Attendance Matters: Resources for 4K Teachers

- **What is Chronic Absence?**
  - First Steps 4K defines chronic absences as missing 10 consecutive days or 10 or more days of school for any reason- excused or unexcused.
- **Engaging Families**
  - Create a welcoming environment
  - Use family conferences and engagement events to remind families of the importance of attendance.
  - Develop a timeline for communication
  - Celebrate improvements
- **Why are students absent?**
  - Barriers- transportation, illnesses, death/grief, housing, guardianship.
  - Behavior challenges
  - Misconceptions- missing days doesn't impact my scholarship, I didn't know there was an attendance policy.
- **How to spot patterns:**
  - Take attendance regularly
- **Ready to Use Communication Scripts**- Use these sample messages as starting points for communicating with families. Personalize each message to reflect the family's circumstances and your program's communication practices.
- **ReadyRosie** share Modeled Moments related to routines, transitions, social-emotional development, and family well-being.

Our Commitment
Attendance Matters is more than an initiative. It is an opportunity to strengthen relationships, understand family needs, and ensure children have consistent opportunities to learn and thrive. First Steps 4K is committed to increase attendance and reduce chronic absenteeism by monitoring attendance, supporting providers, and engaging families.

Tier 1 Intervention- Universal approach. All 4K families will receive information about attendance during the family orientation, in the family handbook, at the family workshops, the family-teacher conferences, and in the monthly family newsletter.
Tier 2 Intervention- First Steps 4K Eligibility & Attendance Specialist will reach out to families when absences reach more than 5 days.
Tier 3 Intervention- the First Steps Director of Family Engagement will contact families when the absence is due to a barrier or more than 10 days

Attendance Matters: Teacher Communication Scripts

1. First Absence: Family Check-In
"Good morning, [Parent/Guardian Name]!
We missed [Child's Name] in class today and wanted to check in to make sure everything was okay. We hope your family is doing well, and we look forward to seeing [Child's Name] back at school.
Please let us know if there is anything we can do to support your family.
Warmly,
[Teacher's Name}
[Program Name]"

Day 2: Teacher Call to the Child
After one day of absence
Purpose: Help the child feel missed, remembered, and excited to return to school.
"Hello, my 4K friend!
This is [Teacher's Name], your 4K teacher! I wanted to call because we miss you, and I can't wait to see you back in class.
We have so many fun things planned! We are learning about [Study or Investigation Topic], and we have a new story that I'm excited to share with you.
I hope to see you tomorrow at [School Start Time] so we can learn, play, and have fun together!
Sending you hugs and smiles!
Love,
[Teacher's Name]"
Reminder: *You are not speaking directly with the child, unless that child is with the parent. Use the family's approved contact method.*

Day 3: Wish You Well Message
Purpose: Reinforce belonging and let the child know the class is thinking about them.
"Good morning!
This is your teacher, [Teacher's Name]. We wanted you to know that we miss our friend, [Child's Name], and we are looking forward to having them back with us!
We have added [Child's Name]'s name and picture to our 4K Wish You Well Board. We want to let them know they are an important part of our classroom family.
When [Child's Name] returns, we will be ready to welcome them with their favorite classroom greeting!
We can't wait to see you soon!
Hugs and smiles,
[Teacher's Name]"
Reminder: *Well Wish Board is a classroom display. You can learn more here-* *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DqQkrTKsb2g* or

https://consciousdiscipline.com/memberships/free-resources/shubert/shuberts-classroom/wish-well-ritual/

Day 4-10: Invite students to make a greeting card or write a note. Have material available and be prepared to send it or have it available upon the student's return.

Returning to School: Welcome the student back with their favorite greeting. Provide at least one non-touch greeting option- https://youtu.be/FET6J3iz5JU?si=r7nyM1L_rFBSZ2UE
Acknowledge their return during the morning meeting.

Celebrating Improved Attendance.
"Hello, [Parent/Guardian Name]!
We are so happy to see [Child's Name] attending more consistently! Thank you for your continued partnership and the efforts your family is making to support consistent attendance. Every day brings new opportunities for your child to learn and grow!
We appreciate you!
Warmly,
[Teacher's Name]"