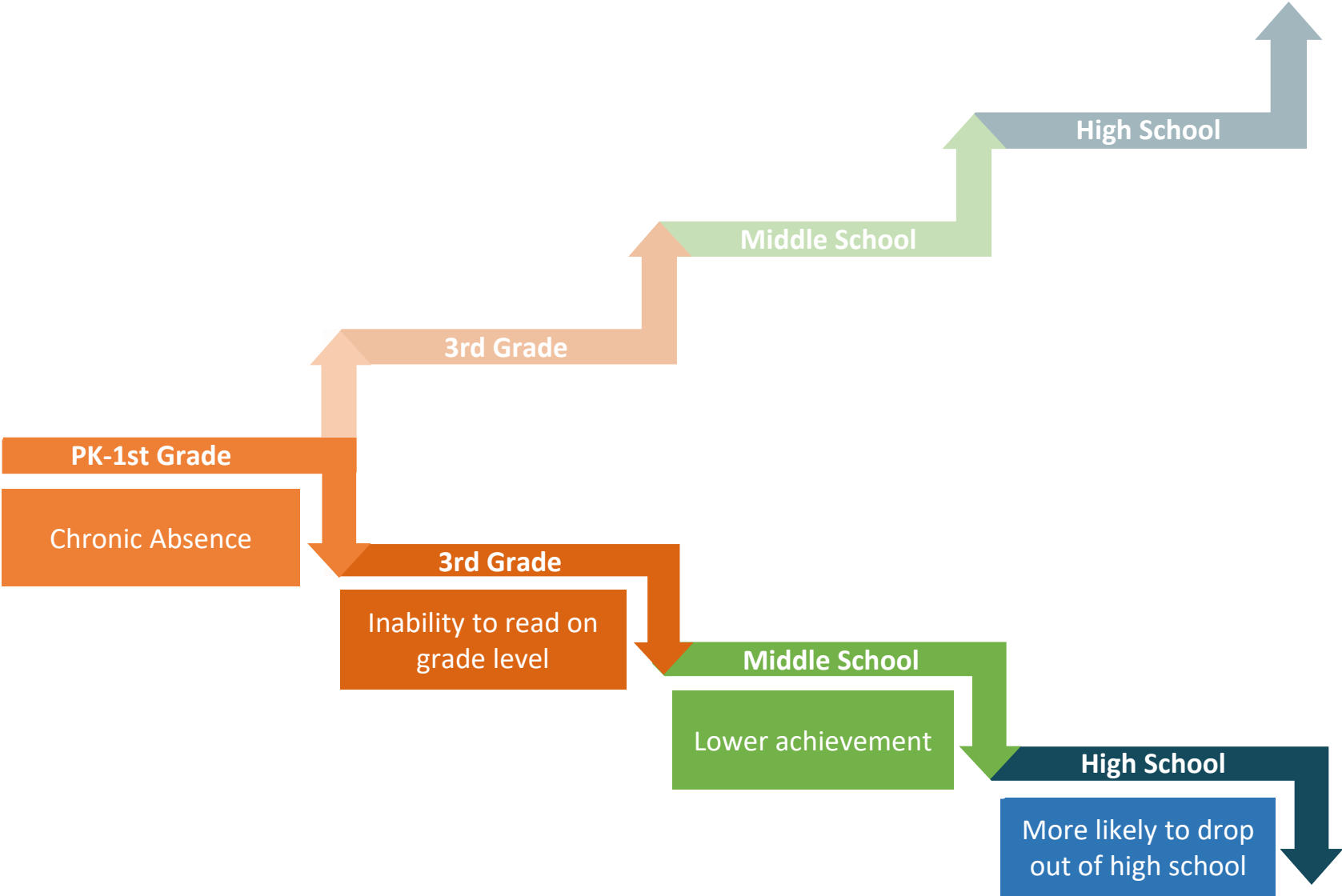
\*Calculations are based only on in-person school days until mid-March 2020. \*\*Calculations include both in-person and remote days.

[Connecticut District, School, and Student Group Monthly Attendance available on Supporting Student Participation \(ct.gov\)](https://www.ct.gov/deep/asp/Supporting-Student-Participation.aspx)



