

U.S. Office of Special
Education Programs

Effective Interventions to Keep Youth in School

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 National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities
NDPC-SD

Goal of Today's Session

- ★ Present useful information about strategies and interventions that work to keep youth in school
 - ★ Attendance
 - ★ Behavior
 - ★ Academics
 - ★ Parent and Family involvement

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“To every complex problem, there
is a simple solution...
that doesn't work”



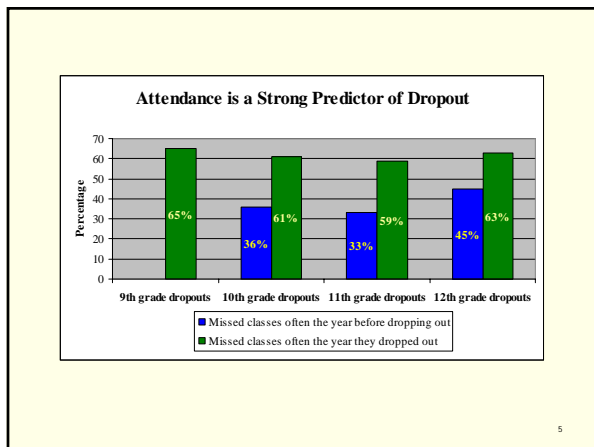
Mark Twain

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Attendance

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Attendance and Dropout

- ★ School attendance serves as a key indicator of “adequate yearly progress” at the middle school level” under NCLB.
- ★ High absenteeism is a serious risk factor associated with school drop out.
 - ★ Approximately 30% of high school students, 20% of middle school students and 14% of elementary students are chronically truant.
 - ★ 80% of dropouts were chronically truant during the year in which they dropped out.

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Attendance and Dropout

★ Research findings indicate that:

- ★ Consistent school attendance has a high positive correlation with academic success and school completion.
- ★ Students learn best when they attend school every day. When students miss school, they miss important lessons and essential skills they need for academic success.
- ★ Good attendance establishes a pattern of responsibility and commitment that will serve students throughout their lives—including college and the workplace.

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Attendance and Dropout

★ Research findings indicate that:

- ★ Dropouts could be distinguished from graduates with 66% accuracy by the third grade using attendance data.
- ★ Students in sixth grade who did not attend school regularly were found to have only a 14% chance of graduating on- time or with one extra year.

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Factors Influencing Attendance

(National Center on School Engagement, 2006)

Risk Factors

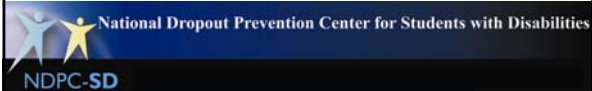
- ★ Fear of harm in schools or neighborhood
- ★ Abuse in the home
- ★ Low academic achievement
- ★ Substance abuse
- ★ Lack of parental involvement in school or homework
- ★ Health problems

Protective Factors

- ★ Good self esteem
- ★ Positive school attitudes
- ★ School attachment
- ★ Activities such as sports, clubs and volunteer work,
- ★ Sense of purpose in life

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Effective Attendance Practices



In Schools that Make Gains in Attendance

- ★ Truancy officers are assigned to students with frequent absences
- ★ Students are rewarded for improved attendance
- ★ Parents are provided with an easily accessible school contact
- ★ Students are referred to a school counselor
- ★ Schools have effective methods of communicating with parents (especially parents whose first language was not English)
- ★ Workshops and training opportunities are provided to parents and after-school programs are provided for students

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In Schools that Make Gains in Attendance

- ★ The teachers know the students well
- ★ The teachers have high expectations for students, which often leads to high expectations within students
- ★ The teachers foster critical judgment and problem-solving skills in their students

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In Schools that Make Gains in Attendance

- ★ Teachers use a broad range of strategies to engage their students
- ★ Students report feeling safer in their schools
- ★ Accountability is strengthened among parents, students, and teachers

Components of Successful Programs

- ★ Include special attention to health and special education needs
- ★ Use ***data*** to drive decision-making
- ★ Involve community and businesses
- ★ Focus on school ***transition years***
- ★ Include ***public awareness*** activities
- ★ Include meaningful ***parent involvement***

