

# Programs

By establishing programs focused on education, including a full curriculum including the arts, family engagement, community concerns, and health, PTAs are able to address issues of concern to their community. Issues like family engagement, violence, and drug use are best handled at the local level by the parents/guardians, students, teachers and administrators working together who face these challenges every day.

PTA activities and programs, including the Reflections Program, Founders Day Celebrations, graduation activities, community and wellness fairs, and other locally developed programs are an excellent introduction to the work of the PTA to improve homes, schools, and communities. PTAs can use these opportunities to increase their exposure and support students and children.

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# Creating an Event

## Areas for PTA Involvement

PTAs are encouraged to explore a range of local issue areas, as long as these concerns fall within the scope of PTA activities. PTAs should share their successful programs with their council, district PTA and California State PTA, so that other units with similar concerns may benefit from their successful experiences. Use these tools, tips, and suggestions as a starting point to seek solutions.

Identify solutions and actions that need to be taken.

Contact community agencies for additional information and assistance.

Make an action plan (see Action Plans, Programs Chapter; Forms Chapter).

Educate the community including parents, staff, elected officials, and the general public.

### Points to Remember

Be familiar with the basic policies of the PTA (Basic Policies for All PTAs, Running Your PTA Chapter).

Review position statements, convention resolutions and issue-related guidelines of California State PTA and the National PTA (Where We Stand, Advocacy Chapter and National PTA Quick-Reference Guide).

Review California State PTA Legislation Policies and Legislation Platform (Advocacy Chapter).

Utilize existing resources and publications from California State PTA, National PTA, allied agencies, and government sources.

## Chairman and Committee Procedures

These procedures have been developed to assist unit PTA officers and chairmen in carrying out their responsibilities (see Committee Development and Guidelines, Running Your PTA Chapter). The president, as an effective leader, will see that officers, chairmen and other volunteers receive copies of their respective job descriptions from this Toolkit as soon as possible (see Job Descriptions Chapter).

Based on goals established for the year, the president and the executive board determine which programs and projects should be implemented and which might be undertaken, remembering that all projects must be approved by the membership.

While every PTA operates within the Purposes and basic policies of the PTA, each individual unit will become involved in programs and projects according to its interests, its needs, and its volunteers. No PTA can be expected to do everything.

### Chairman Duties

Convene a committee.

Serve the executive board, according to the bylaws.

Provide directional leadership for the committee.

Set an optimistic and enthusiastic tone.

Develop and maintain a procedure book (see Procedure Book, Running Your PTA Chapter).

Refer to Bylaws for Local PTA/PTSA Units as needed.

Assist and/or accompany the PTA president to meetings with decision-makers from the school, community, or city government.

Submit a written/oral report at each executive board meeting. Include all committee recommendations and a written financial accounting of all monies received and disbursed to implement approved recommendations.

Keep the committee focused on making appropriate recommendations.

Ensure that the committee assignment is completed and the action reported back to the board association.

Become acquainted with the school staff, school district staff, and decision-makers, including members of the site council and school board.

Survey parents to determine interests and needs in the home, community, and school.

Develop a program plan. Ensure that the plan meets California State PTA insurance requirements. See Insurance and Loss Prevention Guide for allowable, discouraged, and prohibited activities.

Coordinate PTA activities with the school calendar and principal.

Present the plan to the PTA board for approval.

Plan all events well in advance, with a minimum timeline of three months.

Educate parents and the community at an informational meeting.

Encourage membership to actively participate in PTA programs.

Collaborate with other PTAs and community agencies to obtain information, materials, and speakers.

Network with other PTAs in the school district to coordinate events.

Communicate with council and district PTA counterparts.

Share information prepared and distributed by the council and district PTA, California State PTA and National PTA.

Publicize activities. Use the newsletter and website to promote, educate, and inform. Contact the media or enlist the help of the PTA public relations coordinator.

Attend council and district PTA trainings, California State PTA convention and National PTA convention.

Keep fundraisers simple and low stress.

Consolidate PTA activities with school events that bring out parents and students.

Plan more low-key, family-oriented social events.

Evaluate the program and document lessons learned for future program chairmen.

## Considerations for Year-Round Schools

Make sure all tracks are represented in the yearly planning meeting.

Schedule activities and association meetings evenly among tracks.

Avoid holding special events when the treasurer or chairman of that event is off-track.

Schedule programs (e.g., Reflections Program) and fundraisers to cover all on-track and off-track times.

## Creating an Event

If the event is held in collaboration with community organizations or other PTAs, each participating unit, council or district PTA should follow the proper approval procedures specified below.

California State PTA strongly urges unit, council or district PTAs to refrain from serving alcoholic beverages at PTA functions. PTAs may not engage in the sale of alcoholic beverages. (See the Insurance and Loss Prevention Guide, Red Section, Alcohol; and Toolkit, Alcohol and PTA Events, Finance Chapter.)

### Preliminary Planning

Begin six months in advance, if possible.

Discuss and obtain approval to hold an event from the PTA executive board and principal or school representative.

Ensure the event will not conflict with other unit, council or district PTA observances.

Obtain a vote of approval for the event at a meeting of the association. Include a motion to disburse monies to cover the estimated cost involved.

If being held off campus, obtain permission for facility use from appropriate manager. If asked to sign a Hold Harmless Agreement, contact the California State PTA insurance broker.

PTA president appoints the event chairman and committee. Determine the goals of this committee. Articulate what the committee hopes to accomplish with the activities.

Appoint several members to the planning committee. Unit bylaws and standing rules may have information to guide the project. If possible, include the principal or a faculty member, the public relations/publications coordinator (if there is one), and a student (see Event Planning Worksheet, Forms Chapter).

Review event material—make copies as needed. From previous chairman or committee, obtain the procedure book, National PTA Quick-Reference Guide, Our Children, and PTA in California.

Discuss budget needs with president and treasurer. Ideally, the budget should be planned with a line item for the event. The planned activities must stay within the budget. If necessary, the community may be asked to partner by donating materials, hospitality items and perhaps even a grant or sponsor to underwrite the planned activity or event. Be realistic in estimating the

costs. Remember to include possible custodial costs, publicity, and postage.

Decide on a focus area, if any. Brainstorm ideas with the committee. Decide on activities that have the best chance for good participation from the student-body, the parents, and the community. If the PTA has never held this event before, do not overwhelm the faculty with activities.

Keep in mind past traditions but also investigate new ways to hold an appropriate event that will fit the school and community.

Select a theme as the major focus, and decide on the type of program (e.g., family dinner, musical program).

As early as possible, check school calendar and decide on a date.

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that disabled persons must be reasonably accommodated by modifying policies, making physical changes and obtaining equipment to assist their participation in any activity. For PTA meetings/events, this could include seating to accommodate an attendant accompanying a member or reserved seating in a location to accommodate a member's special need, providing written handouts to supplement discussion and/or providing qualified readers or interpreters for individuals having a hearing or sight impairment.

Discuss rules and expectations with facility management. Put all agreements in writing. Determine if permission or permits from school district or city are needed.

Notify parents and community to "save the date" for the event. Also send notes to past and present PTA presidents, leaders and award recipients, and school district and community members.

Notify staff, explaining event goals and requesting their support.

Schedule at least three committee meetings prior to event.

**Never sign** a Hold Harmless Agreement on behalf of the unit, council or district PTA until the California State PTA insurance broker has been consulted. (See Hold Harmless Agreement; Forms Chapter.)

### Transportation Planning

In situations where PTA sponsors activities and secures transportation, such as "Grad Night" (hereinafter referred to as "events"), the PTA must provide accessible transportation at no additional cost to students with mobility disabilities in compliance with the requirements set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Local PTA units shall coordinate with their local school and/or school district to obtain updated lists of accessible transportation providers if such lists exist. Questions from PTA units, districts or councils regarding a request for accessible transportation should first be directed to the school district. Additional questions may be directed to the California State PTA Vice President for Leadership Services.

When local PTA units secure transportation for participating students for events, local PTA units must comply with the ADA which does not permit services that are different or separate from that provided to other individuals without disabilities, unless such action is necessary to provide an individual with a disability or class of such individuals with a good, service, facility, privilege, advantage, or accommodation or other opportunity that is as effective as that provided to others.

If the local PTA unit secures accessible transportation to events, as described above, and it fails to arrive, the PTA shall make every reasonable effort to secure alternative accessible transportation to enable students with mobility disabilities to still attend. In no instance shall a local PTA unit inform students with mobility disabilities that they must secure their own transportation.

A student with a disability who requires a one-to-one aide as part of his or her Individualized Education Program ("IEP") shall be permitted to attend any PTA event with his or her aide, as the student's family deems necessary. Further, no fee shall be charged for any PTA event ticket for the student's aide. For any event where a student requires an aide, the cost of the aide's transportation shall be borne by the PTA. PTA may ask to be reimbursed by the event venue, affiliated school and/or school district.

## Event Development

Begin three months in advance, if possible. Develop a timeline utilizing check sheets. Assign committee members specific duties.

### Service Providers/Speakers/Program Participants (At Least Two People)

One person should be designated as the contact person on invitation letters.

One person should assist with paperwork (see Service Provider/Speakers/Program Participants Check List, Forms Chapter).

### Publicity Campaign (At Least One Person)

Publicity may include the use of one or more of the following:

News releases

PTA newsletter articles

Posters for placement at local business locations

Radio/cable television PSA "spots"

Website promotion

E-mail alerts

### Handouts/Fliers (At Least One Person)

Handouts may include the following:

Fliers to parents

Attendee record form

Permission slips, if necessary

Service provider station signs

## Operations (At Least One Person)

Responsibilities include:

Overseeing facility, equipment, and overall operation.

Checking all participating service provider/speaker/program participant requirements.

Coordinating with school district and school custodian.

Ensuring all equipment is in working order.

Consulting with appropriate facility management.

Considering whether additional service providers are needed and reviewing other logistic issues.

Cleaning up after the event.

## Outreach (At Least One Person)

This committee member will

Organize volunteers and coordinate hospitality.

Select invitees from the local area. Send a letter of invitation requesting participation, including a response due date.

### Pre-Crunch

Begin two months in advance.

Send follow-up letter to confirm service provider participation, including a map of the school and parking location (see Participant Response Form, Fig. P-1).

Develop fliers to inform parents and community of the event.

Develop news releases.

Request equipment from school district or facility manager to meet service provider needs.

### Crunch Time

Begin one month in advance.

Be sure to have sufficient tables and chairs as required by participating service providers. This information will be available upon receipt of response form.

Provide custodian/facility manager with a detailed drawing of the layout for tables and chairs.

Plan for access for the disabled.

Recruit and schedule volunteers. Utilize nursing schools, dental schools, and public health agency health promoters.

Plan refreshments, such as coffee and donuts in the morning or a light lunch for all participating service providers and volunteers.

Check to ensure all equipment requirements can be met.

Distribute event fliers and e-mail announcements to parents and community.

Prepare service provider station signs.

## Day of the Event

Have nametags ready for all service providers/speakers/program participants and volunteers.

Check to make sure hospitality area is in order and refreshments prepared.

Check setup of the event stations and all audio-visual equipment.

Welcome the service providers/speakers/program participants and be sure to give them an evaluation sheet (see Evaluation Form, Forms Chapter) that should be collected before they leave at the end of the event.

Have volunteers sign in, including addresses, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses.

Have at least two designated troubleshooters for the day, and make sure that the service providers and volunteers know who they are.

Clean up the facility and leave it in as good or better condition than it was.

## After the Event

Tabulate the evaluations.

Send thank you notes to all participating service providers/speakers/program participants and volunteers.

Write an event report and place it in the procedure book. Include ideas for changes gleaned from the evaluations and comments from participants.

- Did the activities help to accomplish goals?
- Was there good participation from the faculty and the parents?
- Did the kids enjoy it?
- What are the recommendations for next year?

## SAMPLE PARTICIPANT RESPONSE FORM

(Name) PTA/PTSA (Program)

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the (Name) PTA/PTSA (Program). Please mail the completed form to (Name) PTA/PTSA, (Address) no later than (date).

☐ Yes, I will participate in the (name) PTA/PTSA (Program) on (date).

Organization/Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Service and information to be provided:

Please include a detailed description of the services you will provide.

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Please list any equipment, audio-visual, space or special requirements you have.

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☐ No, I will be unable to participate in the (name) PTA/PTSA (Program), but I would be interested in providing related materials. Please list materials which will be provided.

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Fig. P-1 Sample Participant Response Form

## SAMPLE AGENDA FOR NEEDS ASSESSMENT

### CHAIRMAN

Welcome

Introduction of facilitator, recorder, secretary, group members (invited participants)

Explain roles of those introduced

### FACILITATOR

Facilitator conducts balance of meeting, and chairman becomes a group member.