Source: EdSight

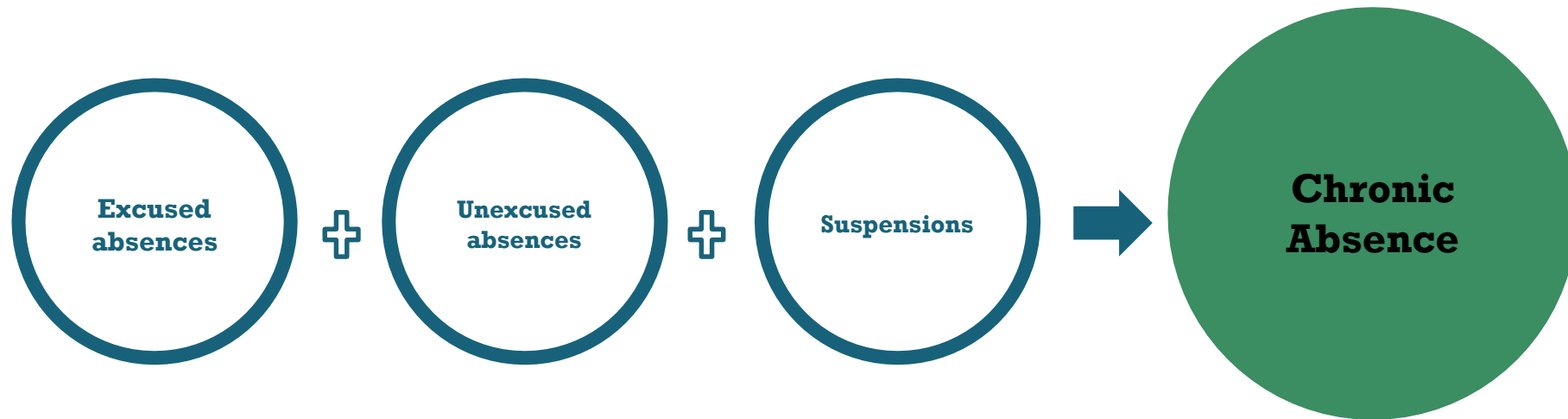
# Improving Attendance Matters





## 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.**

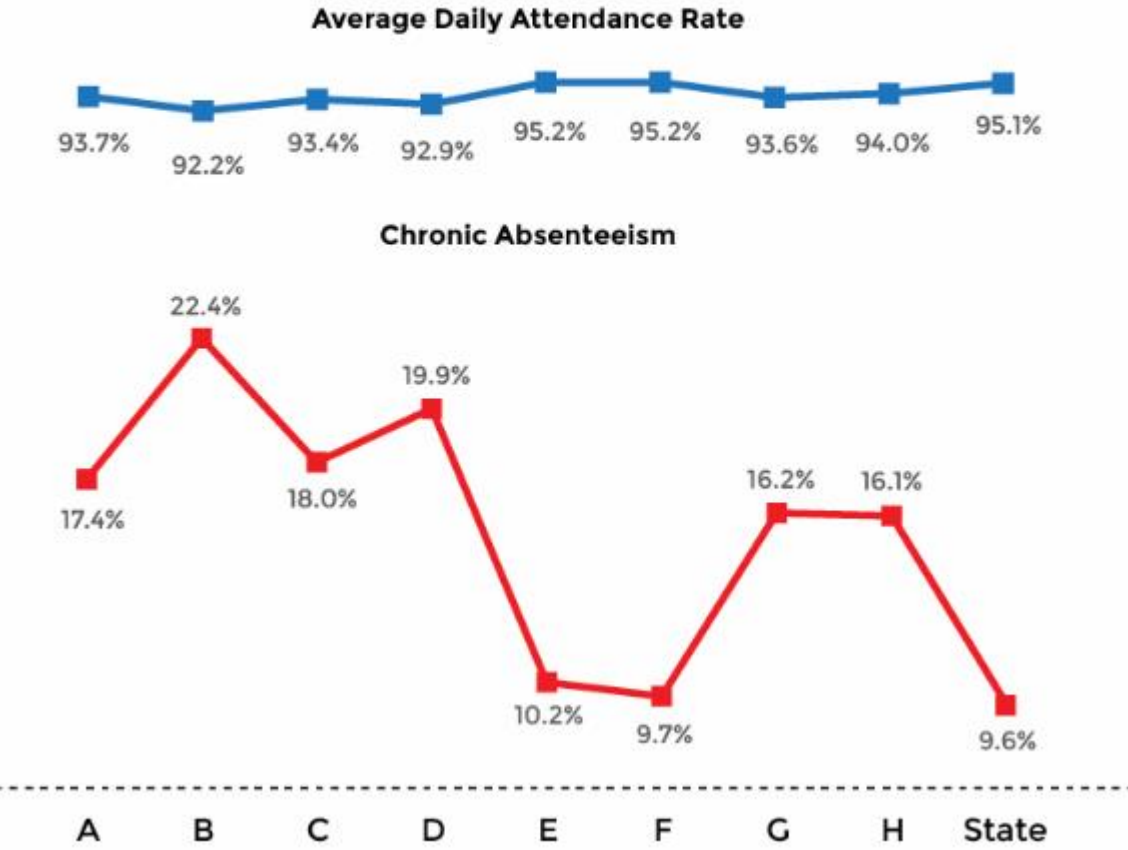


Chronic absence is different from **truancy** (unexcused absences only) or **average daily attendance** (how many students show up to school each day).

