

Check & Connect

Increasing student engagement and persistence in school

Check & Connect is a model of sustained intervention for promoting students' engagement at school and with learning. Demonstrated outcomes of Check & Connect include:



increased attendance, persistence in school, accrual of credits, and school completion rates; and



decreased truancy, tardies, behavioral referrals, and dropout rates.

The Check & Connect model originated from a partnership of researchers, practitioners, parents, and students led by the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota.

Check & Connect is data-driven and grounded in research on resiliency and home-school collaboration. Student referral criteria include alterable warning signs of school withdrawal—primarily attendance indices (absences, tardies, skipping class)—in the context of academic performance and emotional or behavioral problems.

Check & Connect is implemented by a person referred to as a mentor—a cross between a mentor, an advocate, and a service coordinator whose primary goal is to keep education a salient issue for disengaged students and their teachers and families.

Check & Connect is structured to maximize personal contact and opportunities to build trusting relationships. Student levels of engagement (as reflected in their attendance, grades, and behavior) are “checked” regularly by mentors and used to guide their efforts to increase and maintain students’ “connection” with school.

According to the [What Works Clearinghouse](#), **Check & Connect is the only dropout prevention intervention found to have positive effects on staying in school.**

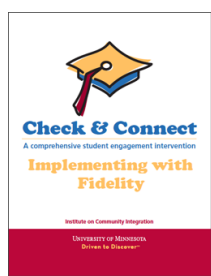
Check & Connect Core Elements

1. **Relationships** based on mutual trust and open communication whereby the mentor:
 - a. monitors or “checks” a student’s attendance, grades, behavior, etc.;
 - b. “connects” a student to personalized, data-based interventions;
 - c. mentors students for a minimum of two years; and
 - d. facilitates student access to and participation in school.
2. **Problem solving and capacity building** to help students overcome obstacles.
3. **Persistence Plus**, a persistent source of motivation, familiarity with the youth and his/her family, and a consistent message that “education is important for your future.”

Check & Connect Implementation Steps

1. Determine indicators of student disengagement
2. Identify students at risk of disengagement or dropout
3. Select or hire mentors
4. Organize existing resources for intervention
5. Get to know students, teachers, and parents
6. Use “check” procedures and the monitoring form
7. Implement “connect” interventions
8. Strengthen the family-school relationship
9. Monitor the person-environment fit
10. Provide mentor support and supervision
11. Evaluate program implementation

New Check & Connect Implementation Manual



Check & Connect: A Comprehensive Student Engagement Intervention **Implementing with Fidelity** (2012)

By Sandra L. Christenson,
Karen Stout, & Angie Pohl

The 2012 edition of the Check & Connect implementation manual builds on the experience and continuing research of the past 21 years to offer users an expanded guide that incorporates new findings about the model. It walks users through the Check & Connect implementation process, outlining the key components, describing the steps of implementation, and presenting the underlying theory and research, including the four types of student engagement (academic, behavioral, cognitive, and affective) and the importance of intervening both directly with students and indirectly through enhancing students' home and school contexts. Additionally, the 2012 manual provides guidance on options for implementing Check & Connect with fidelity to its principles and strategies while also responding to local school and community contexts.

Cost: \$50 each, \$45 each for 20 or more copies in a single order. For more information and to order, go to checkandconnect.umn.edu/manual.

Check & Connect Training and Consultation

Check & Connect staff at the University of Minnesota offer several standard and custom training options to schools, districts, and community agencies seeking to start a new student engagement program, enhance an existing truancy prevention program, or use Check & Connect with related initiatives:

1. **Overview Webinar** for a brief introduction at your computer.
2. **Preparation and Implementation Training** for getting Check & Connect started at your site (includes manual).
3. **Mentor Training** for new or existing Check & Connect mentors (includes competency-based online follow-up).
4. **Reflect, Refresh, Renew** for celebrating successes, identifying development priorities, and renewing your commitment to Persistence Plus.

Overview webinars are held every other month, and implementation and mentor trainings are held annually at a minimum in Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN. However, all of these training options can be customized to meet your site's specific needs with on-site training and follow-up technical assistance and consultation. In addition, staff are available to assist you with writing Check & Connect into grant proposals.



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