Discuss needs assessment

Define the problem

1. brainstorm ideas
2. prioritize ideas
3. develop problem statement(s)

Develop solutions

1. brainstorm ideas
2. prioritize ideas
3. develop solution statement(s)

Develop a tentative action plan

1. brainstorm ideas
2. prioritize ideas
3. examine possible obstacles to plan implementation
4. develop ways to remove any obstacles OR develop alternative plans

Develop final action plan that includes

1. all components (parts of the plan)
2. individual assignments
3. time frame
4. budget needs
5. evaluation method
6. date for final evaluation

If unable to complete the agenda in the allotted time, set date, time and place for another meeting. At the next meeting, review any statements agreed to at the prior meeting and complete the rest of the agenda. Allow time for discussion of additional information obtained between meetings.

**Fig. P-2 Sample Agenda for Needs Assessment**



# Advocacy Action Plans

Determine whether an identified concern is truly a problem that should be dealt with through a broad-based community action plan.

## ACTION PLANS

### Recommended Actions

Prepare a needs assessment worksheet including the name of the PTA, the school, and the identified concern in appropriate places (Needs Assessment Worksheet, Forms Chapter).

Determine who is to receive the needs assessment form, how it is to be distributed and the due date for the return. Determine method of follow-up.

Survey appropriate agencies to obtain statistics on the identified concern. This can be done by making personal contacts or by sending a cover letter and the needs assessment form to some or all of the people and agencies listed below.

- School personnel;
- Private and church-related programs;
- Chamber of Commerce and major employers;
- Local, county, state, federal departments of health, education, probation and social services;
- Libraries;
- Professional and volunteer agencies; and
- Community organizations.

Obtain statistics reflecting the community's ethnic and socioeconomic background. Information may be obtained from the school district office and will be necessary if the PTA will apply for a grant to fund this project.

Evaluate information received. Review all data and compile the responses to the questions on the needs assessment form. Determine whether the school and community concur with the identified concern and believe that a problem exists.

If it is determined that a problem exists, the information gathered will be a basis for the formulation of a community action plan. If it is determined that a problem does not exist or is not of concern to the school and community, it is best not to invest time and money in seeking solutions.

Prepare a final report that includes the following information:

- Reason for the study;
- Statistics that note the numbers by age, socioeconomic status, ethnic background, or religious affiliation;
- Community responses;
- Professional resource people interviewed and their responses;

- Other resources used, such as periodicals, books, films, and surveys; and
- Findings that indicate whether a problem exists that requires further action.

As a courtesy, distribute the report to those who participated in the survey. It will compensate them for their cooperation and will raise the level of awareness within the community.

Use the report as a tool in developing and implementing a plan of action. A Sample Agenda for Needs Assessment (Fig. P-2) for a meeting to discuss the findings follows.

### How to Make a Study

A study is in order whenever the association (membership) is concerned about a subject or an issue. A study committee must gather facts, investigate carefully and prepare a final report. The possible reasons for making a study are many.

#### Purposes of a Study

The purposes of a study are to:

Acquire knowledge about a subject;

Respond to a concern of the membership in a particular area (e.g., education, health, safety, community problems, state or local legislation);

Respond to a need or problem;

Gather all available facts and information before acting on an issue that concerns the membership;

Develop information on a subject or issue that the association believes should be presented to the California State PTA Board of Managers, government agencies (e.g., school board, city council, board of supervisors), other groups or the public; or

Develop a resolution for the California State PTA Convention.

#### Initiate a Study

Initiate a study with a:

Motion from the association membership;

Request from an individual member;

Recommendation from the executive board;

Recommendation from a committee of the association; or

Request from an allied agency, organization or group.

#### Study Committee

The president appoints the chairman and members of the committee subject to ratification by the executive board. The number and composition may be specified in the motion creating the committee. (If this is done, the phrase "and others as appointed by the president" must always be included as protection against oversight.)

The committee should be composed of at least five but not more than nine people. Members may include:

- PTA members, officers and chairmen whose duties fall within the subject matter of the study.
- Administrators, teachers, students (if appropriate), consultants, and/or community members.
- People with differing points of view on the subject.
- The association president as an ex officio member.
- The committee secretary may be appointed by the president or the committee chairman or elected by the committee at its first meeting.

Committee expenses are legitimate PTA expenses.

### Study Committee Procedures

Keep minutes to avoid repetition in subsequent meetings, to ensure that all items in the plan of work are covered, to avoid omissions in the final report, and as a record of the committee's work.

Identify the subject(s) and/or issue(s) to be included in the study.

Set goals. Will the committee gather information, or will it try to develop recommendations for action? If "information only," how will the information be used? How much time will be needed?

Decide the scope of the study. How much information will be needed to reach the goals? What areas of the subject/issue will the committee try to cover?

Use resources such as films, newspapers, publications, appropriate agencies, and experts in the field of study. All sources should be verified to ensure the accuracy of the information.

Assign responsibilities for research. Each member of the committee should have a specific assignment. Subcommittees may be helpful in completing the research. All research should be available to all members of the committee.

Ensure that all areas of interest on the subject or issue (within the defined scope) are covered. Personal views must not be allowed to intrude.

### Conclusions

All possible solutions, conclusions, etc., should be listed with an evaluation of how they will affect the subject or issue.

#### Recommended Solutions Should be Tested

Are they in accordance with the Purposes and basic policies of the PTA?

Is there a strong possibility they will accomplish the desired results?

Are they practical? Are the necessary resources (whatever they may be) available?

Will the proposed solution create other problems that need to be resolved before implementation?

Are the recommended solutions in the best interest of children and youth?

Do the solutions completely address the subject or issue as defined in the scope, or is more research needed?

### The Study Report

The study report should:

Be written by the chairman (the secretary may assist) and approved by the committee;

Be submitted first to the PTA executive board and then to the association;

Include an appendix listing all reference materials used and any other resources;

Include any recommendations for further study, implementation or action; and

Include the time requirements involved in implementing recommendations.

### When a Study Is Completed

The association or executive board may refer a study report to another group, although that group had no part in initiating the original study.

Studies forwarded to California State PTA should be sent through channels—unit to council (if in council) to district PTA.

When appropriate, all studies should be submitted to the council (if in council) and to the district PTA, so the information will be available to other units.

All studies referred to another group or submitted through channels should be accompanied by a study letter.

Following the final report, the study committee ceases to function unless given further responsibilities by the executive board or association.

## Develop an Action Plan

### Purpose of Plan

Explore alternate solutions to identified problem(s).

Open informal communication among various community groups.

Share information and resources and avoid duplication of efforts.

Ensure that program improvement and changes are relevant to the community.

### Steps to Follow

Consider the probable community response.

- Is the political climate receptive to improvements in this area?
- Have there been previous efforts?
- What is the general community's attitude toward this problem?

Identify influential leaders to be involved. Make sure the group is balanced and no special interests dominate. Ensure that participant's time and talents are utilized effectively. Consider representatives from the following groups:

- Parents of preschool and school-aged children;

- Students, teachers and school administrators;
- School board members;
- Media representatives;
- Professionals in the field, such as health, welfare, social services;
- Key people from public and private agencies serving children and families;
- Business and civic leaders;
- City, county and/or state officials;
- Representatives from the religious community; and
- Community volunteers and other interested persons.

Set specifics of initial meeting:

- Date, time, place;
- Identify chairman and secretary;
- Establish meeting format and agenda; and
- Assign hospitality responsibilities including coffee/tea/sodas, name tags, and sign-in sheet.

Prepare and send letters of invitation to potential participants. Include the following in letters:

- Meeting purpose;
- Invitation to participate;
- Date, time, place and directions;
- Due date and contact person for response;
- Preliminary agenda; and
- List of invited participants.

At the meeting:

- Review identified problems/leadership needs/goals;
- Determine whether any existing school and/or community programs deal with the problem;
- Analyze existing beliefs, attitudes, circumstances, etc., in the community regarding the problem;
- Determine what changes could cause things to be different (e.g., beliefs, attitudes, circumstances, laws, time, money);
- Develop a tentative action plan;
- Brainstorm ideas;
- Prioritize action (may include immediate and future action);
- Examine obstacles to plan implementation;
- Decide whether ideas presented are feasible;
- Identify available group resources (e.g., people, enthusiasm, dollars);
- Identify obstacles that will prevent effective action;
- Remove obstacles and/or develop alternatives for each part of the plan;
- Determine if additional information is needed;

- If necessary, schedule another meeting in order to obtain additional information;
- If any obstacle cannot be removed, select an alternative action; and
- Assess alternatives for potential obstacles.

Develop a final action plan (Final Action Plan, Forms Chapter):

- List all steps needed to carry out the plan;
- Identify the person responsible for each step;
- Establish the time frame for each step;
- Identify budget needs including amount and sources;
- Obtain necessary approvals;
- Obtain letters of support from appropriate community individuals, organizations and agencies if outside funding is required;
- Identify evaluation method for each step;
- Set date for project completion and final evaluation; and
- Determine whether the agreed-upon goals and objectives are met.

-Take the action plan to the PTA board and general membership for final approval.

### Implement the Action Plan

Through the evaluation process, show to what extent the group can be a viable community force.

### Purpose

- To ensure the action plan is being implemented.
- To make modifications to the plan, if evaluation data indicates changes are needed.

### Steps to Follow

Monitor progress of the action plan through regular reports.

Modify the action plan as necessary. Be flexible.

At a meeting of the group, review:

- Action taken;
- Time and funds spent;
- Difficulties encountered;
- Successful experiences; and
- Unmet objectives.

### Evaluate Success of the Plan

A final evaluation report should include (Evaluation Form, Forms Chapter):

- Problem statement;
- Summary of the action plan;
- Changes effected relative to the identified concern; by whom;

- Type and extent of school and community involvement;
- Budget and actual dollars spent;
- Project completion (On time? Within budget?);
- Continuing action needed;
- Continuing action planned; and
- A final report presented to the PTA executive board and general membership.

## Absentees and Dropouts — Education

There are serious truancy and school dropout problems in California. This issue affects students from all socio-economic backgrounds. Truants and dropouts are prone to committing offenses associated with juvenile delinquency and put themselves at risk physically. Keeping children in school through graduation is a proven method for developing productive and successful adults.

### Role of the PTA

PTA believes that all children and youth should have the opportunity to develop to their fullest potential. Therefore, PTA supports programs that encourage regular school attendance.

### Recommended Actions

Become familiar with California State PTA convention resolution, School Absenteeism/Dropouts (1986) (see *Where We Stand*, Convention and Board of Managers Resolutions, Advocacy Chapter; California State PTA Resolutions Book, [capta.org](http://capta.org)). See "Attendance" in the Advocacy Topic Index for related position statements or guidelines.

Support county and/or local School Attendance Review Board (SARB). If one does not exist, support the creation of a SARB.

Encourage daily attendance awards and incentive programs in grades K-12.

Educate parents, students and the community about the seriousness of the problem, and point out that existing California laws mandate that minors between the ages of 6 and 18 years of age must participate in an approved education program.

Reach out to the private sector and allied agencies for participation and support of programs encouraging school attendance.

In cooperation with school personnel, seek assistance from the School/Law Enforcement Partnership Cadre, a trained cadre of educators and officials from law enforcement and criminal justice agencies that assist in building an interagency approach to improving order and attendance, reducing school violence/vandalism, reducing truancy, and encouraging good citizenship.

Support school district alternative educational programs.

Encourage school districts to incorporate self-esteem programs into the curriculum.

Encourage the use of peer counseling.

## Additional Resources

School/Law Enforcement Partnership Cadre can provide information. Contact California Attorney General's Crime and Violence Prevention Center, 916.324.7863, or California Department of Education's Safe Schools and Violence Prevention Office, 916.323.2183.

California Youth Authority. The Prevention of Truancy (1986), a narrative report on successful truancy prevention programs.

California Department of Education. School Attendance Review Boards Handbook (2002). Available online at the Safe Schools and Violence Prevention Office ([www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ai/sb/documents/sarb02.pdf](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ai/sb/documents/sarb02.pdf)) or through the Bureau of Publications, Sales Unit, 916.445.1260.

National School Safety Center. Increasing Student Attendance (1994). Available online at [www.schoolsafety.us](http://www.schoolsafety.us) or by calling 805.373.9977.

U.S. Department of Education. Manual to Combat Truancy (1996). Available online at [www.eric.ed.gov](http://www.eric.ed.gov), or call 877-433-7827; see [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov).

Bureau of At-Risk Youth. School Attendance, Truancy and Dropping Out (1998), available by calling 800.99.YOUTH.