# Average Daily Attendance (ADA) Can Mask Chronic Absence

90% and even 95%  $\neq$  A

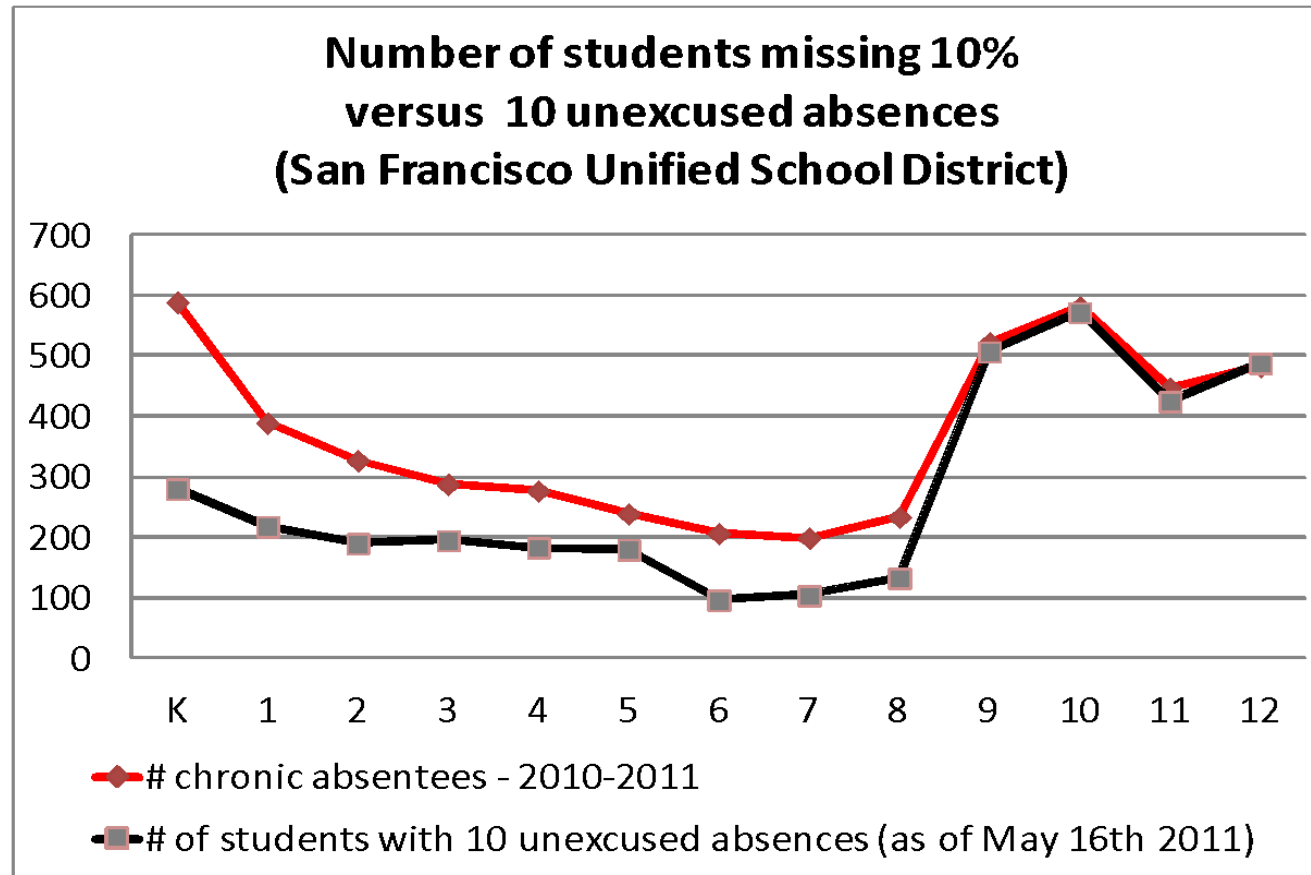
## 2015-16 Attendance Rate and Chronic Absenteeism (Eight Alliance Districts with Network Schools)



Source: Reducing Chronic Absence in Connecticut Schools: How do we know if chronic absence is affecting learning in our district



