In School + On Track: Positive Parent Messaging Toolkit

The Problem

- **230,000** elementary school students in California were absent **18+** days in the 2014–15 school year.
- **83%** of kindergartners and first graders who miss 18+ days of school are unable to read on-level by the end of 3rd grade.
- Students who cannot read on-level by the end of 3rd grade are **4x** more likely to drop out of school than those who can.

The Research

- The Office of California Attorney General Kamala D. Harris (the Bureau of Children’s Justice), the Ad Council, and the California Endowment sought to answer one question: **What’s the best way to communicate with parents about elementary school absences?**
- We sent communications experts to learn from our most important partners: parents. Specifically, those experts spoke to nearly **1,000** parents of chronically absent elementary school students across California.

The Toolkit

Based on the research, we are releasing a Toolkit that contains:

- All of the research findings.
- Communication tools based on the research, including a list of ‘top 10’ tips for effective communication and a letter that school and district leaders can send to teachers. For example, we found that simple communication approaches—such as highlighting absences per month, instead of per term or year—can help parents understand the actual number of their children’s absences.
- Strategy recommendations for districts and communities to design their own communications plans.

The Parent Communication Toolkit

To access the Toolkit, please visit: [oag.ca.gov/truancy/toolkit](http://oag.ca.gov/truancy/toolkit)