

The National PTA and California State PTA consider health education to be of major importance. Local units should promote health education.

Some ways to promote physical, mental and emotional health education are to:

- Help parents recognize and respond to the health and nutrition needs of their children and families.
- Encourage compliance with mandated health education curriculum.
- Work to improve health care services, in particular the credentialed school nurse-to-student ratio, in school and community.
- Stress the concepts of wellness and prevention.
- Update and implement school wellness policies.
- Emphasize the importance of healthy lifestyles and modeling these lifestyles for children.
- Support and promote a healthy school environment.
- Make parents cognizant of, and responsive to, environmental issues and hazards that may jeopardize the health of children and families.
- Ensure a comprehensive school health program that integrates activities and services designed to promote the optimal physical, emotional, social and educational development of children and youth.

Recommended Action

- Work with the PTA program chair each year to facilitate at least one PTA meeting about health topics.
- Arrange to have a health display table at PTA meetings. Distribute health materials.
- Work with classroom teachers and parents to secure alternatives to food as rewards.
- Identify alternative ways to celebrate school and non-school events by using non-food items.
- Be sensitive to student and adult special needs when planning PTA sponsored events including physical accessibility and dietary needs such as food allergies, students with diabetes, etc.
- Ensure that the school complies with the standards for physical education and recess for every student.
- Promote physical education and activity events throughout the community.
- Encourage volunteerism in the areas of student screening for hearing, vision, scoliosis, etc.

- Request a line item in the PTA budget for student health and welfare needs.
- Support comprehensive health education instruction at all grade levels, in compliance with the California Standards for Health Education, including first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) training. See https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/healthst_andmar08.pdf
- Promote hand washing in classrooms, especially prior to eating and after using the restroom.
- Promote increased access to fruits and vegetables and free, fresh drinking water.
- Submit health-related articles for the PTA newsletter. Ask the school nurse for articles and suggestions or use health articles from State PTA publications, PTA allied agencies and health websites.
- Use social media to promote health and wellness messages and tips.
- Participate in ongoing health projects of the National PTA and California State PTA.
- Support health-related events, such as Red Ribbon Week, National Immunization Month, School Nurse Day, Children's Health Month, Yellow Ribbon Month, National Nutrition Month, Dental Health Month, World AIDS Day, and the Great American Smoke Out.
- Work with local school districts and statewide policymakers to ensure policies are enacted to provide appropriate health leadership by credentialed school nurses, including adoption of the recommended nurse-to-student ratio of 1-to-750 for students in general population; 1:225 in the student population that may require daily professional school nursing services or intervention; and, 1:125 in student population with complex health care needs.
- Educate school staff and families on the importance of healthy indoor air quality and its relationship to student and staff health, academic achievement and absenteeism.
- Educate students, parents, school personnel and the community about the high incidence of skin cancer and recommended strategies for reducing risk for this disease.
- Educate school staff and families on the importance of comprehensive school health programs including dental programs.

- Encourage schools to implement Public Access to Defibrillator Programs (PADs).

Additional Projects Might Include

- Establishing a School Health Council.
- Representing PTA on allied agency committees and school district committees or task forces.
- Planning a community or school wellness fair including speakers, health-related demonstrations, displays and video materials provided by local agencies.
- Advocating for school or community fruit and vegetable gardens and farmer's markets.
- Encouraging adult and youth participation in first aid, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) classes, and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) training, and Public Access to Defibrillator Programs throughout the community.
- Preparing and distributing a list of community health agencies, hotlines for drug/alcohol abuse, child abuse, and crisis intervention.
- Supporting school-based immunization programs and parent education related to the benefits of immunization.

PTA Resources

PTA in California (official magazine of California State PTA)

California State PTA [website](#)

California State PTA *Insurance Guide* (English and Spanish) mailed annually to PTA presidents

[National PTA website](#) Health and Safety webpages

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