## 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 typically more blaming and punitive, solutions



## Chronic Absence

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



## Silent Reflection

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



## Effective Practice Pathway

Mindset

Actionable  
Data

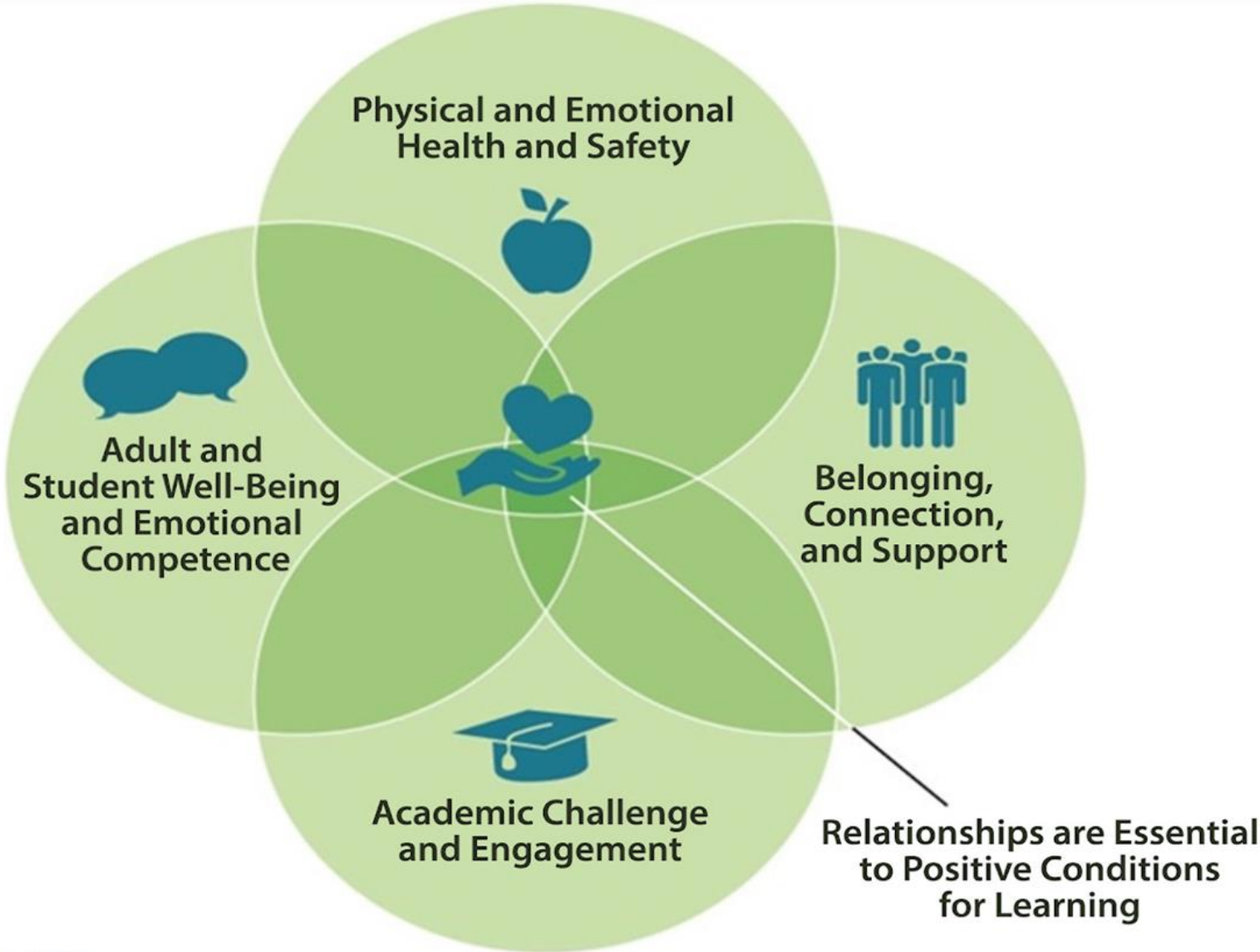
Capacity

Strategies



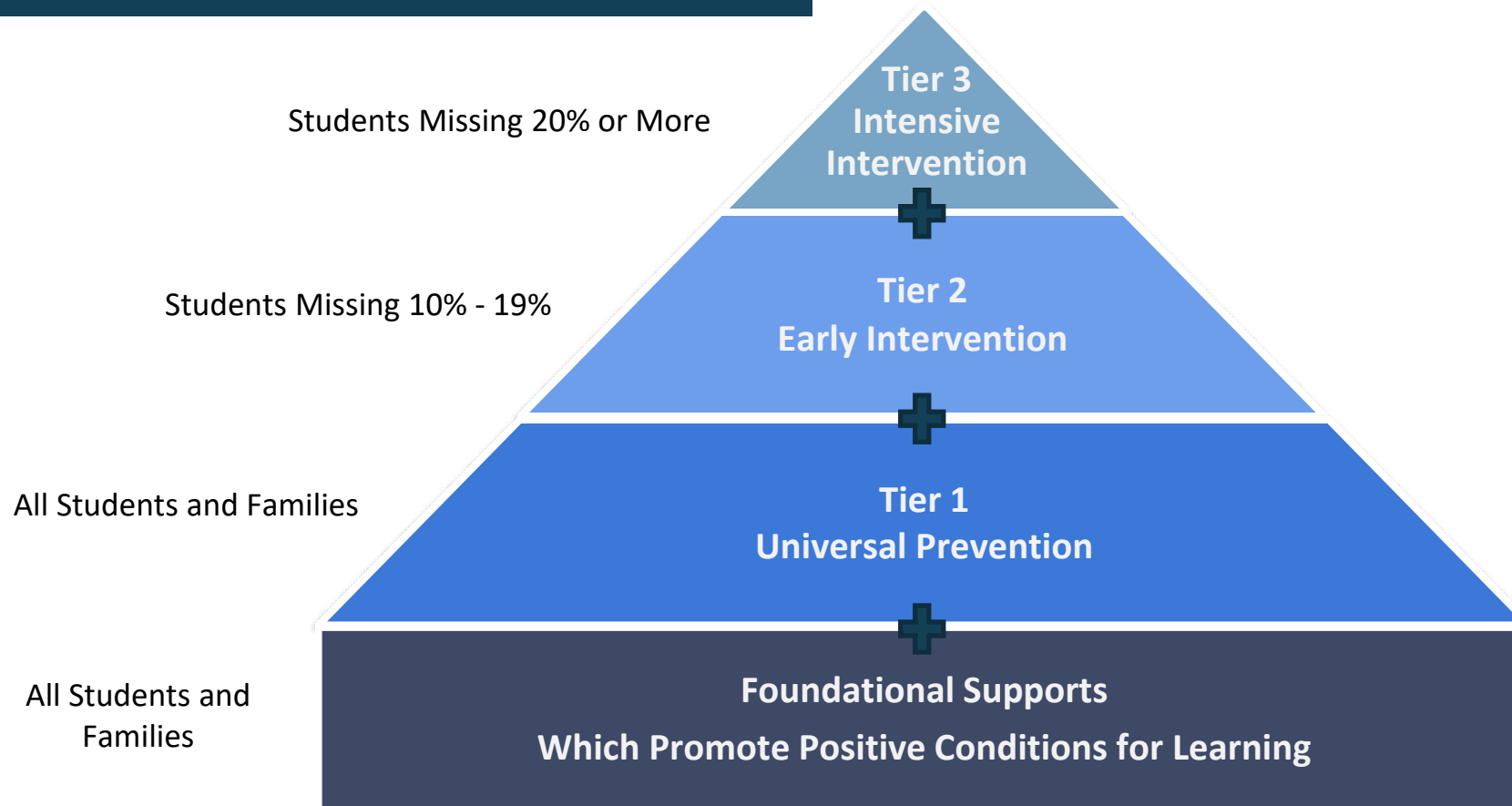
**The Key to Improving  
Attendance is a Tiered Approach**

