Early Truancy Prevention Project
Teacher Training Materials

Intervention Teachers
August 16, 2013

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Teacher Training Agenda

August 16, 2013

10:00-3:30

1. Introductions and Contact Information
2. Informed Teacher Consent
3. Project Overview and Purpose

▲ HOME VISITING
4. Why Should Teachers Conduct Home Visits?
5. Potential Barriers to Home-School Collaboration
6. How to Schedule and Conduct a Successful Home Visit
7. Safety
8. Maintaining Your Relationship with Families after the Home Visit

▲ TARGETED ATTENDANCE INTERVENTIONS
9. Intervention Model Overview
10. Online System Procedures for Tracking Target Students
11. iPhone Distribution

▲ FINAL QUESTIONS
Required Documentation

* $1,000 stipend received if home visits, interventions and documentation completed on time.

1. Meetings and Data Collection Surveys
   _____ Fall Training and Consent Form (August)
   _____ Mid-Year Feedback Session and Data Collection (November or December)
   _____ End-of-Year Feedback Session and Data Collection (end of April)

2. August 16 – October 15: Home Visit Documentation
   _____ Document completed home visits ONLINE with AIS (as an “interaction”)
   _____ Home Visit Reflection Form for each completed visit (via Qualtrics Link on website)
   _____ TWO home visit updates to Erika via email
   _____ September 8th: Email update #1 due
   _____ September 22nd: Email update #2 due
     Information to include in the email:
     1. # of total students
     2. # of home visits completed
     3. # of home visits scheduled
     4. # of home visits you are having trouble scheduling
   _____ Home Visits Not Completed Form (via Qualtrics Link on website)

3. October 1 – May 1: Targeted Intervention Documentation
   _____ Document Attendance Barriers and Attendance Interventions for Target Students ONLINE with AIS by each FRIDAY
How to Schedule a Home Visit

Teacher Guidelines for Scheduling a Home Visit:

1. Introduce yourself.
2. Make sure the parent is available to talk at that time, if not, schedule another time to call back.
3. Make a positive statement about having the child in your class.
4. Explain why you are calling.
5. Mention the expected length of the home visit.
6. Offer a couple of different times when the home visit could occur.
7. Confirm the parent’s address and get directions if necessary.
8. If someone will be accompanying you on the visit, be sure to mention this to the parent.
9. Give the parent your phone number in the event that they need to reschedule the visit.
10. Confirm the date and time of the visit.
11. Thank the parent for their time.
12. *Option to use Home Visit Scheduler*

Alternative Locations to Meet Parents:

1. Restaurant
2. Local community center
3. Public library
4. Bowling Alley
Sample Teacher Script for Scheduling a Home Visit:

This is written for a phone call, but it could be modified slightly if you are having this conversation with a parent in person.

Hello, Mr/Mrs _______________________. My name is _______________________ and I am __________’s teacher. How are you today? Good. Are you busy right now or do you have a couple minutes to talk? Great. Well, I am calling to first of all tell you how glad I am to have ____________ in my class this year. I am really looking forward to working with both you and ___________ to make sure he/she has a great year.

I make it a priority to get to know my students and their families at the beginning of the year. So, I am scheduling home visits with each family. It would be a short visit, only about 30 minutes. I would like to visit so that we can get to know each other, so I can learn more about __(child’s name)_____, and so I can answer any questions you might have about school. Would that be okay with you to schedule a home visit?

In the Durham Public Schools, we make family involvement a priority. We have partnered with Duke University to develop family engagement strategies including home visiting.

The two days I had in mind to visit are _________ or _________. Would either of these days work for you? Terrific. (At this time, teacher should ask for the address if she doesn’t have it, or confirm that the address she has is correct. She should also ask for directions to the house if necessary).

Let me give you my number so you can contact me if you have any questions or if you should need to reschedule the visit (teacher gives school and/or home number, whichever she prefers).

Include when appropriate: I also wanted to let you know that ____________(name of person accompanying the teacher on the visit) will be accompanying me on this visit if that is okay with you.

Thank you very much for you time Mr./ Mrs. ____________________. I am looking forward to meeting with you on ____________ (date).
Sample Letter to Send Home to Parents:

Teachers: Feel free to use this letter if you are unable to schedule a home visit on the phone or in person.