Engage Parents in Improving Attendance

- ★ Share ideas with parents and make them part of the team without placing blame
- ★ Establish a contact at school for family members to work with (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002)

Engage Parents in Improving Attendance

- ★ Make home visits to chronically absent children
- ★ Provide a home-family liaison to identify the root causes for children not coming to school
- ★ "Initiate discussions about community services that can assist" (Schargel & Smink, 2001, p. 51)

Components of Successful Programs

- ★ Provide a balanced continuum of ***incentives*** and ***sanctions***
- ★ Focus on ***prevention***
- ★ Emphasize ***early warning*** and intensive intervention
- ★ Provide a continuum of ***strategies***
- ★ Provide alternative options to court

School-Based Strategies

- ★ Attendance recognition awards
- ★ Letters/voice/e- mails to parents
- ★ Catch up classrooms or tutoring
- ★ Student Attendance Review Boards (SARBs)
- ★ Class letters home

School-Based Strategies

- ★ School climate programs (school involvement, anti-bullying, tolerance, activities)
- ★ Attendance specialists or coaches in buildings
- ★ School support programs (psychological services, tutoring, social work services, school based health centers)

School-Based Strategies

- ★ Check & Connect
- ★ Truancy Intervention Program (TIP)
- ★ School support programs (psychological services, tutoring, social work services, school based health centers)
- ★ Good Attendance Campaigns
- ★ Increase student engagement in school activities

Effective Attendance Policies and Procedures

Develop Effective Attendance Policies and Procedures

(Skiba & Kresting, 2001)

- ★ Are clearly written, publicized and communicated to all staff, students and parents
- ★ Clearly distinguish between the difference between excused and unexcused absences
- ★ Are aligned with the district's policies and goals

Develop Effective Attendance Policies and Procedures

(Skiba & Kresting, 2001)

- ★ Avoid the use of suspensions and expulsions for truancy and instead, consider less severe consequences, such as community service or in-school detentions
- ★ Contain effective reporting, recording and monitoring processes. Investigate the various computerized attendance tracking systems currently available
- ★ Include full family involvement, with parent notification and frequent home-school contact

Develop Effective Attendance Policies and Procedures

(Skiba & Kresting, 2001)

- ★ Clearly specify how reward or incentive program will be used
- ★ Develop two-way contracts among students, administrators, teachers, and families that delineate standards of performance for the student, services the school will provide, or changes the school will make

Activity

- ★ Review your school's policy on attendance. Use the rating tool provided to determine how your policy stacks up against effective components identified in the research.

Local Action: Where Do We start?

- ★ Know your attendance laws, local policies & their inconsistencies
- ★ Develop a strategic plan across agencies
- ★ Adopt promising practices that "fit" locally
- ★ Focus on attendance and engagement not just truancy

Local Action: Where Do We start?

- ★ Create both incentives and graduated sanctions
- ★ Involve students and parents in planning programs to improve attendance and engagement
- ★ Take baselines and track progress
- ★ Avoid Killer policies


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Behavior

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The Truth About Problem Behavior

- ★ Problem behaviors exist in every school and are on the increase
- ★ Problem behaviors have negative effects and are associated with a variety of contributing variables
- ★ Increased concern among administrators, teachers, and parents
- ★ Teachers are asked to do more with less
- ★ Teachers often lack the skills necessary to address severe problem behavior



By the time a child is eighteen years old, he or she will witness on television, 200,000 acts of violence (Huston, et al., 1992).

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Problem Behavior at the Secondary Level

- ★ **Problem behaviors** coupled with **academic difficulties** are key predictors of dropout
- ★ **Exclusion** from class and punishment are the 2 most common responses to bad conduct
- ★ Exclusion from class leads to **lost instructional time** and **increased academic difficulties**
- ★ The use of **exclusionary discipline** practices (e.g., suspension) is a major factor that **leads to dropout**

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Discipline at the Secondary Level

- ★ The overall goal of school disciplinary policies is to maintain an orderly environment so that teachers are better able to teach and students are better able to learn.
- ★ “Punishing” problem behaviors (without a proactive support system) is associated with increases in (a) aggression, (b) vandalism, (c) truancy, and (d) dropping out (Mayer, 1995, Mayer & Sultzer-Azaroff, 1991, Skiba & Peterson, 1999).

