



Caring Adult Interventions



Caring Adult interventions include mentoring, assistance with work completion, daily check-ins, etc. These activities establish one or more positive relationships at school- relationships that support student engagement and protect against negative outcomes (Anderson et al., 2004; Rumberger, 2001; Wilkins & Bost, 2016). Programs across the country show solid evidence of the positive impact of mentoring relationships between youth and caring adults.

Remembering important things about your students' lives

"I created a list of all of the birthdays for students on my focus list. I do my best to check the list every day and create a little birthday note for them. I just write a note telling them happy birthday and that I'm happy I have gotten to know them and include a few Starbursts. Last week, I did this for a boy on my focus list. His birthday was on a Saturday, so I didn't get a chance to give him the note until Monday when he had class with me. Most students say thanks, but aren't ever super enthusiastic about receiving the note. However, this particular student was so excited! He made a comment about how 'someone noticed' and said he was going to keep the note forever and hang it up somewhere. That one interaction made me feel happy and sad at the same time. Happy that he was so excited to receive the note and sad that he felt that potentially no one else had noticed his birthday. Moments like that just reaffirm that I enjoy this position!"

Checking in with a student who is not coming to school

"As I was saying goodbye to the students at the door I ran into one of my favorite students that had dropped from our program. It was a rare moment of relief and excitement for me. I tried to keep in touch with her as much as possible after she dropped--most times not getting a response. Sometimes it's hard not to take that personally seeing the relationship we had. She was one of the first students that immediately enjoyed seeing me. I helped her out in class and kept up with her. It was tough to see her stop showing up because I know her potential and she's such a smart girl. I think it's hard when you are there for someone to listen, but can't seem to help them in any other way.

When she saw me we hugged--a real hug. She was so happy to see me and when I told her that I was glad to see her back she said, 'It's because of you!' This made me almost cry because I'm not sure I believe it--but the fact she thought of me in that way was so sweet. Even if I don't see her again it was a sense of satisfaction that I haven't felt. Her light is so apparent to those around her, I just hope she sees it in herself."

Developing positive connections with students

“I have a student that has been getting into some trouble in school. I was meeting with him once a week and I felt like he was not liking me very much and he was not willing to talk to me about his behaviors. I had to email his mom on some academic concerns and she replied that day and she expressed how upset and worried she was about her son. I met with him that day and he still wouldn't say much to me.

Then one day I saw he was in ISS and I went to ask him what he did and he told me what happened. I looked right at him and I told him how upset and worried his mom was and he started to cry. He had felt so bad and he said he only gets into trouble to make people like him and so he can fit in. He and I talked and I had his mom come in to meet with me and I had her son with as well and I think the two of them just needed to know that they both care about each other and now things have turned around for him and his teachers have told me how great he has been in class. I am not sure I really did anything to help at all and they just needed to sit together and hear how each other felt and not they seem to understand each other and things are better for everyone!”

Tutoring a student struggling with an academic subject

“I work with a student in math lab. Math lab is a class where students extra help with the math homework if they are falling behind or low test scores. She has been failing her math class consistently and has anxiety when it comes to the subject. I have tried working with her in small groups, but she refuses to participate. Lately we have been working one-on-one with math problems. Now that she is by herself with no distractions, she is doing much better. She struggles with self-esteem issues and is embarrassed that she is farther behind than her peers. She explained that she was afraid that the other students would make fun of her in our group and that discouraged her.

A couple times a week we will go over certain problems she is struggling with and take our time. It has helped tremendously that she is by herself when working. She concentrates more and actually wants to improve her grade. She was so proud that she got a C on her test, since usually it is less than 50%. I told her that success does not come overnight and it will take time. I explained that if worked hard for the rest of the trimester, then she would not have to go to summer school. It is a great feeling knowing that you are contributing to a student's success.”