### Local Agencies to Contact for Assistance:

County Office of Education

County Juvenile Justice Commission and/or County Delinquency Prevention Commission

County School Attendance Review Board (SARB)

County Probation Department, Truancy Mediation Program

County Welfare Department, CalWorks Program

County District Attorney, Truancy Mediation Program

See "Attendance" in the Advocacy Topic Index, Advocacy Chapter, for related resolutions and guidelines.

## Child Abuse Prevention — Revised October 2010 – Community Concerns

The number of reported child abuse cases (sexual, physical, and emotional) is continuing to rise. Society, through federal, state and local agencies, is ultimately responsible for any resulting foster care placement, institutional care, and medical and court costs. The public must be informed about the causes, prevention

and reporting of child abuse. Efforts must be made to better coordinate child abuse prevention and intervention programs.

### Role of the PTA

PTA's primary concern is the protection of children who cannot protect themselves from abuse, neglect and exploitation. PTA supports programs that help the family stay together, when this is in the best interest of the child.

### Recommended Actions

Sponsor parent education programs to address prevention and identification of child abuse, including how to report suspected cases.

Encourage school districts to provide students with education to help them identify and report abuse, and to empower them to report the abuse without retribution.

Encourage schools to include parenting skills in their curricula.

Encourage school districts to provide staff development workshops regarding the recognition and reporting of child abuse.

Inform parents/guardians about curriculum that teaches children to say "no," and encourage its use in the school.

Advocate for adequate funding for child welfare services programs.

### Additional Resources

California State PTA Position Statements: Assistance to Families in Need and Family Services (Where We Stand: Positions Statements, Advocacy Chapter). See "Child Abuse" and "Violence and Vandalism" in the Advocacy Topic Index for related resolutions or guidelines.

Attorney General's Crime and Violence Prevention Center (<http://safestate.org>)

National PTA ([pta.org](http://pta.org)). Kids Need a Future, Not a Funeral and Safeguarding Your Children.

Wooden, Kenneth. Child Lures, A Need for Prevention. Shelburne, Va. ([www.childlures.com](http://www.childlures.com)).

National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect. Child Sexual Abuse Prevention: Tips to Parents. Washington, D.C.

For free information and free videos, contact:

Office of Child Abuse Prevention  
744 P Street, M.S.11-82, Sacramento, CA 95814  
916.651.6960; Fax 916.651.6328

### Additional Agencies

California Department of Education ([www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov))

California Department of Social Services Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP)  
([www.dss.cahwnet.gov/](http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/))

California Department of Social Services, Children and Family Services Division  
([www.childsworld.ca.gov](http://www.childsworld.ca.gov))

Child Abuse Coordinating Councils

County Departments of Public Health – Find a listing by county on the website California Department of Public Health, <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/servicesPages/LocalServices.aspx>

County Departments of Social Services, Child Protective Services

County Offices of Education

Local law enforcement agencies (police/sheriff)

## Child Restraints and Seat Belts —

Revised October 2008 – Community Concerns

Nationally, automobile accidents are the number one killer of children, youth and adults under age 44.

### Role of the PTA

The proper use of child restraints and seat belts saves lives. PTA can help educate parents about the importance of using seat belts and child safety seats in automobiles.

### Recommended Actions

Contact California Safe Kids Coalition to sponsor a PTA program on the importance of using correctly installed child safety seats. Demonstrate various types of safety seats and booster seats to show their correct installation and proper use. Make certain the child restraint unit is the correct one for the vehicle in which it will be used. All car seats do not conform to all child restraint units. Emphasize the correct use of booster seats for children who have outgrown regular child safety seats.

Have material available at PTA meetings that stresses the importance, placement, and proper use of restraints/seat belts and child safety seats.

Become familiar with and work for the enforcement of current laws.

Work with the school principal and school board to include restraint/safety belt curricula at all grade levels.

Encourage the principal to plan a school assembly on restraint/seat belt safety. Set up a display for students on restraint/seat belt safety.

Seek and support legislation that will mandate use of seat belts by passengers in all vehicles not now covered by state law (e.g., pick-up trucks, buses and vans).

### Resources and References

See "Seat Belts" in the Advocacy Topic Index for related Resolutions and Position Statements.

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety  
([www.aaafoundation.org](http://www.aaafoundation.org))

American Academy of Pediatrics ([www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org))

California Automobile Association ([www.csaa.com](http://www.csaa.com) and [www.aaa-calif.com](http://www.aaa-calif.com))

California Child Passenger Safety Association

California Highway Patrol ([www.chp.ca.gov](http://www.chp.ca.gov))

California Motor Vehicle Code ([www.leginfo.ca.gov](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov) or [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov))

California Office of Traffic Safety ([www.ots.ca.gov](http://www.ots.ca.gov))

California Safe Kids ([www.usa.safekids.org](http://www.usa.safekids.org))

Center for Injury Prevention Policy and Practice (CIPPP) ([www.cipp.org](http://www.cipp.org))

California Coalition for Children's Health and Safety

Child Safety Network ([www.csn.org](http://www.csn.org))

Local health care providers

Municipal law enforcement agencies

National Safety Council ([www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org))

National Highway Transportation Safety Association ([www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov))

## Citizenship — Revised January 2011 – Community Concerns

PTA activities in citizenship are designed to provide information and inspiration, to help members engage as citizens. By reminding members of their privileges and responsibilities and involving them in community projects, PTA makes an important contribution to the democratic way of life.

### Recommended Actions

Urge the display, proper use of, and respect for the American flag in homes, schools, and communities.

Recite the Pledge of Allegiance at each meeting. Arrange for short, inspirational, patriotic messages or music when the flag is presented.

Encourage special programs in conjunction with the observance of patriotic holidays.

Cooperate with established organizations working for good citizenship training.

Invite youth participation at PTA meetings, recruit leaders, and sponsor groups when indicated (see Community Organizations, Co-sponsorship, and Coalitions, Know Your PTA Chapter).

Arrange for community recognition ceremonies of newly naturalized citizens.

### Elections

Stress the importance of voting in all elections. Cooperate with other community groups in registration and get-out-the-vote campaigns.

Encourage student participation in the election process.

Emphasize the need for all citizens to know election laws, including registration requirements.

Get involved with school-bond and ballot-measure campaigns that will improve schools, following California State PTA procedures (see Advocacy Chapter).

Host candidates forums.

### Government Participation

Make information available on how individuals may participate in government, and encourage them to do so.

Promote projects for the study of local, county, state, and national governments.

Encourage attendance at meetings of boards of education, commissions, city councils, and county supervisors, and ask those who attend to report on issues of concern to the PTA.

Encourage the appointment of youth to city and county commissions.

Organize letter-writing campaigns to support legislation that benefits children, youth, and families.

### Resources

American Legion ([www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org))

California Department of Education ([www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov))

California Legislative Analyst (for analysis of ballot measures) ([www.lao.ca.gov](http://www.lao.ca.gov))

California Secretary of State ([www.ss.ca.gov](http://www.ss.ca.gov))

California State Library ([www.library.ca.gov](http://www.library.ca.gov))

Constitutional Rights Foundation ([www.crf-usa.org](http://www.crf-usa.org))

County Registrar of Voters

League of Women Voters of California ([www.smartvoter.org](http://www.smartvoter.org))

Local United Nations Association

Rock the Vote ([www.rockthevote.org](http://www.rockthevote.org))

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services ([www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov))

Youth Vote Coalition ([www.youthvote.org](http://www.youthvote.org))

Youth group leaders

## Education

California State PTA believes it is important for parents and community members to be knowledgeable about education issues affecting student learning and achievement. PTAs should participate actively at all levels of the decision-making process and the implementation of the legally-required parent involvement policy, Education Code 11500-11506 and the State Board of Education 1994 Parent Involvement

Policy. Parent participation should include but not be limited to:

- School Accountability Report Card (SARC), an instrument to inform the local community about the conditions and progress of the school, including holding public forums to share results with the community.
- School Budget
- Curriculum
- Assessment
- School Site Council/Governance
- District Advisory and Community Advisory Committees
- Other matters affecting the outcome of education.

The local PTA education chairman and committee should promote understanding of the purposes and needs of public schools and encourage participation by parents and community members in working toward any necessary improvements in public education. The education chairman and committee should highlight and promote the importance of parents' involvement in their children's education.

For additional details on the responsibilities of the Education Chairman, see "Job Description for Education Chairman."

See "Education" in Advocacy Topic Index for related resolutions, position statements or guidelines.

## Environmental Protection — Revised

January 2007 – Health

Natural resources are being depleted and destroyed at an alarming rate. The world's population is increasing. The delicate balance of our world's ecosystems is upset and, in many areas, this imbalance has become a threat to our health and survival.

### Role of the PTA

Inform members that threats to the environment adversely impact the quality of our lives and health and endanger future generations.

Advocate the inclusion of environmental education in school curriculum.

Help members learn how to support a sustainable environment that will be safe and healthy for present and future generations.

### Recommended Actions

Review California State PTA Position Statement, Environmental Protection (Where We Stand: Position Statements, Advocacy Chapter). See Environmental Protection in Advocacy Topic Index for related resolutions or guidelines.

See also National PTA convention resolutions on Environmental Quality.

Encourage the school and PTA to use biodegradable products whenever possible.

Present at least one environmental or energy education program during the year.

Have PTA members participate in meetings and hearings of local governmental agencies on environmental matters. Report to the unit on such matters as zoning, planning, greenbelts, open space, coastline protection, air pollution, noise, highways, and water quality.

Work with the school to conduct energy audits; study ways to conserve resources, such as gas and electricity, while saving the school money.

Help to identify ways to conserve resources through the reduction of waste, reuse, and recycling of materials.

Learn the effects of energy shortages on schools, and cooperate in conservation efforts.

Develop a project dealing with some form of environmental improvement or conservation of natural resources.

Sponsor or support student environmental improvement or conservation projects such as recycling, ecology clubs, nature trails, field trips, junior museums, outdoor education programs, and the wildflower poppy preserve.

Arrange a tour of a public facility, laboratory or industrial site in the local community to learn what is being done to alleviate environmental problems.

Participate in observances of Earth Day, Arbor Day, Conservation Week, or other related events.

### Additional Resources

California Department of Education,  
Environmental/Energy Education

California Environmental Protection Agency  
([www.calepa.ca.gov/Education/EEI/default.html](http://www.calepa.ca.gov/Education/EEI/default.html))

California State Parks Foundation, Oakland, CA

National Park Service ([www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov))

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, D.C.

## Gangs — Revised October 2008 – Community Concerns

There is a serious gang problem in California involving students from all cultures, communities, and backgrounds.

- Gangs are not just a law enforcement problem in urban settings but a quality of life problem and a challenge to the well-being, health, safety, social justice and educational outcomes for children and youth throughout California.
- Gangs are not a recent phenomenon; there is a multi-generational pattern of gang membership and affiliation as well as “newcomer” membership. There also is an interstate/international aspect to many gangs, and the situation is at or near crisis level in many areas of the state.
- Gangs adversely affect the well-being, health, safety, social justice, and educational outcomes for children and youth throughout California communities.

Children and youth who join gangs often become involved in drugs and other criminal activities. Law enforcement, school districts, PTA at all levels, other community agencies, and the general public must work together to inform and educate themselves and develop gang and drug awareness, prevention, and intervention programs. Such vital programs are needed to inform young people how to protect themselves from gang and drug involvement.

### Role of the PTA

PTA believes that all children and youth should have the opportunity to develop their capabilities to the maximum. PTA supports programs that encourage youth and help them avoid gang participation and drug involvement.

### Recommended Actions

Review California State PTA Position Statement, Gang Awareness. See “Gangs” in Advocacy Topic Index for related resolutions or guidelines.

Partner with school staff, parent/guardian, student, and community leaders and provide informational meetings about gangs and drugs.

Support the adoption and use of school district policies designed to protect children and youth who are threatened or harassed by gangs.

Support the adoption of school district policies that preclude the wearing of gang symbols, colors, and clothing.

Work with local business and corporate offices to educate and inform them about current gang trends.

Sponsor gang awareness, conflict resolution, anger management, and peer-to-peer mediation classes in the schools, with the approval and cooperation of the administration, faculty and the greater community.

Collaborate with local agencies regarding prompt graffiti abatement. Encourage community and youth involvement in these programs where safe and appropriate.

Promote the establishment of supervised quality, out-of-school programs for children and youth as an alternative to gang involvement.

Support community collaboration with law enforcement such as Neighborhood Watch, Retired Seniors Volunteer Patrol (RSVP), Citizen Police Academies, and community support teams.

The greater community must proactively work with parents and family members to break the pattern of gang membership and affiliation. Prevention/intervention programs must begin at the elementary grade levels.

Promote life skill training, conflict resolution training, cross-cultural understanding, and education on hate crime activities, among youth at risk of gang involvement.

Foster appreciation of cultural diversity through workshops, public meetings, and forums.