# We Know What Helps Get Students and Families to School: Positive Conditions for Learning



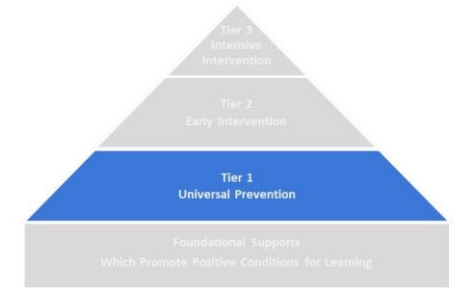


## Multi-tiered System of Support for Attendance



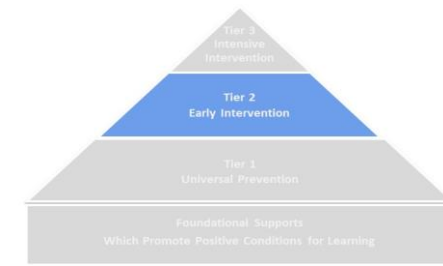
# Tier 1: Universal Attendance Supports

- ❖ Clear, concise and consistent communication about schedules and expectations
- ❖ Routines, rituals and celebrations related to attendance and engagement
- ❖ Personalized positive 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



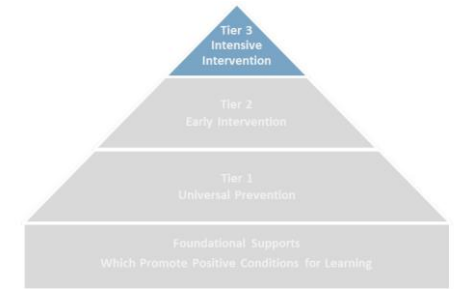
***Share in Chat: In your experience, which Tier 1 attendance supports have been most essential at your school or in your district?***

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



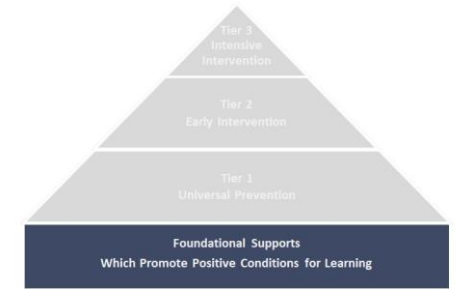
- ❖ Common community and school barriers identified and addressed
- ❖ Individualized student success plan that includes attention to attendance
- ❖ Attendance strategies added to IEP
- ❖ Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP)
- ❖ Family visit
- ❖ Mentors (e.g., Success Mentors, Peer Group Connections)
- ❖ Intensive tutoring
- ❖ Check-In/Check-Out (CICO)
- ❖ Expanded learning opportunities
- ❖ Small group interventions and supports for students
- ❖ Restorative alternatives to discipline and suspension

