



## MODULE 07: BEST PRACTICES FOR PARENT CONFERENCES REGARDING ATTENDANCE



Meeting with parents on campus about student attendance is an important intervention tool to improve it. We know that meeting with parents in person is the best way to communicate. Parents provide the best chance for students to improve their attendance as well as their academics. Unfortunately, many of the schools' professionals responsible for conducting/leading the parent conferences have not been trained formally.

They have learned through trial and error the best way they believe for dealing with parents at meetings, and some of the lessons they learn can be very painful. Therefore, best practices for meeting with parents regarding their child's attendance should be considered.

It is challenging for most communities to get parents to attend meetings. On average, two out of the parents show up for a conference regarding their child's attendance or any other issue. Most parents have jobs, and often their employers are not receptive to allowing them to miss work to attend school meetings. And it is not unusual for school personnel to schedule a parent conference during their regular working hours.

Early morning or late evening appointments will slightly increase the parents' ability to attend these meetings. If the school district allows parent conferences on Saturdays, that will significantly increase parents attending meetings. Also, campus staff should schedule appointments at the parent's home, if possible, for those who have no transportation or a physical disability that prevents them from attending meetings at school.



Professionals who prepare for the meeting in advance can do so by reviewing past student attendance documentation, including their profile and notes of other information regarding their absences. In addition, any available campus staff member that may have contact with the student or parent regarding attendance should contribute. All contact notes should be reviewed before the meeting to limit and eliminate any surprises to the parents about their child's absences.

When the attendance professional starts the meeting, they should introduce themselves, including their position and role. Then, everyone introduces themselves by their name, role, position, and precisely what their job means to their child. At that point, an explanation of why the meeting was called and the school's obligation regarding discussing with parents, and any state law requiring such meetings should be provided to the parent.

When parents arrive at the meeting, they should be acknowledged and thanked for taking time out of their busy schedules to attend, and the reason for the meeting should be made clear. After having them sit, I allow them to speak first by asking if they would like to share anything about their child's attendance. School personnel should be attentive by listening closely to what parents have to say and affirming their feelings.

When sharing any data with parents on their child's attendance, attendance personnel should make sure that they explain every code associated with their child's attendance to assure that parents understand. Indeed, you can limit your explanation to only codes that apply to that student.

Attendance professionals should start the meeting by talking about something positive regarding the student. Many parents do not like to hear anything negative about their child even if they know it is true.



## WORKBOOK SECTION

1. Why is meeting with parents in person the best way to communicate?

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2. What type of information must be discussed when sharing any data with parents on their child's attendance?

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