### Additional Resources

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) ([www.cdcr.ca.gov/DivisionsBoards/DJJ/index.html](http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/DivisionsBoards/DJJ/index.html))

California Department of Transportation, Division of Maintenance Office of Roadside Maintenance, Sacramento, CA ([www.dot.ca.gov](http://www.dot.ca.gov))

GANGS, California Department of Education ([www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov))

Local law enforcement, school district, county office of education, government, city and district attorney's offices and gang prevention and education task forces.

Office of the Attorney General Crime and Violence Prevention Center ([www.caag.state.ca.us](http://www.caag.state.ca.us); [www.safestate.org](http://www.safestate.org))

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention ([www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org](http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org))



## Health — Revised May 2013 – Health

National PTA and California State PTA believe that health education and student wellness are critical to student success and are the responsibility of every member of the community.

### Promote Physical, Mental and Emotional Health Education

Educate parents on how to recognize and respond to the health and nutrition needs of their families.

Encourage compliance with health and physical education directives in the curriculum.

Advocate for the improvement of health care facilities and services in the school and community.

Advocate for the implementation of the recommended school nurse-to-student ratio of 1:750.

Stress the concepts of wellness and prevention.

Partner in the development of, implement, update and evaluate school district wellness policies.

Emphasize the importance of healthy lifestyles and modeling these lifestyles for children.

Promote a school environment that is consistent with health education being taught in the classroom.

Build awareness and engage parents to be responsive to environmental issues and hazards that may jeopardize the health of children and families.

Establish 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.

For additional topics see the “Job Description for Health.”

#### For more information

Environmental Health ([www.cehn.org](http://www.cehn.org))

Action for Healthy Kids ([www.afhk.org](http://www.afhk.org))

Dairy Council of California ([www.healthyeating.org](http://www.healthyeating.org))

National Institute of Health ([www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov))

National Institute of Mental Health ([www.nimh.nih.org](http://www.nimh.nih.org))

Healthy Kids Resource Center ([www.hkresources.org](http://www.hkresources.org))

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov))

#### PTA Health Pocket Pal

See “Health” in Advocacy Topic Index for related resolutions, position statements and guidelines.

See Grants for information on the Healthy Lifestyles Grant Application.

## Homeless Families and Children —

Revised January 2011 – Community Concerns

Families with young children have become the fastest-growing segment of the population now living on the nation’s streets.

A family is considered to be homeless if, due to lack of housing, it must reside in a shelter, motel, vehicle, campground, abandoned building, trailers on the street, or doubled-up with relatives or friends.

Homeless families do not need to provide a permanent address in order to enroll children in school. All children have a right to public education. It is the shared responsibility of parents and schools to see that each child receives it.

### Role of the PTA

Support funding and legislation for adequate housing for all families, and inform parents/guardians about how to obtain access to educational, health, and community services.

### Recommended Actions

Review California State PTA position statement on Homeless Families/Children (Advocacy Chapter). See “Minors” in the Advocacy Topic Index for resolutions or guidelines.

Advocate for sufficient emergency shelters and low-cost housing for families.

Advocate for government retraining and education of jobless parents/guardians, so they can become self-reliant.

Advocate for school policies that recognize the needs of homeless children and families.

Provide opportunities for children who cannot afford school-related activities to participate.

Establish a “clothes closet” or community partnership to provide clean, new or serviceable used clothing, new shoes, socks, underwear and hygiene supplies for children in emergency situations. Emergency nonperishable food supplies also could be supplied.

Offer parent education meetings, using PTA materials, for all parents including homeless parents, or locate experts in the field to teach parenting skills, reading techniques, and nutrition as well as self-esteem. Encourage involvement with shelters, food banks, and other agencies in the community that help the homeless.

### Additional Resources

The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act improves services for homeless people, including emergency shelters, health care, and job training. Policies, resources, and a list of current education programs for homeless children and youth in California are available online ([www.cde.ca.gov/cilbranch/homeless/homelesstoc.html](http://www.cde.ca.gov/cilbranch/homeless/homelesstoc.html))

Bridge of Hope ([www.bridgeofhopeinc.org](http://www.bridgeofhopeinc.org))

California Housing Advocates ([www.housingadvocates.org](http://www.housingadvocates.org))

Clothe Homeless Children ([www.WorldVision.org](http://www.WorldVision.org))

Homes for the Homeless  
([www.homesforthehomeless.com](http://www.homesforthehomeless.com))

National Association for Education of Homeless  
Children ([www.naehcy.org](http://www.naehcy.org))

National Center for Homeless Education, Greensboro,  
N.C.; 800.755.3277 or NCHE Helpline 800.308.2145;  
[www.serve.org/nche/](http://www.serve.org/nche/)

National Resource Center on Homelessness and  
Mental Illness; 262 Delaware Avenue, Delmar, NY  
12054; 800.444.7415;  
(<http://www.nrchmi.samhsa.gov/default.aspx>)

U.S. Department of Education  
([www.ed.gov/programs/homeless/guidance.pdf](http://www.ed.gov/programs/homeless/guidance.pdf))

## Library and Media Facilities in Schools — Education

California State PTA believes books and reading are vitally important to the lives of children and the development of an informed citizenry. The public library is a symbol of our democracy, and a good school library is essential to an effective educational program for lifelong learning.

### Questions for a Study

Does the school have a library/media center or learning center?

- Do students have regular access to the library during the school day to use its resources?
- Is the school library open before and after school, as well as during the lunch period?
- Can PTA help to provide greater accessibility to the library/media learning center?

Is there a credentialed librarian, library technician or clerk on staff?

- Are they full-time or part-time employees?
- Does the library have trained volunteers?

Is technology available?

- How many computers are available to students? (What is the student-to-computer ratio on campus?)
- Is there Internet access?
- Does the school district have an “Acceptable Use Policy for Electronic Information Resources”?

Does the library/media facility have a filtering system or an automated library system? (Filtering and automated systems have pros and cons.)

- Have there been discussions regarding these systems?
- Is the staff trained and available to provide computer assistance?

Is there a current written policy for selection of books and materials?

- Is there a school district policy?

- Is there a selection committee?
- Do the materials reflect the diverse needs of all students in our multicultural society, particularly the student population on the local school campus?
- Are the books and materials current and relevant to the instructional program?

What are the funding sources for the library?

- Are the funds adequate to keep the library current and well equipped?
- Is there community support to ensure stable and adequate funding for school libraries?

Are there guidelines for evaluating the current collection for relevancy and timeliness?

(Adapted from the National PTA publication, *Looking In On Your School.*)

### Questions for the Community

What is the district policy on Internet access?

Would it be more effective to have constant supervision of students while they are using/accessing the Internet?

Would an automated system provide a more efficiently run library/media facility and enable students to find what they are looking for more quickly and easily? Should scarce library funds be used to automate library services instead of increasing the library collection?

Does elimination of the card catalog limit the number of students able to access information, depending on the number of computers available?

### Recommended Actions

Meet with the principal, school librarian, and other appropriate staff to learn about the library/media facilities and the goals and needs for the school.

If staffing is inadequate, the PTA may donate funds to the school district, earmarked for that purpose. PTA should never employ library staff (Fiduciary Agreements and Gifts to School, Finance Chapter).

When PTA members volunteer in the library, they should become familiar with the procedures and technology available.

Plan book exhibits and book fairs consistent with criteria suggested in the California State PTA Toolkit Finance Chapter and in the National PTA Quick-Reference Guide.

The PTA can develop an instruction sheet or handbook that may cover basic items such as class schedules, emergency procedures, basics on checking books out and in, shelving and repairing books, use of and guidelines for technology/Internet.

Call attention to new books, library services and volunteer opportunities through the PTA newsletter.

Support California State PTA efforts to seek credentialed librarians for school libraries.

Become informed about public library facilities in the local community.

- Publicize services such as story hours, book-reading contests, bookmobile, etc.
- Encourage families to read with their children, and help them learn to use the local library.

### Additional Resources

See “Library” and “Mass Media” in the Advocacy Topic Index for related resolutions, position statements or guidelines.

American Association of School Librarians  
([www.ala.org/ala/aasl](http://www.ala.org/ala/aasl))

California Department of Education and School Libraries Association. Check it Out. Publication available from CDE,  
[www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/lb/checkitout.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/lb/checkitout.asp)

The Children’s Partnership with The National PTA and The National Urban League. Tips & Tools for Parents Keeping Kids Safe Online (December 1997).

Good Ideas! California School Library Association  
([www.schoollibrary.org](http://www.schoollibrary.org)). 1001 26th Street,  
Sacramento, CA 95816.

American Library Association, [www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org)

Reinventing Your School’s Library in the Age of Technology, by David Loertscher (2002).

## Missing and Exploited Children —

Revised October 2008 – Community Concerns

Each year thousands of children disappear. Most return home safely. Many do not. They are runaways, throwaways, or victims of parental or stranger abduction. Others are exploited at home by family members or acquaintances. Many of these children either turn to crime to survive or are criminally exploited by people who will abuse them and profit by their vulnerability. Law enforcement agencies, schools and the general public need to work together to ensure all steps are taken to identify and find missing and exploited children and return them to a safe environment.

### Role of the PTA

PTA supports continued funding for missing children’s programs, including support for programs that explore the extent of the problem of missing children, circumstances involving stranger and non-custodial parent abduction, effective preventive measures, and supportive and rehabilitative services.

PTA supports state and national missing children information centers/clearinghouses and the prompt reporting by law enforcement agencies of children reported missing.

### Recommended Actions

Review California State PTA Position Statement, Missing and Exploited Children, (Where We Stand: Position Statements, Advocacy Chapter). See “Minors” in the Advocacy Topic Index for related resolutions or guidelines.

Provide parent education programs; include current information and preventive education in the area of missing or exploited children.

Work with local law enforcement agencies, school districts, and the business community to provide free fingerprinting/DNA clinics for children of all ages.

Work with the school principal to encourage school districts to offer a fingerprint program for children enrolled in kindergarten or newly enrolled in the school district. All fingerprinting is subject to the consent of a parent or guardian.

Work with the school principal to implement personal safety education programs for students.

Partner with community organizations on projects concerning missing and exploited children.

Encourage local media to broadcast PSA information concerning missing or exploited children.

### Additional Resources

Federal Juvenile Justice, Runaway Youth and Missing Children Act (as amended 1984). Authorizes a missing children’s program to assist parents and local law enforcement agencies in locating missing children. Establishes clearinghouse and grant program to provide technical assistance. Provides education and prevention programs relating to missing and exploited children. Includes parents and representatives of parent organizations as a membership category for Juvenile Justice State Advisory Groups (SAGS).

Child Safety Network ([www.csn.org](http://www.csn.org))

FBI – Kids and Youth Education Page – Crime Prevention ([www.fbi.gov/](http://www.fbi.gov/))

International Center for Missing and Exploited Children ([www.icmec.org](http://www.icmec.org))

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children ([www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com))

National Crime Prevention Council ([www.ncpc.org](http://www.ncpc.org))

Vanished Children’s Alliance ([www.vca.org](http://www.vca.org))

### For more information

California Missing Children Clearinghouse;  
1.800.222.FIND or [www.caag.state.ca.us/missing/content/clearinghouse.htm](http://www.caag.state.ca.us/missing/content/clearinghouse.htm)

Polly Klaas Foundation; 1.800.587.4357 or  
[www.pollyklaas.org](http://www.pollyklaas.org)

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children;  
1.800.THE.LOST or [www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com)

California Attorney General’s Office, Crime and Violence Prevention Center; [www.caag.state.ca.us](http://www.caag.state.ca.us) and  
<http://safestate.org>; Materials, pamphlets, camera-ready masters, current photo files. Information on Megan’s Law, registration, and public information.

## Safety/Disaster Preparedness —

Revised January 2011 – Community Concerns

PTAs have a responsibility to identify and promote awareness of safety problems in the school community and, in collaboration with others, to help develop solutions.

Safety is a growing concern for the public. Preparedness for emergencies and disasters, as well as the prevention of unintentional injuries, is a serious concern of those who care for children in the home, at school, and in the community.

Activities to promote safety are related closely to and can be incorporated in all PTA efforts.

### Recommended Actions

Establish an ongoing working relationship with the school district and safety agencies within the community (e.g., local branches of the National Safe Kids Coalition). Attend safety workshops, conferences, and clinics.

Research the facts on safety problems and regulations in the school and community. Interview school officials, student leaders, local police, fire officials, and members of health departments, safety councils, automobile clubs, medical societies, and other groups involved in keeping the community safe.

Determine what safety instruction is included in the school curriculum, K-12, and adult education programs.

Become familiar with the school district's and school site's state-mandated disaster preparedness program. Is it up-to-date, adequate and enforced?

Cooperate with school authorities to inform the public of these programs.

