

Tips from Youth & Coaches: Helping Youth to Re-engage, Re-enroll, and Persist/Graduate from High School

When youth is NOT ready to re-engage in high school – what approaches can we take?

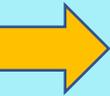
- ❖ Support/meet them where they are
- ❖ Build the relationship first - have fun, eat together – don't talk about school right away
- ❖ Get to know them, who they are, thoughts, feelings, interests
- ❖ Practice “power listening”
- ❖ Build trust
- ❖ Clarify that it's a partnership and that we are following their lead – we not are here to tell them what to do/not do
- ❖ Under the “why” – the drivers, their reasons – as to why they don't want to engage (always with support and empathy; not judgement or agenda)
- ❖ Don't force them down any pathway
- ❖ It “doesn't have to be right now”
- ❖ Practice patience
- ❖ Let them drive
- ❖ Build off the reason why they don't want to go back and take baby steps. Work on one thing at a time.
- ❖ Believe in their potential and let them feel that
- ❖ Be consistent – meet them at least 1x each week
- ❖ Build a relationship with the key adults in their lives – practice collaboration & coordination so they know they are supported by their team
- ❖ Help youth come up with their own solutions
- ❖ Find out their interests and what they may want to engage in, even if it's not related to school; tailor your approach based on their interests
- ❖ If they are not sure - help them Explore their options and Expose them to new opportunities
- ❖ Maybe connect them to a peer group and/or credible messenger
- ❖ Take them somewhere new (the ferry, a day trip, a new area) where they can open up and potentially have an “ah-ha moment”
- ❖ Remember that it doesn't always have to be about school/work
- ❖ Be supportive, patient, and there for them, no matter what!



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When they are ready – **how to help them connect to a best-fit high school/GED setting?**

- ❖ Get their transcript to see where they are with credits and Regent's exams
- ❖ Explore the different types of high school options; if in Buffalo, a GED program may be the best option. If in Erie, a GED program or a BOCES alternative high school may be an option; Refer to [Appendix F8: Alternative High School Selection and Application Guide](#) and [Appendix F9. List of Alternative High Schools](#). Set up a TA session to explore!
- ❖ Help the youth understand all the different options/types of schools and programs that they are eligible for; see what they prefer.
- ❖ Once the type of high school setting is identified (e.g., GED) – help them explore specific schools/programs; consider commute time, eligibility, onsite offerings/supports available. See [Appendix H0: GED Programs](#) for a list of list of GED options in Buffalo.
- ❖ Teamwork approach - loop in the Case Planning team, parent/foster parent, school, and all key parties to ensure everyone is on the same page and supportive
- ❖ VISIT schools/GED programs they are interested in; go with them to provide support; meet the staff they would be working with
- ❖ Debrief after each visit (over food!)
- ❖ Assist with the application process (ask for support if needed); ensure youth is prepared for any interviews
- ❖ Be there every step of the way
- ❖ Provide emotional support throughout the entire process
- ❖ Keep everyone in the loop
- ❖ **Celebrate their acceptance!**



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Once Enrolled/Engaged,

how do we support them to persist and graduate (or obtain a GED)?

- ❖ Follow up with young person before the first day of school to provide support/encouragement
- ❖ Make sure they have the correct address/directions, any needed materials/supplies, and know what time to get up and leave their home
- ❖ Reach out after the first day to debrief/reflect on experience, navigate any challenges/feelings, provide support, and celebrate
- ❖ Connect as much as needed (minimum to check-in every week to provide support and keep building the relationship); be consistent
- ❖ Build a relationship with the primary person at the school/program (e.g., Guidance Counselor); check-in as often as needed
- ❖ Visit the school/program at least once per semester with the young person (more often if needed)
- ❖ On school visits, model strength-based behavior, and follow the best practices on how to prepare for, conduct, and follow up from school visits. [See Appendix C5: Effective School Visits.](#)
- ❖ Connect student to any needed academic supports, including quality 1:1 tutoring, afterschool supports, IEP, etc.
- ❖ Ensure student is receiving all supports/accommodations
- ❖ Provide educational advocacy; slowly help the students learn how to advocate themselves
- ❖ If the school is not a right fit; help them transfer to an [alternative or best-fit setting](#).
- ❖ Help them create a vision through post-secondary and career Exploration ...Expose them to new opportunities!
- ❖ Connect them to career opportunities (e.g., internships, extracurriculars, leadership/ community service) in line with their interests
- ❖ Celebrate successes every step of the way
- ❖ Always show that you care – and if it doesn't work out – don't give up no matter what! ... Repeat starting from slide 1 😊