Dear Parent,

Hello, my name is ______________ and I am your child’s teacher. I am very glad to have __________ in my class this year. I am really looking forward to working with both you and __________ to make sure he/she has a great school year.

I make it a priority to get to know my students and their families at the beginning of the year by conducting a home visit with each family. It would be a short visit, only about 30 minutes. I would like to visit so that we can get to know each other, so I can learn more about __(child’s name)______, and so I can answer any questions you might have about school.

In the Durham Public Schools, we make family involvement a priority. We have partnered with Duke University to develop family engagement strategies including home visiting.

The two days I had in mind to visit are ____(date and time)_____ or __ (date and time)_______. Please fill out the bottom of this form to let me know if either of these days will work for you. If you are not free on these days, that is fine. Please suggest other days that would work better for you. If you should have any questions about this visit or about our classroom, please do not hesitate to contact me at (919) ____ - ______. I would be happy to speak with you and to answer your questions.

Thank you very much! I am looking forward to meeting with you soon.

Sincerely,

TEACHER’S NAME

Please fill out this information and return it to school tomorrow with your child.

Parent’s Name: __________________________ Child’s Name: ________________________________

Please circle YES or NO next to the date and time I suggested below. If you are not free at either time, please write in other times when you can meet with me.

Teachers lists a time here - EXAMPLE: Monday, September 15, 2013 at 4:15pm

I am able to meet with you at this time: YES or NO

I am available on ________________ day at ____________time.

I am available on ________________ day at ____________time.
Conducting a Successful Home Visit

▲ BEFORE THE VISIT:
1. Call or send a letter to the parent to confirm the date and time of the visit.
2. Confirm the date and time with the translator or person who is accompanying you on the visit.
3. Bring a small item to give to the family (magnet, book, school supplies etc.)
4. Collect any other materials you would like to bring, i.e. games/activities for the child, or classroom information to give the parent.
5. Bring this form “Conducting a Successful Home Visit” sheet as a reference.
6. Safety Strategy: Bring the family’s phone number with you in case you have trouble finding the house.
7. Safety Strategy: Confirm that you have the address and directions to the house.
8. Safety Strategy: Be sure to let someone else know that you will be going on this visit. Give them the date, time, and address of the visit, and the phone number of the family.

▲ DURING THE VISIT:
1. Introduce yourself and thank the parent for having you over.
2. Re-state that the purpose of the visit is for you (the teacher) to get to know the parent and child better so that you can work collaboratively to ensure the child’s success in school.
3. Have a friendly conversation with the parent. Share information about yourself and ask “Getting to Know You” questions to learn about the child (and to learn about the parents if they are comfortable with that). Sometimes parents are reluctant to share information about themselves, but they are happy to talk about the child and interested in learning more about you.
4. Compliment the parent or something in the home.
5. School Attendance Discussion:
   a. Discuss importance of school attendance, explain classroom incentives for attendance, and teacher follow-up procedures for missed school days.
   b. Ask HOW child gets to school (walk, bus, ride with X, driven by X). Is there a backup transportation plan if child misses bus etc.?
   c. Ask if any reasons child may have difficulty getting to school (parents leave before child in morning, child very tired/trouble waking up, child responsible for younger siblings in morning, sometimes bus comes early etc.)
6. Discuss ways that you and the parent can work together to support the child’s attendance everyday and success in school.
7. Create communication plan with the parents.
8. Spend time with the child either individually or with the parent present.
9. Mention the importance of parental involvement in school and invite the parent to an upcoming school event, to visit the classroom, or to volunteer in some capacity. Also discuss ways the parent can support the child’s education at home.

▲ AFTER THE VISIT:
1. Document the completed visit online via link to: “Home Visit Reflection Form”
2. Call the parent or send them a card to thank them for the visit.
Sample Questions for Home Visit:

“Getting to Know You” questions to ask the parents:

1. Asking the parent(s) to talk about the child.

PURPOSE: This is an important opportunity to learn about the child by listening to the parent, who is the expert on their child. It also reassures the parent that you really care about their child and are really interested in getting to know the child. It opens communication lines for the future – if you should have any difficulties with the child and need to talk to the parent openly about it. Parents can feel defensive during conversations about problems if they don’t feel that you know and care about their child.

