Best Practices for Increasing School Engagement & Decreasing Chronic Absence

Kim Corneille
Foster Youth Services Coordinator/Education Consultant
Santa Cruz County Office of Education
During the 22-23 school year we served 189 foster students (ages 5-20)

The current point-in-time count is 123

25% of our students are English Language Learners

37% of our students have IEPs, and 7% have 504 Plans

About half of our students attend school in Pajaro Valley Unified School District
Common Attendance Barriers

- Mental health issues
- Placement changes
- Not feeling successful in school
- Natural disasters
- Sleep issues
- Suspensions
- Transportation
- Not feeling safe
- Peer issues
- Housing instability
- And more...
FosterEd

PROGRAM MODEL

Education Champion who can support the student's long-term success

Education case plan based on proactive assessment of the student's education strengths and needs

Education team of engaged adults, including the Education Champion, caregiver, agency staff, and youth

Student Enters State Care or Supervision

Student is Prepared for Long-term Success
Collaborating to increase school engagement and reduce barriers to attendance

Creating attendance goals and interventions for all students with <90% attendance

Providing information and resources to caregivers on the importance of attendance

Tracking and monitoring each student's attendance and education case plan
Partnerships that support school engagement:

- College or Bust subcommittee
- The Career Exploration Project
- TutorMe and Tutoring Club
More Strategies

- Leverage student's strengths, talents and interests into prosocial activities
- Ensure students are enrolled and disenrolled in a timely manner when they move placements
- Track data locally
- Help schools become more trauma-responsive and welcoming environments
- Partner closely with school counselors
- Educate parents, caregivers and team members on the definition and threshold of chronic absenteeism
- Celebrate individual progress in student attendance
Diversity is a fact. Equity is a choice. Inclusion is an action. Belonging is an outcome.

-Arthur Chan
Contact Info

Kim Corneille
kcorneille@santacruzcoe.org
Santa Cruz County Office of Education Foster Youth Services/FosterEd program