School Discipline

- ★ **Research findings in this area have concluded that:**
 - ★ student disorder interrupts not only school safety, but decreases student achievement as well.
 - ★ when misconduct is not confronted, misbehaving students are likely to infer that such behavior will be tolerated.

School Discipline

- ★ **Research findings in this area have concluded that:**
 - ★ School personnel have a long history of applying simple and unproven solutions to complex behavior problems (e.g., office discipline referrals, suspensions), rather than focusing on the administrative, teaching and management practices that either contribute to, or reduce them (Tobin, Sugai, & Martin, 2000).

Effective Behavior Strategies

Effective Teachers Seldom

(Lewis, 2006)

- ★ Punish students
- ★ Make disapproving comments
- ★ Compare a student's behavior with other students' behavior
- ★ Yell at students
- ★ Engage in verbal battles
- ★ Make unrealistic threats
- ★ Ridicule students

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Effective Behavior Practices

The Context

- ★ Schools with better discipline and academic organization have more positive student outcomes
- ★ Research reviews indicate that the most effective responses to school violence are:
 - I. Academic Restructuring
 - II. Social Skills Training
 - III. Behavioral Interventions

(Elliot, Hamburg, & Williams, 1998; Gottfredson, 1997; Lipsey, 1991, 1992; Tolan & Guerra, 1994)

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Effective Interventions

- Occur over time—usually months or years
- Involve a family or parent component
- Should be strength based and involve a variety of contexts
- Employ strategies focused on student engagement

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Effectiveness of Interventions

Which approaches have limited effectiveness?

- ★ Short-lived approaches
- ★ Punishment-oriented approaches
- ★ Approaches not focused on engaging students in school
- ★ Approaches not focused on active participation

Which approaches are effective in increasing school completion?

- ★ Approaches focused on engaging students
- ★ Strength-based approaches
- ★ Approaches matched to student needs
- ★ Long-term approaches
- ★ Approaches involving various contexts

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Positive Behavior Support

PBS is consistent with the IDEA, which advocates the use of positive behavior interventions and school-based disciplinary strategies that reduce or eliminate the need to use suspension and expulsion as disciplinary options.

Positive Behavior Support

- ★ PBS is a broad range of systemic and individualized strategies for achieving important social and learning outcomes while preventing problem behavior.

(OSEP Center on PBIS)

PBS is not:

- ★ a specific practice or curriculum. It *is* a general approach to preventing problem behavior.
- ★ limited to any particular group of students. It *is* for all students.
- ★ anything new. It *is* based on a long history of behavioral practices and effective instructional design and strategies. Its roots are in applied behavior analysis.

Positive Behavior Support

- ★ Aims to build effective environments in which positive behavior is more effective than problem behavior
- ★ Is a collaborative, assessment-based approach to developing effective interventions for problem behavior
- ★ Emphasizes the use of preventative, teaching, and reinforcement-based strategies to achieve meaningful and durable behavior and lifestyle outcomes

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Traditional Discipline versus PBS

Traditional Discipline

Is focused on the student's problem behavior.
Has the goal of stopping undesirable behavior through the use of punishment.

Positive Behavior Support

Replaces undesired behavior with a new behavior or skill.
Alters environments, teaches appropriate skills and rewards appropriate behavior.