Cooperate with PTA program chairman to plan a safety program for at least one PTA meeting during the year. Secure guest speakers from community safety agencies. Make announcements and arrange displays, exhibits, and posters at meetings.

Sponsor parent-education safety awareness programs.

Keep informed about all safety legislation and pending legislation at the local, state, and federal levels of government. Study measures regulating schools and residential areas.

See Job Description for Safety/Disaster Preparedness.

#### For additional ideas

See Creating an Event, Programs Chapter

See "Safety" in Advocacy Topic Index for related resolutions, position statements and guidelines.

### Additional Resources

See "Safety" in the Advocacy Topic Index for related resolutions, position statements or guidelines.

California Attorney General's Crime and Violence Prevention Center (<http://safestate.org>)

California Coalition for Children's Health and Safety ([www.sacadvocacy.com/ccsh/ccsh.html](http://www.sacadvocacy.com/ccsh/ccsh.html))

California Department of Consumer Affairs ([www.dca.ca.gov](http://www.dca.ca.gov) or [www.dca.ca.gov/kids/index.html](http://www.dca.ca.gov/kids/index.html))

California Safe Kids ([www.usa.safekids.org](http://www.usa.safekids.org))

California Safe School Coalition ([www.casafeschools.org](http://www.casafeschools.org))

Child Safety Network ([www.csn.org](http://www.csn.org))

California State Automobile Association ([www.csaa](http://www.csaa) and [www.aaa-calif.com](http://www.aaa-calif.com))

Insurance Information Institute ([www.iii.org](http://www.iii.org))

National Education Association ([www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org))

National Safe Kids ([www.usa.safekids.org](http://www.usa.safekids.org))

National Safety Council ([www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org))

Safe Kids Worldwide ([www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org))

California Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA) (<http://www.calema.ca.gov>)

County Offices of Emergency Services (searchable on the California Emergency Management Agency website, <http://www.calema.ca.gov/>)

## Awards

To recognize the achievements of members, units, councils and allied agencies, the National PTA and California State PTA coordinate a number of awards programs. This section provides direction on how to apply for or order:

- Phoebe Apperson Hearst Family-School Partnership Awards;
- California's PTA Spotlight Awards;
- Honorary Service Awards;
- Acknowledging Service and Honoring Presidents;
- Legacy PTA Awards; and
- National PTA Reflections Program Awards.

Applications for all awards can be found at the California State PTA website, [capta.org](http://capta.org).

### Phoebe Apperson Hearst Family-School Partnership Awards, National PTA

National PTA's Phoebe Apperson Hearst Family-School Partnership Awards recognize and celebrate PTAs that are successfully implementing the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships.

There are three levels of recognition:

- The Outstanding Family-School Partnership Award will be given to one local PTA that has excelled in implementing the National Standards, and includes a monetary award of \$2,000.

- The Family-School Partnership Award of Excellence will be given to six local PTAs, each representing the best in one of the six National Standards, and includes a monetary award of \$500.
- The Family-School Partnership Award of Merit will be given to all PTAs that apply to the awards program, in recognition of their commitment to building partnerships.

Any local, council, district PTA in good standing with the state and national PTAs may apply.

To be considered for an award, a PTA must complete and submit the online application at [pta.org/hearst](http://pta.org/hearst) or mail in a hard-copy application.

## California State PTA Spotlight Awards

The California State PTA recognizes the achievements of local units and councils. After considering budget and capacity, the California State PTA will announce any awards and recognitions for the coming term. Please check the website and newsletters for details.

## Honorary Service Awards (HSA) Program

Honorary Service Awards (HSA) are available to recognize the service and dedication of both individuals and organizations. They are awarded only by unit, council, district PTA and California State PTA, and presented by PTA representatives at PTA-sponsored meetings or at functions of allied groups.

The HSA Program includes the Very Special Person Award, the Honorary Service Award, the Continuing Honorary Service Award, the Golden Oak Service Award, the Outstanding Teacher Award, the Outstanding Administrator Award, Elected Official Honorary Service Award, and donations to the HSA Program that benefit the California State PTA Scholarships and Grants Program. A person may receive more than one of any of these awards and in any order.

Funds contributed to the HSA Program provide resources for the California Scholarship, Grant and Leadership Development Programs.

Individuals or organizations can make donations:

- As a contribution;
- To say thank you or to honor an individual for service given;
- In tribute to a person who already has received an Honorary Lifetime Membership, Honorary Service Award, Continuing Service Award or Golden Oak Service Award;
- In tribute to an organization or group of people for service given; or
- In memoriam.

An acknowledgment card or certificate suitable for framing will be sent, upon request, when a minimum donation of \$10.00 or more is made (Donation Form, Forms Chapter).

A person may receive more than one HSA, more than one CSA, or more than one Golden Oak Service Award, or may have more than one donation made in their name.

## Responsibilities

The unit HSA chairman, with a committee appointed by the president, shall

- Study the various types of awards, the donation amounts and the criteria for selecting honorees for specific awards.
- Publicize to the membership that the HSA selection committee will be meeting and ask for suggestions for honorees. (A flier may be distributed requesting names and information.)
- Meet for the specific purpose of selecting honorees. All proceedings must be kept confidential. Budget allocations must be observed.
- Order specific awards using the order forms in the California State PTA Toolkit. Pins may be ordered at the same time. **(Allow up to two weeks for delivery.)**
- Arrange for presentation of awards at a meeting as determined by the executive board and the program committee (e.g., at a Founders Day program meeting or end-of-the-year luncheon).
- Devise an innovative way to present the award(s) using a poem, skit or other unique way to praise the honorees' accomplishments. Be sure to mention that the donation made to the California State PTA Scholarship and Grant Program in each honoree's name assists in the education of other individuals.
- Arrange for families and friends of honorees to attend the presentation.
- Give a copy of the biographical presentation to the honoree. Assign a committee member to take pictures for the honorees. Retain copies of the pictures, programs and biographies.
- Obtain Media Release Statement signature of recipient to forward biography and photos taken at the award event to California State PTA.  
  
"By accepting this award and submitting biography and photograph(s) of the awards event to California State PTA, you hereby grant and assign California State PTA and its legal representatives the irrevocable and unrestricted right to use and publish for editorial, trade, advertising or any other purpose and in any manner and medium, including website and Internet promotion, all photographic, video, and digital images of you and your guests taken while in attendance at the awards event. You hereby release California State PTA and its legal representatives from all claims and liability relating to said photographs, video and digital images."
- Write a summary of the event and place it in the chairman's procedure book.
- Maintain accurate records of all awards in a permanent file.

The committee should be:

- Appointed early in the officer's term to allow time for planning and ordering awards.
- Composed of different members each year.
- Representative of the school's community.
- Composed of an uneven number (five is suggested).

The applicants being considered should be recognized for outstanding service to children and youth, and not necessarily for routine, assigned responsibilities or for retirement.

It is recommended that you avoid establishing a pattern such as always presenting an award to the outgoing president or retiring faculty members.

Remember to consider those who work behind the scenes, quietly and efficiently serving youth.

### Very Special Person Award

The Very Special Person (VSP) Award may be given to individuals or PTA constituent organizations to recognize having contributed to the school community in a special way. This award is available by a contribution of \$25.00 or more. A VSP pin (tack back) is also included.

### Honorary Service Award

An Honorary Service Award (HSA) may be given to an individual or organization in special recognition of outstanding service to children and youth. This award is available by a contribution of \$40.00 in the name of the recipient. An HSA pin (tack back) is also included.

### Continuing Honorary Service Award

A Continuing Honorary Service Award (CHSA) may be given to an individual or organization in special recognition of continued service to children and youth. The recipient may or may not have received a California State PTA Honorary Service Award. This award is available by a contribution of \$45.00 in the name of the recipient. A CHSA pin (tack back) is also included.

### Golden Oak Service Award

The Golden Oak Service Award is the most prestigious PTA award in California. This award may be given to an individual or organization that has made significant contributions to the welfare of children and youth in the school or community. This award is available by a contribution of \$85.00 in the name of the recipient. A Golden Oak Service pin (tack back) is also included.

### Outstanding Teacher Award

The Outstanding Teacher Award may be given to a teacher in special recognition for outstanding service in positively impacting the lives and welfare of children and youth in the PTA, school, or community. This award is available by a contribution of \$40.00 in the name of the recipient. An Outstanding Teacher Award pin (tack back) is also included.

### Outstanding Administrator Award

The Outstanding Administrator Award may be given to an administrator in special recognition for outstanding service in positively impacting the lives and welfare of children and youth in the PTA, school, or community.

This award is available by a contribution of \$40.00 in the name of the recipient. An Outstanding Administrator Award pin (tack back) is also included.

### Elected Official Honorary Service Award

This award may be given to recognize an elected official for outstanding policy work and/or legislation that positively impacts the lives of children. This award may be given at the local, state or federal level. This award is not to be used as an endorsement of any elected official, but to celebrate the work of the elected official. An award certificate and pin (tack back) is available with a contribution of \$40.00 by a PTA unit, council or district in the name of the recipient. Best practice in awarding elected officials is to award 60 days or more before their name would appear on a ballot. There is not a set number of days required legally, but the further you can get from the active campaign period the better. At least 30 days is a strong recommendation.

### Donations

Donations may be given by PTAs/PTSAs or by individuals in tribute to a person, a group or in memoriam. The donation may be made in any amount. An acknowledgment card or certificate, as requested, will be sent when a donation of \$10.00 or more is made. Anyone or any group may donate to the HSA program fund; the fund is not limited to contributions by PTAs (Memoriam or Tribute Donation Form, Forms Chapter).

## Acknowledging Service and Honoring Presidents

In addition to the HSA, other PTA pins may be given to represent an individual's pledge of service and protection to children and youth. Members, by wearing this emblem, indicate that they have a share in this service.

California State PTA uses a basic design for the pins, to be worn as indicated:

- The membership pin may be worn by members;
- The president's pin with the name of the unit, council or district PTA engraved across the bar is a symbol of the office and is worn by the president during the term of office and given to the succeeding president;
- The unit past president's pin with one acorn may be worn by past presidents;
- The council past president's pin with two acorns may be worn by past presidents of councils;
- The district PTA past president's pin with three acorns may be worn by district PTA past presidents upon completion of the term of office.

Past president pins should be engraved with the unit/council/district PTA on the bar, and the years of service and their initials on the back of the emblem.

Presidents must have served half of the elected term of office to be eligible for a past president's pin, except in the case of a first president of a new organization.

Additional acorns are never added for serving more than one term at the same unit, council or district PTA, nor as

president of more than one unit, council or district PTA. Separate pins should be provided from each unit, council or district PTA served.

It is appropriate to wear the PTA emblem whenever one is representing the organization or serving it. It is the responsibility of individuals to determine when, where and how many pins should be worn.

Pins may be purchased through California State PTA.

## Legacy PTA Award

Legacy PTA Awards are given each year by California State PTA to those units, councils, and districts who have reached a certain yearly milestone as a chartered PTA association. Local, council, and district PTAs in good standing who have achieved fifty (50), sixty (60), seventy (70), seventy-five (75), eighty (80), ninety (90) and one hundred (100) years chartered are recognized as Legacy PTAs with a certificate issued by California State PTA. In addition, all Legacy PTA honorees are encouraged to attend the California State PTA convention to receive “A Legacy PTA” ribbon and be recognized for their accomplishment. Awardees who have reached their 100<sup>th</sup> year as a PTA association will be recognized on stage at the state convention by the California State PTA president.

## Popular Events

### Community and Wellness Fairs

Sponsoring a community and wellness fair will enable the PTA to share practical and valuable information.

Fairs can:

- Promote good family and personal practices;
- Provide screening services for your school and community (and follow-up, when screenings indicate further testing is required);
- Utilize community professionals to identify potential health-related problems that, if properly treated, can be eliminated or prevented from becoming serious;
- Promote safety in the home, school, and community;
- Provide the community with a variety of educational information and resources;
- Emphasize the practice of good habits; and
- Connect with organizations and agencies in the community.

Materials and planning guides may be found in “Health Fairs at Your Fingertips ... a Practical Guide to a Successful Health Fair,” [capta.org](http://capta.org), under Programs, Health, events.

## Founders Day: February 17

Founders Day is a perfect time to renew the dedication to the Purposes of the PTA that were defined by PTA's founders more than a century ago. Each year in February, PTA honors the three founders as well as past and present PTA leaders. Through special programs and events, PTA also attempts to increase the awareness of its members and the community by highlighting achievements, activities, projects and goals.

