

Let families know that you care about their child and believe they can do well in school, but you are concerned that their child has begun to fall behind in his studies because he or she has missed so many days of school so far this year. Tell them how many days the student has missed.

What to Say to Families of Teens

- **Almost all parents have hopes and dreams for their children.** Consider asking them to share their dreams for their child. Let them know that being in school every day will enable their child to do well in school, graduate ready for the work force or go on to college.
- **Ask them if they know that students who miss as little as two days a month are at risk** of not graduating from high school.
- **Tell them that even strong students with good grades in elementary school can quickly fall off course** in middle and high school if they miss a few classes. Lessons build on one another and move more quickly in the upper grades. They risk failing their classes!
- **Let them know that while it may not seem like it, students can't make up for too many absences** with take-home assignments.
- **Suggest that the parents talk to their teen about being in school every day.** Many teens don't think it matters to skip a class during the day, but it does.
- **Help caregivers to identify what the barriers might be that keep their child from getting to school.** Is the student staying home during the day to watch a younger sibling? Is she concerned about bullying? Ask them what approaches might help them address these challenges.
- **Be sensitive when talking about tough challenges families may be facing,** such as a lack of access to health care or food, as well as unstable housing or poor transportation. Parents may feel embarrassed or ashamed about not being able to provide for their children. If your school has this information, offer to put the family in touch with resources that offer help for the whole family.

