

# Getting in Touch with Hard to Reach Parents

Is your school having trouble getting contact information for parents or guardians of chronically absent kids? Check out these tried and true tips from teachers, advocates, and school officials from around the country.

## Start with the basics

- Ask students for their home phone number, as well as any relevant cell phone numbers.
- Talk to a chronically absent student's siblings if you can't reach the actual student.
- Look at school forms – accurate phoner numbers are often on free and reduced lunch forms.

## Seek out the parents

- For younger children, use drop off or pick up as an opportunity to reach out to parents or relatives and ask them to complete forms with contact information.
- Send a formal letter home informing parents of their legal obligation to provide up to date emergency numbers and contact information.
- Schedule a home visit to obtain accurate contact information.

## Get creative

- If an event is coming up that parents are likely to call about, such as school picture day, be sure to alert office workers to ask parents for their contact information.
- Use address information to find and get in touch with families who live near chronically absent kids whose parents you're having a hard time reaching.
- Leverage existing community resources to establish attendance outreach workers who can make personal contact with families through telephone calls and home visits. In Chicago, for example, TANF funds attendance workers. Other communities use trained America Corps volunteers.

Ideas and tips from Sarah Jonas (National Center for Community Schools), Debra Duardo (Los Angeles Unified School District), and Ken Seeley (The Partnership for Families & Children).

For more information on school attendance, visit [www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org) and [www.missingschoolmatters.org](http://www.missingschoolmatters.org)