Early Truancy Prevention Program
Teacher Training Materials

Intervention Teachers

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TEACHER TRAINING AGENDA

OVERVIEW OF THE TEACHER WORK FLOW FOR THE EARLY TRUANCY PREVENTION PROGRAM

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

HOME VISITS
How to Schedule a Home Visit
Sample Teacher Script for Scheduling a Home Visit:
Sample Letter to Send Home to Parents:
Conducting a Successful Home Visit
Sample Questions for Home Visit:
Safety Strategies
Maintaining a Positive Relationship with Families after the Home Visit

ATTENDANCE BARRIERS

ATTENDANCE INTERVENTIONS FOR TARGET STUDENTS

RESOURCES FOR LEARNING TO USE AN IPHONE
Teacher Training Agenda

8:30-12:30

1. Introductions and Contact Information
2. Informed Teacher Consent
3. Program 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
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Overview of the Teacher Work Flow for the Early Truancy Prevention Program

There are five main components to the Early Truancy Prevention Program.

1. **Home Visits.** Teachers conduct home visits with each student in their classroom (August-October)

2. **Target Students.** Each week starting in November, teachers will receive a list that documents which students are on the target list. These are students who have missed 3+ days of school in the last 4 weeks.

3. **Working with Families of Students who are on the Target List.** Teachers will contact the family of each student who is on the target list to identify the reason(s) for the student’s recent absenteeism.

4. **Implementation of Action Plan.** Teachers work with families to develop and implement an action plan to alleviate barriers to school attendance.

5. **Documentation in Attendance Information System (AIS).** Interactions with families who are on the target list regarding attendance issues should be documented in the AIS. This information will help teachers keep track of their work, inform the school social worker about progress that has been made, and see help the research team support teachers’ efforts through consultation.
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 Surveys and Interview (Oct/Nov)
   _____ End-of-Year Feedback Session and Data Collection Surveys and Interview (end of April)

2. August 23 – October 12: Home Visit Documentation
   _____ Document completed home visits ONLINE with AIS (as an “interaction”)
   _____ Home Visit Reflection Form for each completed visit (via Link on website)

   Home visit updates sent via email to Erika every 2 weeks
   _____ September 7th: Email update #1 due
   _____ September 21st: Email update #2 due
   _____ October 5th: Email update #3 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

   _____ October 12th: Home Visits Not Completed Form (via Link on website)

3. October 1 – May 1: Targeted Interventions and Documentation
   _____ Document Attendance Barriers and Attendance Interventions for Target Students ONLINE with AIS by each FRIDAY
Home Visits

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 iPhone number).

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: ________________________________

Address: ____________________________________________________________________________  Phone: __________________________

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, 2015 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. Collect any materials you would like to bring, i.e. activities/books for the child, or classroom information to give the parent.
4. Bring “Home Visit Checklist” and “Communication Plan” Form
5. Bring this form “Conducting a Successful Home Visit” and “Sample Questions for Home Visit”.
6. Use appropriate safety strategies
   a. Bring the family’s phone number, address and directions to their house.
   b. 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.
   c. Bring your iPhone.

▲ 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. Create “Communication Plan” with the parents.
7. Discuss ways that you and the parent can work together to support the child’s attendance everyday and success in school.
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. Create “Communication Plan” and encourage parent involvement

PURPOSE: It is important to make a plan for continued communication and collaboration. Discuss how you will communicate with parent throughout school year and how they can communicate with you.

- Complete the "Communication Plan" form and have parents initial at the bottom.
- Invite the parent to school, or schedule a specific time when they can come to observe or volunteer, etc.
- 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.

5. 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)

6. 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?

7. 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.
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:
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 we created a communication plan
- The parents told me about their child.
- The parent(s) told me about themselves.
- I told the parents about myself.
- I spent one-on-one time with the child.
- 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.
- Other: Please Explain.
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:
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Attendance Barriers

▲ HEALTH PROBLEMS
   This includes:
   Chronic illness
   Routine illness (colds, flu, lice etc.)
   Injury/physical disability
   Emotional/Behavioral problems
   Medical appointments during the school day.

▲ PARENT ACCOMODATES CHILD RESISTS ATTENDING
   This includes:
   School anxiety ("stomach aches" etc.) or if student dislikes school for other reasons.

▲ PARENT’S CHOICE
   This includes:
   Child needed at home (to care for baby, translate for a parent etc.)
   Family holiday / travel

▲ DISORGANIZED HOUSEHOLD
   This includes:
   Parent not available in the morning due to work or other obligations
   Parent has difficulty in coping
   Homelessness/Frequent address changes
   Child alternates between different homes

▲ TRANSPORTATION
   This includes:
   Child suspended from the bus
   Child or parent dislikes the bus
   No alternative to the bus
   Child lives out of district / does not have bus access

▲ OTHER
## Attendance Interventions for Target Students

Interventions for students and families are divided into 3 phases of progressing intensity.

### PHASE 1. INFORMATION SHARING AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING WITH ALL STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

**With Parents/Caregivers:**

- Conduct initial home visit with all families to build a positive relationship, and to discuss the importance of attendance and any possible attendance barriers. Ask for parent commitment to ensure their child attends school and arrives on-time.

- 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)

**With Students:**

- Discuss the importance of attendance/on-time arrival with all students

- Create a welcoming classroom environment to motivate student attendance

### PHASE 2: TARGETED INTERVENTIONS WITH STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

**Student Interventions:**

- 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

- 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.”)
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- 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:

- Contact parents to discuss absences and barriers to attendance.
- Conduct a targeted home visit or schedule in-person meeting with parents: share attendance calendar, brainstorm action plan to address attendance barriers, create an attendance “contract” with parents
- 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.
- Thank parent when child attends school / arrives on time (via iphone, written note or in person). “Thank you for making sure Jessica arrives to school on time!”

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)

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: CONSULTATION AND REFERRALS

Consult with other professionals at school for information about child’s attendance issues and to brainstorm next steps:

- Consult with counselor/school psychologist to discuss issues and solutions related to: child anxiety, school refusal, emotional/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
Refer child/family to professionals at school:

- Initiate SAP 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

▲ VIDEOS
  o iPhone 4 tutorial: [http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3553D9B20BA69033](http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3553D9B20BA69033)
  o How to add contact: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i-RBwQdlSSE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i-RBwQdlSSE)
  o Battery saving tips: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qUBd-bCarpI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qUBd-bCarpI)