- Tell me a little bit about _______.
- How would you describe ________?
- Does your child have any siblings?
- What does _______ like to do in his/her free time? Likes/dislikes?
- What are his/her strengths (in general)? Strengths in school?
- How does he/she feel about starting school this year? Does he/she like school?
- What subjects like/dislike in school?
- Does he/she have any favorite books, games, activities, etc?
- How does _______ get along with other children? Who are his/her friends?
- How does _______ typically behave at home / school?
- ***Do you have any concerns about _________?***

2. Share information about yourself.

PURPOSE: This is an opportunity to put parents at ease with you. It might be the only opportunity for parents to learn about you as a person (your family members, your hobbies, “fun facts” about yourself, how long you have lived in the area, what you love about teaching, how long you have been teaching at X school or in X grade, your teaching philosophy etc.)

3. School Attendance Discussion

PURPOSE: This is a very important part of the home visit. The goal is to make parents aware of the importance of school attendance, as well as classroom incentives/procedures, and to open lines of communication regarding attendance in order to address any attendance issues that may arise.

- Discuss importance of school attendance
- Describe classroom incentives for attendance
- Explain teacher follow-up procedures for missed school days
- Ask HOW child gets to school (walk, bus, ride with X, driven by X). Is there a back-up transportation plan if child misses bus, etc.?
- Ask if any reasons child may have difficulty getting to school (parents leave before child in morning, child very tired/trouble waking up, child responsible for younger siblings in morning, sometimes bus comes early etc.)
4. Ask parents about themselves (*Only if they are comfortable with this)

PURPOSE: Allows you to learn about the parents and engage in casual conversation to build rapport.
- How long have you lived in the area? What brought you here? How do you like it here?
- Do you have any family in the area?
- Do you know many other families with children at X school?
- What do you like to do in your free time? (you may learn about hobbies/skills may be helpful in the classroom)

5. Answering parents’ questions.

PURPOSE: This allows parents to ask questions about the school or about kindergarten.
- Do you have any questions for me?
- Is there anything you would like to know about our school or classroom?

6. Spending one-on-one time with the child.

PURPOSE: This is an ideal opportunity to spend some one-on-one time with him/her. The purpose of this time is to develop a relationship with the child so that the child feels they know you better, are more comfortable with you, and feel more excited about school. Another purpose is to get to know the child better by learning: what motivates them, what they like to do, their areas of strength and challenge, how they behave at home, how they interact with their family members, what personal space they have at home such as a bedroom or play area, whether or not they have siblings and the ages of their siblings, and what materials and supplies they have access to at home.

7. Inviting parents to school and encouraging parental involvement.

PURPOSE: It is important to close your visit with a plan for continued communication and collaboration. ***Explain how you will communicate with parent throughout school year and how they can communicate with you. Double check their contact information and give them your phone number/email, etc.***
- Invite the parent to school, or schedule a specific time when they can come to observe or volunteer, etc.
- You may discuss ways that the parent can become involved at home to support their child’s success in school. Parents may not know how much you value their support and involvement, and how much of a positive impact it has on their child’s success in school.
Safety Strategies

1. Give your home visit schedule to another person. Be sure it includes the date, time, location, and phone number of each scheduled visit.

2. Bring your iPhone.

3. Bring someone along to accompany you as necessary.

4. Schedule visits for earlier in the day rather than in the evening.

5. Be sure to have accurate directions to the house.

6. Bring the family’s phone number with you in case you have trouble finding the house.

7. Do not bring valuables with you or in your car.

OTHER STRATEGIES:
Maintaining a Positive Relationship with Families after the Home Visit

▲ THINGS TEACHERS CAN DO:

1. Send home a grade level or classroom newsletter.
2. Send home good news notes or postcards.
3. Send monthly progress notes.
4. Call parents to discuss their child’s recent accomplishments or progress.
5. Send home a conduct calendar each day for parents to review and sign.
6. Send home a binder of the child’s work twice a month for parents to review. It is also helpful to ask parents to write comments or questions and for them to sign inside the binder each time.
7. Send home notes in Spanish. If you do not speak Spanish, this could be accomplished by translation software, a translator, or by purchasing pre-packaged bilingual parent letters.
8. Call parents to invite them to participate or volunteer.
9. Send home suggested ways for parents to support their child’s learning at home.
10. Invite parents to classroom events.