## Tier 3: Intensive interventions

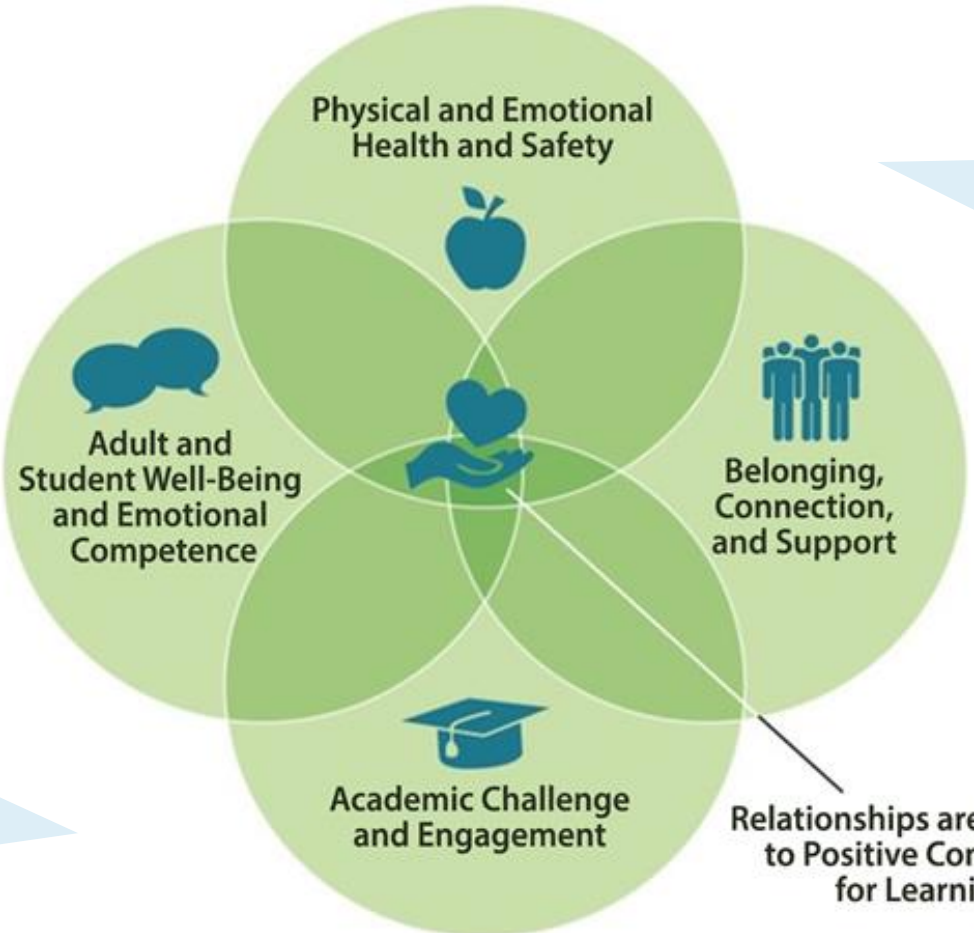


- ❖ Educational support champions / advocates
- ❖ Interagency case management
- ❖ Housing stability supports
- ❖ Student attendance review board
- ❖ Community-based, non-criminal truancy court
- ❖ Individualized learning and success plan leading to graduation
- ❖ Legal Intervention (*as a last resort*)

# 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

Relationships are Essential to Positive Conditions for Learning

# What promotes positive conditions for learning?



<https://vimeo.com/260252509>





# Reflection

How did the video illustrate positive conditions for learning?



# Conditions for Learning #1: 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 #2: *Physical and Emotional Health and Safety*

## 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 #3: 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: 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 in your school?
- 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**



**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>

# 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 programs:  
Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP) Visiting  
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Chronic-Absence/Learner-Engagement-and-Attendance-Program-LEAP>
- ✓ Parent Teacher Home Visiting  
<http://www.pthvp.org/what-we-do/pthv-model/>

### 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 guide**  
<https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/resources-for-educators/relationship-mapping-strategy>
- **2x10 Relationship Strategy Bank**  
[https://www.scoe.net/media/e4olyjir/sesion\\_2\\_relationship\\_strategy\\_bank.pdf](https://www.scoe.net/media/e4olyjir/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 **R**outines

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

## ✓ Increase **E**ngagement

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

## ✓ Provide **A**ccess 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 **L**earning

*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

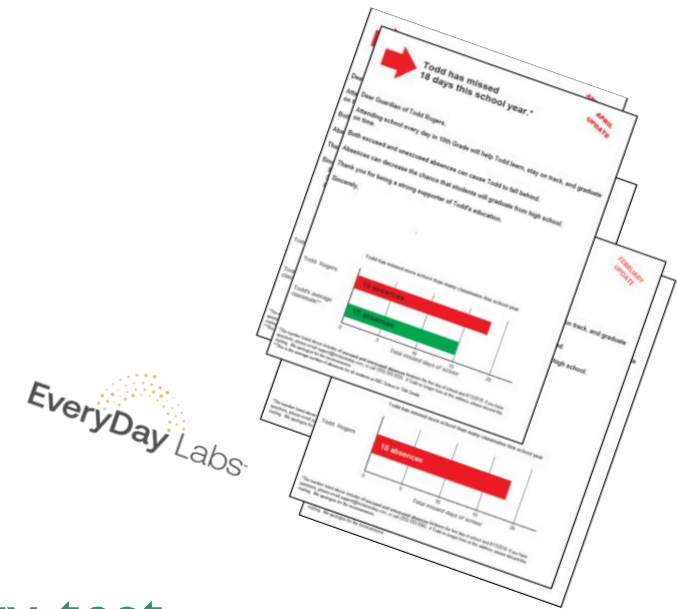
### 1. Readable

- 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://www.chesco.org/Health)

