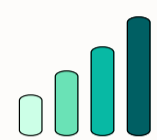


Reaching families is hard. Reaching them well changes everything.

What families say they need + what 3.3 million messages show actually works = **some ideas worth trying**

Families Are More Ready Than You Think



What the data shows: **73%** of families reply to school outreach within a week. Median response time is **11 minutes**, faster than most work emails. **88%** say attendance matters for student success.

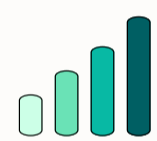


The insight: The barrier to engagement is lower than it feels. The problem is often timing and relevance, not willingness.



Try: "Hi, this is [name] from [school]. I wanted to reach out before things get hectic. Is this the best way to reach you?"

One Early Message Does More Than Ten Late Ones



What the data shows: A first intervention reduces absence rates by **34%**. More than half of students who receive early outreach don't need a second. Families reached in August or September are twice as likely to still be responding in January. And according to [TNTP](#), schools with strong family engagement before the pandemic had chronic absenteeism rates 6 percentage points lower afterward, an impact comparable to replacing over half a school year of remote learning with in-person time.

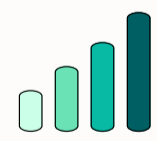


The insight: Family engagement isn't a communication strategy. It's infrastructure. And it compounds over time



Try: "I'm so glad [student] is in my class this year. What's the best way to stay in touch if I need to reach you?"

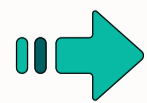
Generic Messages Erode the Trust You're Trying to Build



What the data shows: **31%** of families say school messages aren't consistently relevant to their child. Multilingual families are significantly less likely to feel communications are tailored to them. **71% of families** want to hear what's going well, not just problems.

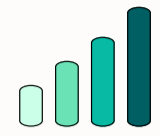


The insight: Blanket notifications feel like no one knows your child. Specific, positive outreach signals that someone does. Families who've already missed too many days often expect a call that feels like an accusation. Starting with something real and positive changes the entire dynamic.



Try: "I want to first share something positive [student] did this week before we talk about anything else."

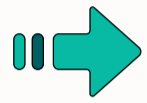
Grade Level Changes Everything About the Approach



What the data shows: 6th grade marks the sharpest spike in chronic absenteeism. Conference effectiveness drops dramatically in high school, especially in group settings. Middle schoolers respond better when the student is part of the conversation directly.

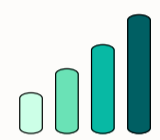


The insight: A message that works for a kindergarten parent won't work for a 10th grader. The student needs to be in the conversation by middle school.



Try (for students): "Hey [student], we missed you yesterday. Everything okay? We'd love to see you tomorrow."

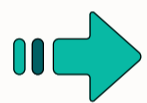
Timing Is a Force Multiplier



What the data shows: Peak family response times are 8 a.m. and 2 to 4 p.m. on weekdays. Specific messages outperform vague ones. A message sent Friday evening gets lost in weekend plans. One sent Tuesday morning does not.



The insight: The same message sent at the wrong time gets ignored. Timing isn't a detail, it's part of the strategy.



Try: Review attendance Monday or Tuesday. Reach out before the week gets away from you.

When You're Ready to Have the Conversation

The data tells you when to reach out and how. Here's a sequence that helps once you're in the room.

1. **Open:** How are things going for your family right now?
2. **Understand:** What's been making consistent attendance hard?
3. **Center the student:** How does your child feel about school on most mornings?
4. **Validate:** A lot of families hit stretches like this. You're not alone.
5. **Solve together:** What kind of support would be most helpful right now?
6. **Plan:** What would a good week look like, and how should we check in?

Trust flows both ways. Every early message, every specific update, every moment that signals "we know your child" is an investment in the partnership that makes the harder conversations possible. The relationships you build before there's a problem are the ones that matter most when there is one.