Other ideas:

▲ THINGS PARENTS CAN DO:

1. Read a book to the class as part of a “weekly mystery reader” program.
2. Read with individual children.
3. Assist with special class projects.
4. Chaperone class field trips.
5. Send treats to school.
6. Send other materials to school for use in academic lessons or special projects.
7. Organize class celebrations for holidays or other special events.
8. A bilingual parent could volunteer to translate parent communication into Spanish.
9. Assist the teacher by: copying, cutting, laminating, gluing, making bulletin boards, typing etc.
10. One parent could volunteer to organize the other parents’ participation in any or all of the ideas listed above.

Other ideas:
Home Visit Checklist

What did you do during the home visit? Check all that apply:

_____ We discussed the importance of school attendance

_____ I encouraged the parents to contact me and created a communication plan

_____ I gave the child/family a _____________ (book, magnet etc).

_____ I spent one-on-one time with the child.

_____ The parents told me about their child.

_____ The parent(s) told me about themselves.

_____ I told the parents about myself.

_____ We discussed importance of home-school collaboration for child’s success.

_____ We discussed school or classroom procedures.

_____ We discussed the parents’ concerns.

_____ The parent(s) had questions for me.
Attendance Barriers

▲ HEALTH PROBLEMS
Asthma
Frequently sick (bronchitis, pneumonia)
Lice
Seasonal colds / flu
Injuries (broken bone etc)
Surgery
Medical Appointments during school day

▲ SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL ISSUES
Disruptive behaviors / frequent suspensions
Anxiety (about tests, peers, school in general)
School Refusal
Peer relationship difficulties (few friends, bullying, violence)
Teacher/Staff relationship difficulties
Academic difficulties contributing to anxiety/disruptive behavior
Academic difficulties contributing to peer problems/bullying
Academic difficulties leading to Teacher-Child relationship problems

▲ INTENTIONAL ABSENCES
Family Vacation / Travel
Family observes holidays at home when there is school
Family opts out of holidays celebrated at school
Child needed to translate for parent (at doctor’s office etc.)
Child needed to care for younger siblings (when parent at work, sick, sleeping after working night shift etc)
Child required to do certain chores (e.g. feed farm animals) prior to school
To visit family members, spend the day with parent, go shopping
So child can catch up on sleep if child is tired
Inclement weather
Parent suffers from health/mental health difficulties that impairs their ability to get child to school on time or on a consistent basis

▲ HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT
Divorcing parents / single parent
Homeless or highly mobile family frequent delays when changing bus route to accommodate each move
Parents caring for other children / younger children
Parents caring for other child with challenges (health / developmental / behavioral / academic)
Parents caring for sick relative
Child alternates between different homes
Parent works night shift has difficulty waking up on time to help child get ready for school or take child to school
Parent work schedule conflicts with school drop-off / pick-up
Parent dropping of siblings at different schools
Parent is not aware of drop-off / pick-up times
Parent is not aware of before-school / after-school care options

▲ TRANSPORTATION
Child lives out of district, does not have bus access
Child frequently visits or stays with relatives out of district, does not have bus access at these times
Parents do not have a car / do not have money for gas, cannot bring child to school if he/she misses the bus
Parents only have one car must coordinate all car trips (school drop offs, work schedule etc)
No bus available to babysitters after school, so parents must pick child up early
Bus is "rowdy" and child feels unsafe on the bus
Bus doesn’t pick the child up, no alternative method of transportation
Bus arrives late to school, but child needs to eat breakfast, so is tardy
Bus suspension

▲ IN-SCHOOL SUPERVISION
Child eats breakfast before school (takes too long to eat, arrives with insufficient time to eat)
Child wanders the halls prior to school