The Founders Day celebration was created in 1910 by Mrs. David O. Mears, a charter member of the National Congress of Mothers founded by Alice McLellan Birney and Phoebe Apperson Hearst in Washington, D.C., February 17, 1897. The Founders Day observance has continued through the change of organization names in 1925 to the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, and the uniting in 1970 with the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, founded in 1926 by Selena Sloan Butler, to become the National PTA (A Brief History: Working Together for Children Since 1987, Know Your PTA Chapter).

Issues concerning immigrants, homeless children and families, the unemployed and the uneducated, and numerous health and safety concerns still need attention. However, through PTA advocacy to enact and enforce laws, children's health is better protected and children are better fed, housed and educated, with parents more involved in their upbringing. The vision of PTA's founders has been realized in many ways, and now it is up to present PTA members to continue the vision.

### Founders Day Freewill Offering: “PTA Birthday Gift”

Donations collected during Founders Day observances benefit the entire organization: unit, council, district PTAs, State and National PTA. California State PTA returns one-fourth of its offering to the district PTA and retains one-fourth for its work throughout the state. Half of the offering is sent to National PTA (Unit Remittance Form Finance Chapter; Forms Chapter).

District PTAs use the funds to:

- Organize new units and councils. Strengthen PTAs and PTSAs. Train leaders through workshops and conferences. Offer leadership training and parliamentary procedure courses. Promote PTA publications and special projects. Plan special contacts with teachers and administrators to increase the value of the PTA to school and community.

California State PTA uses the funds to:

- Service new units and councils. Strengthen PTAs and PTSAs.
- Provide special assistance to council and district PTAs through workshops and leadership conferences. Conduct field services in local areas by California State PTA officers and members of commissions. Perform regional extension work throughout the state. Counsel with individuals and groups.

National PTA uses the funds to:

- Provide requested field services (instructions, guidance and other assistance for California State PTA leaders). Train leaders. Promote contacts with educational groups. Disseminate materials that will further the aims and Purposes of PTA. Hold conferences. Provide extension of parent-teacher services throughout the country.

For details on the responsibilities of Founders Day, see “Job Description for Founders Day” (Job Descriptions Chapter).

## Graduation or Prom Night — Programs and Member Services

A PTA graduation or prom night event is coordinated by a committee whose chairman is an appointed or elected member of the executive board. The committee members can include other members of the board, the principal, a faculty member, the president (ex officio), and other PTA members appointed by the president.

The major responsibility of this committee is to provide a safe, healthy, legal and supervised recreational event for students in cooperation with the community. A secondary responsibility may be to raise funds to host the event.

### Activities

Activities should

Be inexpensive, involve many members and students and be fun.

Not involve commercial or advertising obligations.

Not conflict with other PTA, school or community events.

Create goodwill for PTA in the community.

See section Transportation Planning.

### After the Event

Complete an inventory of supplies and equipment related to the activity, establish a location to store reusable equipment; determine if the value of stored materials warrants the purchasing of property insurance coverage. (Note: Current PTA insurance does not cover unit PTA property.)

### Safety

Have proper adult supervision.

Be aware of risks like hiring a limousine or charter bus. Verify their business licenses with the local Public Utilities Commission.

Follow school district safety procedures when using their buses.

See Insurance and Loss Prevention Guide for allowable, discouraged and PTA-prohibited activities.

A PTA sponsoring or cosponsoring a graduation or prom night activity must follow all California State PTA financial procedures and the *Insurance and Loss Prevention Guide*.

## Resources:

American Automobile Association (AAA) Celebrate Life  
California Attorney General's Guide for Charities (2005)

## Health

Organized events at theme parks or recreational areas create fewer problems than those that are self-catered and supervised by local sponsors.

Every event must be drug-, alcohol-, and smoke-free. Careful consideration must be given to food handling, restroom facilities, rest areas and availability of personnel certified in first aid and CPR.

## Legal Issues

Parents' Approval and Student Waiver forms should be completed for each student participant. The form can be found in the Insurance and Loss Prevention Guide.

It is illegal for a person under the age of 18 to participate in any form of gambling (including casino activities).

Information on how to conduct a legal raffle can be obtained by going to the California Attorney General's website, [www.ag.ca.gov](http://www.ag.ca.gov). (Refer to the California Attorney General's Guide for Charities and §320.5 Gambling: Charitable Raffles effective July 1, 2001.)

Raffles may include but are not limited to 50/50 raffles, donation drawings, ducky derby and cow chip bingo.

Remember that it is illegal for any person under the age of 21 to possess, obtain or consume beer or alcohol. It is unlawful to possess, offer or sell any controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant on school premises. No person may sell, furnish, or procure intoxicating liquor (including beer) for anyone under the age of 21. It is illegal for anyone to possess any controlled substance without a valid prescription. (See Insurance and Loss Prevention Guide.)

## PTA Unit Procedures

A PTA sponsoring or cosponsoring a graduation or prom night activity must follow all California State PTA financial procedures and the Insurance and Loss Prevention Guide.

The association must vote to sponsor or cosponsor the program, and the action must be recorded in the minutes. The president appoints the program committee, subject to ratification by the executive board. All committee and subcommittee members must be members of the PTA (Committee Development and Guidelines, Running Your PTA Chapter).

## Red Ribbon Week Celebration — Revised October 2010 – Community Concerns

In 1985 Enrique Kiki Camarena was kidnapped, brutally tortured, and murdered by Mexican drug traffickers. His tragic death opened the eyes of many Americans to the dangers of drugs and the international scope of the drug trade.

Shortly after Kiki's death, Congressman Duncan Hunter and Kiki's high school friend Henry Lozano launched



“Camarena Clubs” in Kiki’s hometown of Calexico, Calif. Hundreds of club members pledged to lead drug-free lives to honor the memory of Kiki Camarena. These pledges were delivered to first lady Nancy Reagan at a national conference of parents combating youth drug use. Several state parent organizations then called on community groups to wear red ribbons during the last week of October as a symbol of their drug-free commitment. In 1988, the National Family Partnership (NFP) coordinated the first National Red Ribbon Week with President and Mrs. Reagan serving as honorary chairpersons.

### How to Celebrate Red Ribbon Week

- The NFP estimates that more than 80 million people participate in Red Ribbon events each year.
- The campaign is a unified way for communities to take a stand against drugs, and to show intolerance for illicit drug use and the consequences to all Americans.
- Schools, businesses, the faith community, media, families, and community coalitions join together to celebrate Red Ribbon Week in many ways, such as: sponsoring essay and poster contests; organizing drug-free races; decorating buildings in red; handing out red ribbons to customers; holding parades or community events; and by publicizing the value of a drug-free, healthy lifestyle.

### Additional Resources

California Department of Education  
([www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/at](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/at))

Community Alliances for Drug Free Youth (CADFY)  
([www.CADFY.org](http://www.CADFY.org))

California Friday Night Live Partnership  
([www.fridaynightlive.org](http://www.fridaynightlive.org))

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)  
([www.dea.gov](http://www.dea.gov) and [www.justthinktwice.com](http://www.justthinktwice.com))

Partnership for a Drug-Free California  
([www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org))

Sundt Memorial Foundation  
([www.sundtmemorial.org](http://www.sundtmemorial.org))

The Enrique S. Camarena Educational Foundation  
([www.CamarenaFoundation.org](http://www.CamarenaFoundation.org))

Time to Talk (Partnership for a drug free America website directed at parents) ([www.timetotalk.org](http://www.timetotalk.org))

Today, schools and communities throughout the nation create activities and sponsor media campaigns during **Red Ribbon Week** to increase the public’s awareness about the problems caused by substance abuse and promote research-based prevention strategies and programs throughout the year.

~ Community Alliances for Drug Free Youth (CADFY),  
[www.cadfy.org](http://www.cadfy.org)

# Scholarships and Grants

## SCHOLARSHIPS

Funds for the scholarship program to further various kinds of higher education are approved annually by California State PTA.

Scholarships are available to graduating high school seniors to commend extensive volunteer service in the school and community. Scholarships are for use during the first year, following high school graduation.

Scholarship awards also are available to credentialed teachers, counselors, and school nurses for advanced study, and to PTA volunteers with at least three years of PTA service to continue their education.

Applications are available from the California State PTA Toolkit, the California State PTA office, or from the website at [capta.org](http://capta.org).

### Scholarships and Grants Committee

Recommends necessary policies;

Administers the current scholarship and grant program;

Reviews each scholarship and grant project;

Selects scholarship and grant recipients; and

Recommends, to the California State PTA Board of Managers for adoption, amendments to the scholarship and grant program for the following year.

### Graduating High School Senior Scholarship — (Established 1977/1978 – Revised August 2014)

Scholarships are available annually from California State PTA to high school seniors graduating between January and June of each calendar year. These scholarships acknowledge the achievement of high school seniors of volunteer work in the school and community. Scholarships are for use during the first year following high school graduation at an accredited college, university, community college, or trade or technical school.

**Application:** An application and reference form are located in the Toolkit, Forms Chapter. Applications and reference forms with letters must be received in the California State PTA office by close of business February 1. When February 1 falls on a weekend, applications are due in the State PTA office by close of business the following Monday. Postmarks will not be accepted.

**Qualifications:** Applicant must have volunteered in the school and community and must be graduating from a California public high school that has a PTA unit in good standing. Applicant must be a member of the PTA/PTSA unit at his/her high school.

**Selection:** Recipients are selected by the California State PTA Scholarships and Grants Committee. Upon selection to receive a California State PTA Graduating High School Senior Scholarship, a check will be sent to the recipient with the award letter. Checks will be issued to recipients by June first of the current fiscal year.

### Continuing Education Scholarship for Credentialed Teachers and Counselors — (Established 1976 – Revised August 2014)

Scholarships are available annually from California State PTA for continuing education use, including summer study, from January 1 through December 31.

**Application:** An application and reference form are located in the Toolkit, Forms Chapter. Applications and reference forms with letters must be received in the California State PTA office by close of business October 15. When October 15 falls on a weekend, applications are due in the State PTA office by close of business the following Monday. Postmarks will not be accepted.

**Qualifications:** Scholarships are granted to credentialed teachers and counselors who were employed full time in the public schools in California during the preceding academic year, who have a minimum of three (3) years' teaching/counseling experience in public schools, who have a full-time teaching or counseling contract for the current year and who plan to continue as a teacher or counselor. Applicant must be a member of a PTA/PTSA unit in good standing and teach or have a counseling position at that PTA/PTSA school.

**Selection:** Recipients are selected by the California State PTA Scholarships and Grants Committee and approved by California State PTA. A check for the scholarship is sent to the recipient's PTA district president to be presented to the recipient.

### Continuing Education Scholarship for School Nurses — (Established 1985 – Revised August 2014)

Scholarships are available annually from the California State PTA for continuing education use at Board of Registered Nurses (BRN) approved institutions and/or providers from January 1 through December 31.

**Application:** An application and reference form are located in the Toolkit, Forms Chapter. Applications and reference forms with letters must be received in the California State PTA office by close of business October 15. When October 15 falls on a weekend, applications are due in the State PTA office by close of business the following Monday. Postmarks will not be accepted.

**Qualifications:** Scholarships are granted to licensed registered nurses who have been employed as school nurses in the public schools in California during the preceding academic year, who have a minimum of three (3) years' nursing experience in the public schools, who have a nursing contract for the current year and who plan to continue as public school nurses. Applicant must be a member of a PTA/PTSA unit in good standing and have an assignment in at least one PTA/PTSA school.

**Selection:** Recipients are selected by the California State PTA Scholarships and Grants Committee. A check for the scholarship is sent to the recipient's PTA district president to be presented to the recipient.

## **Continuing Education Scholarships for PTA Volunteers — (Established 1993 – Revised August 2014)**

Scholarships are available annually from California State PTA to be used for continuing education at accredited colleges, universities, trade or technical schools. These scholarships recognize volunteer service in PTA and enable PTA volunteers to continue their education. The scholarships may be utilized during the period January 1 to December 31.

**Application:** An application and reference form are located in the Toolkit, Forms Chapter. Applications and reference forms with letters must be received in the California State PTA office by close of business October 15. When October 15 falls on a weekend, applications are due in the State PTA office by close of business the following Monday. Postmarks will not be accepted.

**Qualifications:** Applicant must have given three years' volunteer service to PTA/PTSA and must hold current membership in a PTA/PTSA unit in good standing.

**Selection:** Recipients are selected by the California State PTA Scholarships and Grants Committee. Continuing volunteer service in PTA/PTSA is a major criterion in the selection of scholarship recipients. Upon proof of enrollment, a check for the scholarship is sent to the recipient's PTA district president to be presented to the recipient.

## **GRANTS**

Grants are available to assist unit, council, and district PTAs to develop and implement programs in parent education, cultural arts, and leadership development. Grants are also available to assist unit, council and district PTAs to translate PTA materials into other languages.

Applications may be obtained from the California State PTA Toolkit, the California State PTA office, or on the website at [capta.org](http://capta.org).