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

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

Example A

### 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.

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

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

**PROVIDED BY:**  
GOOD SAMARITAN HOSPITAL  
Part of Good Samaritan Health system  
[GOODSAMSANJOSE.COM](https://www.goodsamsanjoose.com)

**SOURCES:**  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
National Health and Medical Research Council  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
U.S. Food and Drug Administration  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Example B



## Additional Resources from Attendance Works and CSDE

### Handouts for Families

- ✓ Preschool, Elementary & Secondary Grades
- ✓ Available in multiple language

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Chronic-Absence/Awareness-Materials>

### Sign up for the 2023 Attendance Awareness Campaign

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



#attendtodayCT

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE>



#### Help Your Child Succeed in Elementary School: *Build the Habit of Good Attendance*

##### DID YOU KNOW?

- Participation in early education programs, like preschool and Head Start, lead to better attendance in kindergarten.
- Starting in kindergarten, missing 10% of school (or just 2 days every month) can make it harder to learn to read and cause children to fall behind in school.
- Good attendance, whether class is held in person or remotely, can help children do well in school, and eventually in the workplace.

##### WHAT YOU CAN DO

###### Communicate with the School

- Contact your child's teacher(s) and let them know how to reach you.
- Ask about the school's attendance policy.

###### Make School Attendance a Priority

- Establish routines for bedtime, waking up and showing up for class.
- Develop back-up plans for getting your child to school.
- When school is in session, avoid extended family trips and non-urgent medical appointments.
- Ask your child's teacher about attendance and tell the teacher any concerns you have.

###### Help Your Child Stay Healthy and Engaged

- Monitor your child's attendance and participation; and contact the teacher to address any concerns.
- Make sure your child gets the flu vaccine and other required shots.
- Find out if your child feels safe from bullies. Make sure that school discipline policies don't lead to your child becoming disengaged or pushed out of school. If these are problems, work with your school to find a solution.
- If your child seems bored or anxious about school, talk to teachers, school counselors, or other parents for advice on how to make them feel comfortable and excited about learning.
- Ask for help when you need it. School staff, after-school program providers, and other parents or community agencies are available to help families obtain food or housing and address other experiences that make it difficult to attend and participate.

Developed in partnership with ConnectEd, Families in Schools, and Parent Institute for Quality Education.  
Visit [www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org) for more downloadable resources.

# Encourage All Students and Families to Create a Success Plan

## MY FAMILY'S HELP BANK

- 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.

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: \_\_\_\_\_

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

### 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	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	24	25	26	27	28	29	30

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	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31					29	30	1	2	3	4	5

### MY CHILD'S ATTENDANCE SUCCESS PLAN

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 make sure my child is in bed by \_\_\_\_\_ a.m. and the alarm clock is set for \_\_\_\_\_ a.m.
- If my child complains of a stomachache or headache, and medical concerns have been ruled out, I will make sure to call the school nurse and not \_\_\_\_\_ to that he/she can check in with my child during the day.

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

# Better Truancy Notifications

- ✓ Started with positive language and moved punitive language to the end
- ✓ Fewer words
- ✓ Written at 5<sup>th</sup> 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 13002.7 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.  
• 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 13002.7 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](#)

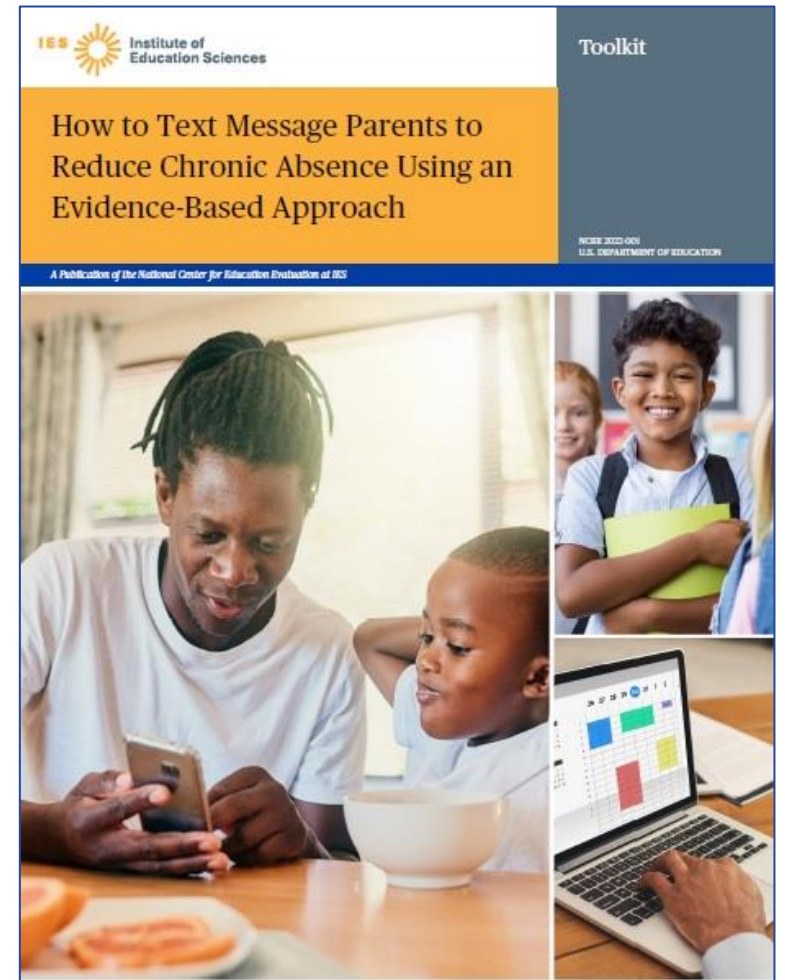
### [Using Behavioral Insights to Improve School Administrative Communications: The Case of Truancy Notifications](#)