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Seven Key Elements

1. Administrative leadership/support
2. School-wide buy-in/support
3. Clearly defined school-wide expectations
4. School-wide expectations are taught
5. Behaviors (school-wide expectations) are acknowledged/rewarded
6. Behavioral/learning errors are corrected – replacement behaviors are taught
7. Data based decision making (information system for decision-making)

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***Universal Strategies:
Classroom***

- ★ Use of school-wide expectations/rules
- ★ Effective Classroom Management
 - ★ Behavior management
 - ★ Instructional management
 - ★ Environmental management
- ★ Support for teachers who deal with students who display high rates of problem behavior



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Academic Achievement

***Key Practices & Policies of Consistently
Higher Performing High Schools***

- ★ Districts with higher performing high schools expect all students to meet high standards
- ★ The high schools expect all students to meet high standards
- ★ Teachers expect all students to meet high standards

(National High School Center, 2006)

Student performance is enhanced when...

- ✓ Teachers use research-based strategies
- ✓ Teachers use instructional time efficiently, while providing multiple means of engagement
- ✓ Teachers provide frequent reinforcement
- ✓ Teachers provide culturally diverse students with equal opportunities to participate
- ✓ Teachers build positive relationships with students

Student performance is enhanced when...

- ✓ Teachers and parents build supportive partnerships
- ✓ When students know what is expected of them
- ✓ Teachers establish classroom routines
- ✓ Teachers maintain a comfortable and welcoming classroom environment
- ✓ Teachers believe that ALL students can achieve & act upon their beliefs

Effective Teachers

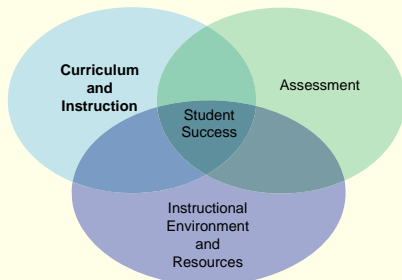
(Lewis, 2006)

- ✓ Manage an organized and efficient learning environment
- ✓ Maximize time on academic tasks
- ✓ Minimize time on non-instructional activities
- ✓ Provide students with tasks that allow them to be successful
- ✓ Maximize use of active or direct teaching procedures with groups of students

Effective Teachers

- ✓ Care about students and their future
- ✓ Listen to what students have to say
- ✓ Teach the whole student
- ✓ Respond to individual student needs
- ✓ Have high expectations for student achievement and behavior

Components of an Effective School-wide Model



Strategies To Keep Students Engaged in School

- ★ Academic Engagement – Strategies to increase time on task, academic engaged time, or credit accrual.
- ★ Examples:
 - ★ Principles of Effective and Differentiated Instruction
 - ★ Active Listening
 - ★ Note taking
 - ★ Streamlining Transitions
 - ★ Questioning & Feedback
 - ★ Credit Recovery

Ten Effective Teaching Principles

1. Active Engagement
2. Providing the Experience of Success
3. Content Coverage and Opportunity to Learn
4. Grouping for Instruction
5. Scaffolded Instruction

Ten Effective Teaching Principles

6. Addressing Forms of Knowledge
7. Organizing & Activating Knowledge
8. Teaching Strategically
9. Making Instruction Explicit
10. Teaching Sameness

1. Engaged Time

Principle 1: Students learn more when they are engaged actively during an instructional task.



...time is an important instructional variable!!

Engaged Time

Three aspects of time that directly impact student learning:

1. time allocated for the activity
2. degree to which students are engaged during the allocated time
3. the rates of success the students experience while engaged in the activity

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2. Success Rate

- ★ Affects attitude as well as achievement
- ★ Success is important in the areas of schoolwork (e.g., academic success, good grades, success on high stakes assessment) as well as personal and social issues (McPartland, 1994)
- ★ How much time being successful?
- ★ How successful should they be?
- ★ What is critical for success?
 - ★ Question: How many more activities would you be willing to actively participate before you shutdown?