Grant funds must be expended by June 1. A report detailing the project's goals and objectives, an evaluation of the outcomes, and a budget of actual expenditures must be submitted to the California State PTA office no later than June 1. Any funds not used for the purpose stated on the original grant application must accompany the Grant Report. See Forms Chapter, Grant Report.

## **Parent Education Grants for Unit, Council and District PTAs — (Established 1953 – Reviewed August 2014)**

Grants are available annually from California State PTA for use by unit, council, and district PTAs to develop and implement parent education programs or projects.

**Application:** An application form for the grant is located in the California State PTA Toolkit (Forms Chapter). Applications must be received in the California State PTA office by close of business on October 15. When

October 15 falls on a weekend, applications are due in the State PTA office by close of business on the following Monday. Postmarks will not be accepted.

**Eligibility:** Applicant must be a unit, council or district PTA in good standing.

**Selection:** Recipients are selected by the California State PTA Scholarships and Grants Committee. A check for the grant is sent to each unit, council and district PTA recipient following the January California State PTA Board of Managers meeting.

## **Outreach Translation Grants for Unit, Council and District PTAs — (Established 1997 – Reviewed August 2014)**

Grants are available annually from California State PTA for use by unit, council and district PTAs for written or verbal translation of PTA materials into other languages.

**Application:** An application form for the grant is located in the California State PTA Toolkit (Forms Chapter). Applications must be received in the California State PTA office by close of business on October 15. When October 15 falls on a weekend, applications are due in the State PTA office by close of business on the following Monday. Postmarks will not be accepted.

**Eligibility:** Applicant must be a unit, council, or district PTA in good standing.

**Selection:** Recipients are selected by the California State PTA Scholarships and Grants Committee. A check for the grant is sent to each unit, council, and district PTA recipient following the January California State PTA Board of Managers meeting.

## **Cultural Arts Grants for Unit, Council and District PTAs — (Established 2000 – Reviewed August 2014)**

Grants are available annually from California State PTA for use by unit, council, and district PTAs to develop and implement student-centered cultural arts programs and projects focused on arts education.

**Application:** An application form for the grant is located in the California State PTA Toolkit (Forms Chapter). Applications must be received in the California State PTA office by close of business on October 15. When October 15 falls on a weekend, applications are due in the State PTA office by close of business on the following Monday. Postmarks will not be accepted.

**Eligibility:** Applicant must be a unit, council or district PTA in good standing.

**Selection:** Recipients are selected by the California State PTA Scholarships and Grants Committee. A check for the grant is sent to each unit, council, and district PTA recipient following the January California State PTA Board of Managers meeting.

## Leadership Development Grants for Unit, Council and District PTAs — (Established 2000 – Reviewed April 2017)

Grants may be available annually from California State PTA to encourage and support attendance at the California State PTA Convention, regional and/or local trainings in order to strengthen leadership on unit, council, and district PTA boards.

**Selection:** A check for the grant is sent to the district PTA. It is the responsibility of the district PTA to select recipients and forward grants to the individual PTA.

The district PTA must submit a final report to the California State PTA office detailing the distribution of leadership development grant funds no later than June 1. See Forms, Leadership Development Grant Report.

Failure to submit this report by the due date will result in an invoice payable upon receipt from California State PTA for the amount of the grant. The Scholarships and Grants Committee and Leadership Services Commission will take into consideration the timely receipt of the report when awarding future Leadership Development Grants.

Direct all questions regarding due dates or rules for all grants to the California State PTA Scholarships and Grants Committee Chairman at [grants@capta.org](mailto:grants@capta.org) for leadership development grants please contact your district PTA.

## Healthy Lifestyles Grant — (Established 2005 – August 2014)

Healthy Lifestyle Grants are available from California State PTA to develop, promote and implement programs, projects and activities which will improve the overall health of children and adults. Refer to the Insurance Loss and Prevention Guide for approved activities.

**Application:** An application form for the grant is located in the California State PTA Toolkit (Forms Chapter). Applications must be received in the California State PTA office by close of business on October 15. When October 15 falls on a weekend, applications are due in the State PTA office by close of business on the following Monday. Postmarks will not be accepted.

**Eligibility:** Applicant must be a unit, council or district PTA in good standing.

**Selection:** Recipients are selected by the California State PTA Scholarships and Grants Committee. A check for the grant is sent to each unit, council and district PTA recipient following the January meeting of the California State PTA Board of Managers.

# Family Engagement in Schools

## Family Engagement Matters

*Revised January 2015 – Family Engagement*

Well-informed, engaged parents make a difference for student success. A home environment that encourages learning is a bigger factor in student achievement than a parent's income, education level or cultural background.

As research indicates, students with involved parents are more likely to:

- ☐ Attend school regularly
- ☐ Perform better in school
- ☐ Earn higher grades
- ☐ Pass their classes
- ☐ Develop better social skills
- ☐ Go on to post-secondary education

As important stakeholders, engaged parents take part in all aspects of their child's education and development from pre-school to high school.

This successful strategy is based on a shared understanding in a school community that parents are a child's first teachers and key resources in his/her education and growth.

## Schools, LCFF and Family Engagement

How California schools are funded makes family engagement in schools more important than ever. With the Local Control and Funding Formula (LCFF), school districts are required to engage parents in making important decisions about their schools to support student success.

This includes the requirement for parent involvement in shaping a school district's Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) by:

- ☐ Actively engaging parents in strategic planning and decision-making
- ☐ Seeking parent input on the needs, priorities, goals and spending in a district's LCAP

With parent involvement as one of the eight key areas in a LCAP, authentic family engagement in schools is vital for school improvement and student achievement.

**TAKE ACTION:** Download our LCFF/LCAP resources at: [capta.org](http://capta.org)

## Parents' Legal Rights

In addition to LCFF requirements for parent involvement, parents of students in California public schools have a number of other legal rights that promote inclusion of parents in student learning at all grade levels.

To enhance student progress, parents have the legal right to be included in the educational process with open access to the system on behalf of their children and teenagers.

As outlined in the California Education Code, parents have a right to:

### Connect with Learning by:

- Visiting a school for classroom observation
- Participating in parent-teacher conferences
- Volunteering at school
- Reviewing curriculum
- Determining school selection
- Helping to establish and review standards

### Oversee Student Progress by:

- Checking their student's attendance records
- Receiving student test results
- Monitoring their student's academic progress
- Being informed about psychological testing
- Accessing their student's records

### Engage in School Governance by:

- Participating in the development of school rules
- Taking part in councils and committees
- Contributing to policy development
- Ensuring safe school environments

With these rights, family engagement is identified as an effective way to help students stay on track academically and to improve our schools.

Another law, the Family-School Partnership Act, is designed to encourage parents/guardians to participate in school activities to support student success. It gives parents the right of parental leave from work to attend school activities from pre-school to high school in California.

If you work for a business with 25 or more employees at the same location, you have a legal right as a parent/guardian to request and take time off from work:

- ☐ To participate in activities at your child's school or licensed day care facility
  - ☐ Up to 40 hours/year as a full-time worker
  - ☐ Up to 20 hours/year as a part-time worker
- ☐ To use existing vacation time, personal leave or compensatory time off to account for the time you use participating in your child's school or child care facility

Any activity sponsored, supervised or approved by a school, school board, or child-care facility is acceptable. This includes volunteering in your child's classroom, participating in parent-teacher conferences, Back-to-School Night, Open House, field trips or extracurricular sporting events and assisting in community service learning activities.

**TAKE ACTION:** Find parent resources and more information on the California Department of Education website: [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov)

## Build Home-School Partnerships

### PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships

When families, schools and communities work effectively together as partners, family engagement is a powerful strategy that boosts student achievement and better prepares our children to lead healthy, happy and productive lives.

That's the thinking behind PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships. As research-based family engagement standards, they provide a framework to build stronger connections between home and school.

The six Standards, which focus on what parents, schools and communities can do together to support student success, are:

#### 1. Welcoming All Families into the School Community

*Families are active participants in the life of the school and feel welcomed, valued and connected to each other, to school staff and to what students are learning and doing in class*

**Getting Started:** Focus on how to break down barriers at your school. Put in place a Welcoming Committee and bilingual greeters and interpreters for meetings. Hold PTA meetings in community locations such as a local library or community center.

#### 2. Communicating Effectively

*Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication and learning*

**Getting Started:** Set up ways for families and school staff to connect better using multiple formats for communication. Organize social gatherings such as a school BBQ for everyone to get to know each other better.

#### 3. Supporting Student Success

*Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students' learning and healthy development, both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so*

**Getting Started:** Offer opportunities for parents to learn more on how to support student learning at home. Identify what parents need to know with a survey and hold Parent Education Nights on topics reflecting their interests. Provide tip sheets on parent-



teacher conferences, homework help and how to handle the tough issues in raising children and teens today.

#### 4. Speaking Up for Every Child

*Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success*

**Getting Started:** Publicize your school's family engagement policy and get parent and student feedback to update the policy. Hold Parent Information Nights on how to be an effective advocate, how to identify and support learning styles and ways to foster student achievement.

#### 5. Sharing Power

*Families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices and programs*

**Getting Started:** Build a culture of inclusion to engage parents in school decision-making that supports student success. Ensure that your PTA membership and leadership reflects your school community with parents of all neighborhoods to promote access and diversity.

#### 6. Collaborating With the Community

*Families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services and civic participation*

**Getting Started:** Partner with community and business leaders to provide resources and support the cultural, recreational, academic, health, social and other needs of families at your school. Welcome community members such as alumni and retired neighbors as volunteers for school activities and events.

**TAKE ACTION:** Download the *PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Guide Assessment Guide*, in English or Spanish, on our website: [capta.org](http://capta.org)

### Family Engagement Committee

Providing ways for parents to better support the growth, development and learning of their children and teenagers is the core purpose and value of PTA.

Setting up a Family Engagement Committee for your PTA ensures inclusion and gives parents ready access to the information, skills and training they need to support student success.

To build family engagement on campus, a good first step is to develop a year-long Action Plan. That way, you can organize, implement and assess your outreach efforts, programs and activities for family engagement more effectively.

### 5 Steps for an Action Plan:

- Survey parents, staff and students to identify the needs and priorities of the school community
- Create a family engagement team with parents, teachers, students, administrators and community partners to work together to support student success
- Design a family engagement Action Plan to reach and engage all families in the school community
- Present the programs budget for the Action Plan to the PTA board and association for approval
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Action Plan, using a year-end survey or an evaluation sheet filled out at each event/activity

As part of your Action Plan, offer Parent Education Nights on a variety of subjects including:

**To Boost Parenting Skills** – Focus on topics such as child development, health and wellness, multiculturalism and diversity, bullying and gangs, substance abuse, the arts, family life/sex education, social media, cyber safety and the other tough issues facing parents raising children and teenagers today.

**To Boost Student Achievement** – Focus on topics such as school policies, homework help, curriculum, reading, writing, math, STEAM, standardized testing, school safety, campus climate, student engagement and school improvement.

To expand your outreach efforts, follow up by using your PTA newsletter, website and social media postings to provide more information and resources on these topics.

**TAKE ACTION:** To learn more, check out the Job Description for the Family Engagement Chairmen in the *California State PTA Toolkit* online at: [capta.org](http://capta.org)

### Family Engagement Nights

When PTAs offer programs, activities and events for families to actively participate in school life, it helps to improve student outcomes and school performance from preschool to high school.

Family Engagement Nights are a great way to reinforce these ties between home and school. By bringing families together on campus, they provide opportunities to create a more welcoming, accessible and inclusive school culture.

They are also an effective way to share information, activities and resources to:

- ☐ Enhance student achievement
- ☐ Highlight what students are doing in class
- ☐ Support student learning at home
- ☐ Boost school improvement to meet whole-school goals
- ☐ Motivate students for long-term educational success

Whether it's a Family Story Telling or Math Night at elementary school, Family Science Mystery or Art Night

at middle school or a Family Fitness or Career Night at high school, Family Engagement Nights increase awareness of what students need to be successful.

They also help build a stronger community support system so that students can thrive in school and beyond.

**TAKE ACTION:** For more ideas and tips, visit the Family Engagement section of our website: [capta.org](http://capta.org)

## The Power of Parents

As a PTA member, you are a part of the largest children's advocacy group in the country that is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for public education.

Ways to ensure that parents have a seat at the table as partners in school governance and decision-making include:

- Attending meetings and sharing the parent view on school-related issues with educators
- Serving on school site and district committees or running for election to the school board
- Keeping other parents informed about specific issues and laws that affect their children's schools as a PTA legislative committee member
- Providing a parent's perspective by taking part in committees that interview, hire, and/or dismiss school staff
- Working with other school and community leaders as a PTA volunteer to devise programs, policies and practices that support student achievement

By helping to guide decision-making at a school, well-informed and engaged parents can ensure that every child and teen has an opportunity to enjoy overall success in school and beyond.