▲ OTHER
Attendance Interventions for Target Students

▲ PHASE 1. INFORMATION GATHERING AND INFORMATION SHARING

Parents/Caregivers:
- Send introductory attendance letter to all families to let them know the time school starts/ends, importance of attendance/on-time arrival, school attendance policies, bus policy (e.g. if the bus misses their child, they can call the school immediately and bus will return for child - parents often do not know to do this)
- Conduct initial home visit with all families to build a positive relationship, and to discuss importance of attendance. Ask for parent commitment to ensure their child attends school and arrives on-time.
- Parent conversation: talk to parents (via phone or in person) to share concerns if student is frequently absent/tardy, discuss student/family barriers to attendance
- Follow-up parent conversation with a letter documenting number of child absences/tardies and plan for moving forward that you discussed with parents

Student:
- Discuss importance of attendance/on-time arrival with the target student
- Talk with target student to share your concerns about their attendance, give them information about the number of tardies/absences they have, learn about attendance barriers and brainstorm possible solutions with their input

Other Family members:
- Talk with other families members to understand attendance barriers and brainstorm possible solutions (e.g. non-custodial parent, step-parent, grandparents, or siblings/cousins of target student that attend same school)

▲ PHASE 2: INITIAL INTERVENTIONS AND CONSULTATION

Consult with other professionals at school for information about child’s attendance issues and to brainstorm next steps:
- Consult with research team member (e.g. Amy Schulting)
- Consult with counselor/child psychologist to discuss issues and solutions related to: child anxiety, school refusal, behavior problems etc.
- Consult with principal, social worker, nurse, transportation / bus driver
- Consult with prior teacher of target student, other teachers on grade level team
- Consult with current teachers of target students’ siblings to identify issues/brainstorm solutions as siblings likely have same barriers as target student

Student Interventions:
- Give praise and positive attention when target student comes to school or arrives on time (Example: “Jessica, you are here exactly on time! Great job! I am so glad that you are at our morning meeting today.”)
- Create attendance calendar or sticker chart for target student to track attendance/on-time arrivals
- Create individualized incentive plan for student for attendance and/or on-time arrivals (e.g. student can select item from “treasure chest” of prizes when certain number of days in attendance or on-time arrivals each week)

Parent Interventions:
- Make a calendar for the child and document time of arrival each day and each absence. This visual aid can later be used as part of child incentive plan. It is also very helpful to present to parents.
- Conduct a targeted home visit or schedule in-person meeting with parents: share attendance calendar, brainstorm solutions to attendance barriers, create an attendance “contract” with parents
- Thank parent when child attends school / arrives on time. Leave a voicemail, tell parent after school or send a note “Thank you for making sure Jessica arrives to school on time!”

Transportation Interventions (in collaboration with school administration / other staff):
- Establish a “bus buddy” system so children feel safe on the bus
- Rotate adult on the bus in addition to driver to ensure child safety/comfort
- Create a “late bus” to pick up children who missed the first bus
- Offer free before/after-school child care, or increase number of “scholarships” so needy families can access these services
- Help families create “carpools” with nearby families who drive – school would need to ask for permission to release names to other families who live nearby, or sometimes families can do this themselves via a school website
- School van to pick kids up when no other options exist

▲ PHASE 3: SCHOOL-BASED AND COMMUNITY REFERRALS

Refer child/family to professionals at school:
- Initiate SAT (student assistance team) meeting with school-based staff to focus on child’s attendance and related issues
- Make a referral to the social worker so he/she can make contact with family
- Refer child to school counselor (severe behavior problems, anxiety)
- Refer child to school psychologist (for academic testing, issues that may be affecting child’s success in school and motivation to attend school)
- Refer child to school-based wellness center to address health issues affecting attendance
- Truancy Court (where available)

Refer child/family to outside professionals (in collaboration with social worker):
- Refer child and family to psychologist or counseling center
- Refer to pediatrician or medical professional
Resources for Learning to Use an iPhone

▲ RESOURCES FROM APPLE
    ▪ Key Pages:
      • Making and receiving phone calls—page 43
      • Email—page 51
      • Sending and receiving text messages—page 64
  o iPhone 4 tips and tricks: http://www.apple.com/iphone/iphone-4/tips/

▲ VIDEOS
  o iPhone 4 tutorial: http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3553D9B20BA69033
  o How to add contact: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i-RBwQdISSE
  o Battery saving tips: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qUBd-bCarpl