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3. Content Coverage/Opportunity to Learn

- ★ The more taught (well), the more learned
- ★ Curriculum determination
 - ★ what is taught
 - ★ how to cover more
- ★ Teacher planning
 - ★ appropriate material/level
 - ★ teach explicitly/organized
 - ★ teach efficiently
- ★ Professional Development

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4. Grouping for Instruction

- ★ Group = achievement
- ★ Group across classrooms and grades
- ★ Advantages of grouping for instruction
 - ★ more instruction
 - ★ better instruction
 - ★ more on-task time
 - ★ practice critical behaviors

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Reading Instruction at Secondary Levels

- ★ More and more schools are screening 9th graders entering high school for reading problems/deficits
- ★ Students identified with reading problems/deficits are placed in structured corrective reading programs designed for adolescents struggling to read
- ★ Example programs include :
 - ★ Corrective Reading - Scientific Reading Associates
 - ★ Language! - Sopris West
- ★ NOTE: 75% of students with reading problems in 3rd grade exhibit reading problems in 9th grade
 - ★ TIME is not an effective intervention!!!!

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5. Scaffolded Instruction

- ★ temporary and adjustable support
- ★ reduce task to fewest steps
- ★ initial explicit demonstration
- ★ promote student elaboration
- ★ promoting cueing
- ★ scaffolding and explicit instruction

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6. Address Forms of Knowledge

- a. Declarative
 - ★ facts, vocabulary
- b. Procedural
 - ★ how to use steps of a rule or strategy
- c. Conditional
 - ★ when and where to use rules or strategies

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7. Activate and Organize Knowledge

- ★ assist students in organizing, storing and retrieving knowledge
- ★ goal of education is transfer of knowledge
- ★ therefore, students need to access and use knowledge
- ★ problem areas
 - ★ insufficient knowledge base
 - ★ poorly organized knowledge base
 - ★ conditional knowledge

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8. Strategic Instruction

- ★ focus on becoming an independent, self-regulated learner
- ★ how to learn versus teaching content
- ★ all students use strategies, but some are not very efficient or effective
- ★ don't generate strategies or learn them observationally
- ★ use scaffolding, active student participation with the goal of independent strategy use

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Five Strategic Instructional Guidelines

1. ***Preskills*** of a strategy are taught before the strategy itself is presented
2. Instances that are ***consistent*** with a strategy are introduced before exceptions
3. ***High utility skills*** are introduced before less useful ones.
4. ***Easy skills*** are taught ***before*** more ***difficult*** ones.
5. ***Separate*** skills that are easily confused.

Strategy Instruction Model Programs

University of
Kansas
Center on
Research



<http://www.ku-crl.org>

9. Making Instruction Explicit

- a) make goals, objectives, and expectations explicit
- b) make instructional content explicit
- c) make the structure of the lesson explicit

Explicit vs. Implicit

- ★ The National Research Council (Kilpatrick, et al., 2001) calls for a mix of ***explicit instruction*** with opportunities to ***apply principles using real-life problems***.
- ★ As teachers we recognize that students do and should construct their own knowledge. However, we ***must guide them in their discovery***

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Explicit & Implicit Progression

- ★ Explicitly model all critical steps
- ★ Demonstrate the most efficient strategy multiple times with many examples
- ★ Challenge students to develop “their own” way to become problem solvers

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10. Teaching Sameness

To promote transfer and generalization

By teaching sameness in and across skills, we promote the ability to access knowledge in new situations.

Teachers can teach more content in less time and encourages students to build important foundational ideas for the development of more complex cognitive structures (i.e., problem solving skills)

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More on Sameness

By nature, we constantly seek out sameness,
we attempt to figure out the strategy.

Our goal as educators: Build APPROPRIATE
cognitive structures

AVOID learner misconceptions

Effective Instruction Summary


- ★ Educators can only control what they can control—Alterable variables are most notably the Curricular Materials and Daily Instruction
- ★ Some aspects can be completed at the Teacher Level while others are more of a System issue
- ★ No assumptions other than: We (teachers) can always plan and deliver a more effective lesson!

