

Onward & Upward

Connecting Youth to a **Brighter** Tomorrow



Brought to you by MindPeace • 3rd Edition

Boosting Student Engagement

The troubling news?

According to [Ohio's Attendance Guide](#) published in May of 2024, "During the 2022-2023 school year, more than 26% of Ohio's students were chronically absent, meaning they missed 10% or more of the school year for any reason. It's hard to engage in learning when students don't show up.

The good news?

Many of the same strategies that engage students as learners in school have also been shown to boost student attendance.

#1 on the list of strategies is fostering a sense of connection and belonging. As such, we've pulled together some resources in MindPeace's new [Guide to Fostering Classroom Connection and Belonging](#). Visit this new [guide](#) to get started!

***ProTip:** Choose the resources and strategies below which are most helpful for your community. The goal is progress, not perfection.*

For Your Students

Elementary School

1. A **light-hearted pep talk** for students returning from a school break or preparing for a big week of testing. Pair it with a class discussion on the importance of school attendance and perhaps even create a classroom goal and group incentive/celebration.



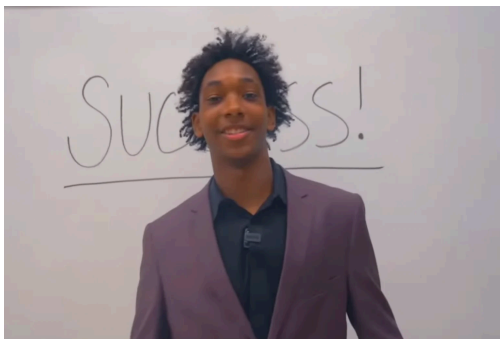
Kid President's Pep Talk to Teachers and Students!

2. **Keep connection top of mind** throughout the school year with this NEW **Classroom Belonging Activities, Elementary School** resource from MindPeace offering bi-monthly programming ideas.

Middle & High Schools

The first days after a school break and/or the days leading up to big testing weeks are great times to re-emphasize school attendance, engagement and motivation for learning. Below are two peer-to-peer resources to help you get these conversations started.

Extra bonus for teachers and administrators willing to openly share your own motivation struggles with students!



1. A Pep Talk on School Attendance

This **video** (2:28) by *Sylacauga High School Athletics* offers a light-hearted way of reminding students why school is important.

Show this video as is or leverage it as an example and invite students to pair up with one another to create videos of their own!



2. The power of CHOICE (a short film to motivate you), by Anna Engelschall

It's easy for students (and sometimes even teachers) to lose motivation in the spring time. Need a boost?

This **video** (2:20) drives home the cumulative impact of the daily choices we make.

For Your Families

Simply copy and paste this sample message into your school's e-newsletter:

"How was school today?" - Parent

"Fine." Child/ Teen

Want to move beyond 'fine' in assessing and supporting your child's school learning experience?

Check out this [video](#) (22:56; need to rewind) featuring Jenny Anderson & Rebecca Winthrop, authors of [The Disengaged Teen](#), as they share four different dynamic modes of learning and how to support our kids in finding their spark. Content is relevant for kids of all ages.

Pro Tip: Encourage your parent organization to host a Book Club experience featuring [The Disengaged Teen](#).

For Your School Team

It all starts with relationships...



1. This video (3:40) by Edutopia, [The Power of Relationships in Schools](#), discusses the scientific benefits on a child's and teen's brain when healthy, trust-based and attuned relationships are fostered between teachers and students and among students with their peers.

2. Check out these NEW resource guides from *MindPeace* to support both student and family engagement:

[Strategies and Ideas for Boosting Student Attendance & Engagement](#)

[6 Strategies for Increasing Family Engagement in Schools](#)

For YOU!

It's not just our students who wrestle with connection and belonging. The truth is we've all felt that sting at one moment or another.

Feeling disconnected? Step one: Connect with and be kind to yourself...

A Message to the So-Called "Misfits" of the World:

- © Rachel Macy Stafford 2017 (from the book #onlylovetoday)

If you find yourself towering over others, don't slouch to fit in,

Stand tall and admire the view from up there.

If you find yourself hating your glasses,

Go funky with the rims and notice the details of life you might've missed.

If you find yourself wishing you didn't take up so much of the seat,

Know the person next to you thinks she's lucky to sit next to someone so nice."...

Continue reading [here](#).

Feeling the tug of loneliness? You're in good company.

According to a **2024 Healthy Minds Monthly Poll** by the American Psychiatric Association (APA), **30% of adults reported experiencing feelings of loneliness at least once a week.**

This Psychology Today [article](#) shares common reasons for loneliness including why we sometimes feel lonely even in crowds, along with practical tips for moving beyond it. Remember: loneliness is not an indication that you (or I) are broken. Rather it's affirmation that we are human. After all, connection is one of our core basic needs.

MindPeace Network News

Click [here](#) for important network updates and mark your calendars for these upcoming MindPeace Network educational events...



Suicide Screening and Assessment (C-SSRS & ASQ) Tools & Safety Planning Training

Virtual Training presented by:
MindPeace and CCHMC

Date: **Monday, March 10**

Times: 8:00 am – 1:00 pm



School Administrator's Forum & Luncheon

June 2, 2026 - Save the date!

[Attention Administrators:](#)

Complete this quick **survey** to inform planning for this year's forum. Your input is appreciated!



Annual Summit & Luncheon

Yes, the cakes are returning! Join us as we celebrate your team's hard work over the past year and get energized for the year ahead.

Administrators: If possible, keep this date open for your school

Virtual

mental health teams to be available to attend.

Learn about Cincinnati Children's and MindPeace's recommended system approach for youth at risk for suicide.

Date: **Thursday, Aug. 13, 2026**

Location: Manor House, Mason

For more information and to register, click [here](#).

Registration will open in May.



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