## Communicating with Families

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

- ❖ Chronic Absence letter updated for Covid-19  
<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/welcome-students-to-school/>
- ❖ Stay the Course - Winter Messaging  
<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/messaging/stay-the-course-a-winter-messaging-toolkit/>
- ❖ How to Text Message Parents to Reduce Chronic Absence Using an Evidence-Based Approach  
<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/2022001/pdf/2022001.pdf>





## 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

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 1 (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/>



## Questions from the Audience







## Learning Goals for Session 1

### *Participants will:*

- Draw on 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



# Connecticut Resources



*Today's E-Learning Series with Attendance Works sponsored by  
Connecticut State Department of Education in collaboration with CREC and EdAdvance*

## Connecticut Resources

- [Attendance and Awareness Campaign 2022-23](#)
- [EdSight](#),
- Supporting Student Attendance - Updated for 2022-23 ([monthly attendance reports](#))
- [Guidelines for Excused and Unexcused Absences](#)
- [LEAP](#) - Learner Engagement and Attendance Program
- [Mental Health Wellness Days Guidance](#) (January 24, 2022)
- [Reducing Chronic Absence in Connecticut's Schools: A Prevention and Intervention Guide for Schools and Districts Guide](#)
- ★ [Talk Tuesdays](#) – peer learning community, every other Tuesday, open to all
- [Youth Service Bureau Referral for Truancy and Defiance of School Rules Form](#); [Youth Service Bureau Referral Guide](#) and [Catalog of Truancy Models](#)

## State Support & Technical Assistance

### **Kari Sullivan Custer**

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CT State Department of Education

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EdAdvance

[Calhoun@edadvance.org](mailto:Calhoun@edadvance.org)



## 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!**



**Hedy Chang, Executive Director**

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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)

# Appendix



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

A Toolkit for Communicating with Students and Families

April 2022

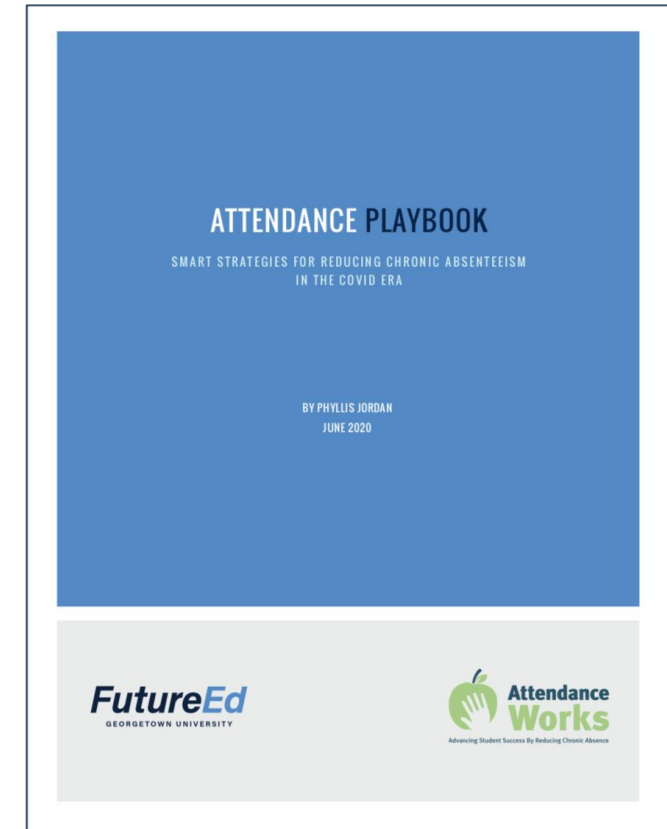
## Four Key Steps

- 1. Explain Why Attendance Matters.** *(Showing up matters because it builds Routines, increases Engagement, provides Access to Resources, Supports Learning.)*
- 2. Cultivate a Culture of Engagement and Attendance With Students and Families**
- 3. Use Data to Determine Need for Intervention and Additional Support**
- 4. Engage Community Partners**

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

# 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/>