20 Ways to Make Instruction More Effective

1. Use Big Ideas for Lesson Foundation
2. Sequence Information Strategically
3. Develop a Structure for Instructional Lessons
4. Connect New Content to Prior Knowledge
5. Explain New Content Clearly
6. Correct Errors Quickly
7. Make Abstract Concepts Concrete
8. Increase Allocated and Engaged Time
9. Increase Opportunities for Responding
10. Use Effective Questioning Techniques


20 Ways to Make Instruction More Effective

- 11. Maintain a Brisk Pace
- 12. Use Guided Practice
- 13. Alternate Using Examples and Non-examples
- 14. Use Flexible Grouping
- 15. Monitor Student Progress
- 16. Use Assessment Data to Inform Instruction
- 17. Use Reminders (mnemonics)
- 18. Provide Guided Notes
- 19. Teach Concepts Maps
- 20. Demonstrate Self-Monitoring & Adjusting Skills



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Family Involvement



Family Influence

- ★ The most accurate predictor of a student's school achievement is the extent to which his/her family encourages learning.
- ★ There is a declining trend in family engagement as students progress in age.



Family Influence

- ★ Middle school and high school students whose parents remain involved tend to:
 - ★ Have a positive attitude about school
 - ★ Earn higher grades
 - ★ Score higher on standardized tests
 - ★ GRADUATE from high school

Family Influence

- ★ Students are more likely to drop out if parents are not involved
- ★ Beginning in middle school parents are typically involved in their children's schooling mainly for discipline reasons
- ★ 68% of students report parents got more involved once they became aware their child was on the verge of dropping out

Family Influence

- ★ 48% of dropouts reported their school contacted them or their parents to find out why they left school or to encourage them to return
- ★ In the majority of cases, such contact may not occur
- ★ Students report that the school contacted their parents or when they were absent (47%) or when they dropped out (48%)

At this point, IT IS TOO LATE!

Characteristics of Effective Family Engagement Programs

- Recognize, respect and address cultural and class differences – ***Honoring***
- Invite involvement and address specific parental needs – ***Welcoming***
- Make families feel at home, comfortable, and a part of the school community – ***Welcoming***

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Characteristics of Effective Family Engagement Programs

- Families are respected, validated and affirmed for their involvement and contributions – ***Honoring***
- Children serve as the focus that connect partners on educational issues and improvement opportunities for children – ***Connecting***

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Strategies

- ★ Assess your school's climate. Is it family friendly?
- ★ Conduct a family needs assessment
- ★ Develop annual family events and build on them
- ★ Send information home frequently. Don't just send home the "bad" stuff... Remember to praise the good too!

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Strategies

- ★ Help to increase proactive parent involvement
- ★ Promote communication between students and parents
- ★ Share graduation plans with parents

Strategies

- ★ Increase communication between home and school (i.e., family outreach)
 - ★ Home visits
 - ★ Inviting parents to be part of school teams and committees
 - ★ Hold parent conferences or support groups
 - ★ Provide feedback to parents on student progress more frequently
 - ★ Report more than just negative behavior

Activity – Here &/or At Home

1. Identify and list challenges your school faces in developing and/or maintaining home-school partnerships.
2. Brainstorm and list strategies to address these challenges.
3. List two strategies (e.g., activities, events, media, parent newsletter) your team/school can implement to facilitate (A) family awareness, (B) family engagement/involvement, and (C) family support.

Family Resources

http://www.pacer.org/articles/parentbriefs/ParentBrief_Jul06.pdf

Parent Brief
Promoting effective parent involvement in secondary education and transition
July 2006

The Role of Parents in Dropout Prevention: Strategies that Promote Graduation and School Achievement
by Deborah Leuchter

Students who drop out of school face a difficult future. They are more likely to be unemployed, incarcerated, and/or supervised. For students with disabilities, the risks are amplified. They dropout one in about 40 percent—more than twice that of their peers without disabilities.

Importantly, they should become involved or seek assistance if they represent one risky behavior such as skipping school, failing classes, having significant discipline problems, or being involved in illegal activities.

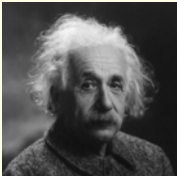
Students who do not earn a high school diploma are more likely to:

Students with disabilities are at greater risk of dropping out if

IN THIS ISSUE
1 Why Do Youth Drop Out?
2 Promising Approaches
3 Tips for Parents
4 Alternative School Settings

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“Insanity is continuing to do what you have always done and expecting different results”



Albert Einstein

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