



Engaging with Youth in the Community



The community can play a vital role in supporting local students' academic success. By engaging in conversations with students every day about their experiences in school, community members encourage students to make education their priority.

A little talking can go a very long way. How many opportunities do you have everyday to talk to elementary, middle, and high school students about their experience in school? What can you say to express that *their community* counts on them to be in school and is committed to their future success?

[The Be There campaign at the United Way](#) focuses on the issue of chronic absence – missing 10% of school/18 out of 180 days/2 days per month. **3 out of 4 students who are chronically absent in 6th grade never graduate from high school.** [A study done in Utah](#) found that students who were chronically absent in any year between 8th and 12th grade were 7.4 times more likely to drop out of high school! We believe that the best way to combat this trend is by working as a community to encourage students to be in school every day.



Tips to engage youth in your community

Be warm and friendly, even if they're not

Look young people in the eye when you're talking

Get to know their names if they come in often

Try to rid yourself of stereotypes about youth and look past the surface

Ask open-ended questions instead of yes/no questions (Have a good day at school today?) or questions that elicit a brief response (e.g. How are you? Fine.).

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- ◆ What's going on today?
 - ◆ Anything funny happen at school today?
 - ◆ Learn anything interesting today?
 - ◆ What do you think about...?

Take note of interesting things about them

- ◆ I love that pin on your backpack. What does it mean?
- ◆ I see you like...

Get their input on your business

- ◆ What do you think of this new product?
- ◆ What kinds of things would you like to see offered?



Be yourself.

Young people hate when adults act like them to try and earn their trust. They don't need more friends. Be a caring, supportive adult!

- "Tips" provided by Mentoring Partnership