**TAKE ACTION:** Find out more about how California's education system works on the Ed100 website: [www.ed100.org](http://www.ed100.org)

## Partnering With Teachers

Open communication between parents and teachers on what and how a student is doing in class is an important factor in growing student learning and achievement. Regular interaction between teachers and parents is also critical in creating a reliable support system for students.

By reaching out to parents for input and feedback, teachers gain a better understanding of students and their families. And, by communicating with teachers, parents gain more insight, information and updates on their child's progress in school.

### Parent – Teacher Conferences

One of the best ways for parents and teachers to strengthen the home-school partnership is a parent-

teacher conference. It offers an opportunity to focus on how well a student is doing by sharing information, asking questions and devising ways to better support student learning.

#### • BEFORE the Conference

Take time to talk to your child about what he/she likes to do at school. Let the teacher know more about your child's strengths and challenges and what he/she likes to do with free time.

To ensure the success of the conference, prepare questions to ask the teacher about classroom activities, homework and your child's academic and social progress.

#### • AT the Conference

Exchange views and information with the teacher about how well your child is doing in school and how he/she can do even better. Ask the questions on your list to learn more about your child's achievements, development and growth.

Finding out more about what specific steps you can take to better support student learning at home is also an important part of your conversation with the teacher.

#### • AFTER the Conference

Share what you have learned at the conference with your child, emphasizing the positive feedback from his/her teacher. Put together an action plan with your child on how you will help with learning at home.

As follow up, arrange to talk again with your child's teacher in the next few months to assess your child's ongoing progress in school.

Making the most of a parent-teacher conference lets parents, teachers and the school work together more effectively as a team to help students achieve their potential.

**TAKE ACTION:** Download tips and checklists for successful parent-teacher conferences on the Harvard Family Research Project website: [www.hfrp.org](http://www.hfrp.org)

## Volunteering

Assisting with activities organized by your PTA, school or classroom teacher supports student learning and achievement in schools.

Stepping up as a volunteer also signals to your child how much your family values education and actively supports the efforts of teachers and the school to nurture students' learning, development and growth.

How much time and commitment is involved depends on your availability. It can range from one time only assignments to monthly, weekly or daily volunteer activities such as helping to:

- ☐ Tutor and mentor students

- ❑ Supervise lunchrooms, playgrounds and field trips
- ❑ Assist in a class, library or school office
- ❑ Enrich classroom learning by sharing a special skill, talent or experience
- ❑ Plan or run a PTA or school program, activity or event
- ❑ Prepare classroom materials, mailings or newsletters at home
- ❑ Manage PTA websites and social media at home
- ❑ Coordinate class phone calls, texts and emails to other parents

See what volunteer opportunities are offered on campus or at home by checking PTA and school newsletters, websites and social media. Sign up for volunteer jobs that fit well with your interests, availability and skill sets. To get connected, contact your PTA president.

**TAKE ACTION:** Download PTA Job Descriptions for Volunteer, Volunteer Coordinator, Room Representative and Room Representative Coordinator from the *California State PTA Toolkit* online at: [capta.org](http://capta.org)

## Your Voice Matters

As a parent, you may not realize how frequently you are an effective advocate for your child. Every time you stand up for your child or look for ways to improve his/her school experience, you are acting as an advocate by speaking up and affecting the decision-making process.

Working with others in your school community to identify and resolve an issue amplifies your voice as a parent. It helps ensure, too, that all students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities so that they can thrive in school and beyond.

To get started, work together to:

- Research the issue and share the information with your school community
- Raise questions for discussion at school or community meetings
- Participate in the solution by proposing possible remedies for the problem
- Provide updates on the status of the issue
- Empower and train other parents in how to share their story as effective advocates

By developing a plan together with a strong message and effective strategies for communication and outreach, parents can make a difference as advocates to improve the education, health and wellbeing of all children.

**TAKE ACTION:** See how to develop and implement an action plan to study an issue on our website: [capta.org](http://capta.org)

## School Smarts Parent Engagement Program

### THE POWER OF SCHOOL SMARTS:

School Smarts is California State PTA's signature program for building authentic family engagement in school. It trains parents/caregivers on how the California school system works, how to effectively advocate for a quality education and how to grow family-school partnerships to support student success and school improvement.

School Smarts is grounded on decades of research that shows how and why parent involvement in school matters. When parents/caregivers are engaged in a child's school life, it makes a positive difference in academic achievement, as well as attitude and behavior, for students from all neighborhoods.

As studies indicate, a home environment that actively encourages learning is a bigger factor for student achievement than a parent's income, education level or cultural background.

Connecting parents/caregivers to their child's learning is more important than ever. With the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), 'Parent Involvement' is a State Priority for developing and reviewing a school district's Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). This means the parent voice is an essential part of the process that determines how our schools are funded.

Inclusion is the program's operating principle. As a fee-for-service program, School Smarts is sponsored by a school district or PTA and is offered for parents/caregivers at no cost. Each Session is family-centered with childcare onsite. And, the curriculum is available in six, home languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, Spanish, Tagalog and Vietnamese. In addition, the program can be presented either in-person or virtually for a school community.

School Smarts is an effective tool for school districts implementing family engagement strategies. Course content is specifically designed to assist districts with their state and federal family-engagement requirements and support their LCAP implementation. Funding options can include Title 1, English Learner Parent Involvement Funds and LCFF/LCAP Funding.

Typically, the School Smarts Program is provided at almost 100 school sites each year across the State. As School Smarts graduates, thousands of parents/caregivers are empowered as community leaders to advocate for their children and schools regardless of their zip code.

**Learn More:** To find out how to bring School Smarts to your school as an in-person or virtual program, contact: [schoolsmarts@capta.org](mailto:schoolsmarts@capta.org)

### THE SCHOOL SMARTS ACADEMY:

As a parent engagement program, School Smarts is tailored to meet the priorities and needs of a local, school community. While each Academy consists of seven, interactive Sessions with curriculum and course materials supplied by California State PTA, a School Smarts Planning Team of parents, teachers and



administrators at a school often plans, oversees and runs an Academy.

Academy participants meet weekly with a facilitator, either in-person or virtually, to explore and learn more about:

- Why family engagement in school makes a difference
- How to navigate the education system
- How your school operates and how decisions are made that affect your child
- Why parent engagement in the development and review of a district's LCAP matters
- Ways to communicate effectively with teachers and administrators
- How to advocate for a quality education
- Strategies and tips to support student learning at home more effectively

Topics such as Common Core Standards, assessments, testing and college readiness are also covered to inform and strengthen home-school partnerships.

Finding ways to enhance a school community is embedded as a learning outcome of School Smarts. The program kicks off with a Parent Engagement Night (PEN) for the whole school community. This in-person or virtual event brings parents and educators together to build relationships and trust. With the PEN, a community conversation on ways to better support student learning and school improvement on campus is also initiated.

In the final Session, Academy participants create group and personal action plans to benefit students and the school community. Action plans often focus on effective ways for parents/caregivers to reinforce classroom learning, to enhance school climate and to improve campus safety.

The impact of School Smarts on a school is enduring. As post-Academy surveys indicate, graduates get more involved in school committees and local PTAs. By paying it forward, the lives of children, families and their community are enriched by School Smarts.

**Learn More:** Check out the School Smarts Program on our website - [capta.org/schoolsmarts](http://capta.org/schoolsmarts)

## PTA OUTREACH – WAYS TO SUPPORT A SCHOOL SMARTS ACADEMY:

As a PTA leader, you can support a local Academy and its participants in a variety of ways. Remember to coordinate your efforts with other local leaders at the unit, council and district level.

For the school-wide Parent Engagement Night (PEN) and the Academy Sessions, work with the School Smarts Planning Team and facilitator on campus to connect School Smarts more closely with your PTA network by:

### Engaging Your Community

- **Promote Involvement** – Use PTA communication channels to reach out to families from all neighborhoods to participate in School Smarts
- **Raise Awareness** – Add a link to your PTA social media postings and website for the School Smarts homepage on the State PTA website: [www.capta.org](http://www.capta.org)
- **Welcome Participants** – Invite parents/caregivers to join PTA, engage in PTA activities and sign up for volunteer opportunities at school
- **Work Together** – Explore ways your PTA can assist in completing the Academy's action plans to enhance student learning, safety and well-being on campus
- **Celebrate Success** – Showcase School Smarts graduates in your PTA e-news, website or social media

### Sharing Your PTA Resources

- **Provide Support** – Supply information, speakers, interpreters and volunteers as needed and serve as a key resource on how to grow family-school partnerships for student success
- **Promote PTA** – For an in-person Academy, set up a PTA table to showcase your activities, volunteer opportunities, membership benefits and programs such as the Reflections Art Program
- **Get Connected** – Arrange for a board member to talk about your PTA's impact on campus for 'Session 4: Understanding our school' and to offer congratulations at the graduation
- **Practice Inclusion** – Invite program graduates to add their voices to PTA advocacy efforts and your school district's development and review of its Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP)
- **Grow Leadership** – Encourage and mentor School Smarts graduates to serve on a PTA committee or board

**TAKE ACTION:** Check out the School Smarts Parent Engagement Program on our website: [capta.org/schoolsmarts](http://capta.org/schoolsmarts). Contact us at [schoolsmarts@capta.org](mailto:schoolsmarts@capta.org) or 916.440.1985 to find out how to get more involved and connected with School Smarts.

## Parenting Resources

### Helping Your Child Grow and Learn

As a child's first teachers, parents make a difference for student success at every grade level. Providing a family support system that nurtures a child's healthy physical, emotional, intellectual and social growth lets a child thrive to do well from preschool to high school.

#### • How to Make a Strong Start

Children's early experiences shape their potential to succeed in school and beyond. During the first three years of life, brain development is especially rapid with

more than 700 neural connections created each second. This means that more is learned and at a faster rate than at any other time in a child's life.

That's why how parents, guardians and caregivers interact with infants and toddlers has a long-lasting impact on a child's development and functioning later in life. Key elements to ensure overall, healthy growth include:

**Nutrition** – Providing a properly balanced diet with healthy food choices affects a child's physical and mental development, fosters good eating habits and helps to prevent and overcome illness

**Communication** – Interacting with a young child by talking, reading and singing supports his/her language, cognitive and social development and provides a language-rich environment

**Activity** – Playing, movement and physical activity develop muscles, bone density and coordination for a child, reinforce good exercise behavior patterns and boost physical wellbeing

**Assessment** – Ensuring early assessment, intervention and referral for a young child can help prevent, treat or manage many developmental challenges

**Environment** – Raising a child in a positive, safe and loving environment has a profound impact on a child's emotional, physical and social growth and development

When babies and toddlers have strong emotional bonds with parents and caregivers, good health and wellness care and positive early learning experiences, an enduring foundation is built to do well at school and beyond.

**TAKE ACTION:** For videos, podcasts and information on early learning, behavior and development, visit the Zero to Three website: [www.zerotothree.org/child-development](http://www.zerotothree.org/child-development)

### • How to Help Kids Thrive

Success in school is heavily linked to a child's self-esteem and self-discipline. When children and adolescents feel good about themselves, they develop social skills and competencies to relate well to others, behave more appropriately and be more aware of the world around them.

Research shows, too, that high self-esteem has an even greater payoff over a lifetime of making decisions. By providing everyday opportunities for your children and teens to learn how to make decisions that are age appropriate, they develop more confidence and a sense of responsibility for their own actions and choices.

Self-discipline is equally important as a basic building block for student achievement. Helping a child to learn why and how self-control, perseverance and grit matters better prepares and empowers him/her for school readiness and learning.

As key assets from preschool to high school, self-esteem and self-discipline are nurtured in a child and teenager when, as a parent, you:

- ☐ Show and express how much you care, love and value him/her unconditionally
- ☐ Set limits and rules that are important to the quality of your family life
- ☐ Provide guidelines with clear expectations to help meet his/her responsibilities
- ☐ Listen and are responsive to his/her needs and aspirations
- ☐ Notice and praise his/her efforts and problem-solving skills
- ☐ Spend individual time with him/her
- ☐ Create an atmosphere of honesty, mutual trust and respect

Fostering healthy self-esteem and self-discipline gives children and teens a strong sense of their own power, purpose, worth and promise to do well in school and beyond.

**TAKE ACTION:** See how key developmental assets support student learning and growth on the Search Institute's website: [www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org)

### • How to Navigate the Teen Years

A teenager's need to be more independent, assert themselves and take risks is a normal and healthy part of his/her development.

As parents can attest, teens often seem to make impulsive decisions without thinking about consequences. Yet, studies show this is a natural outcome of this stage of growth since parts of the teenage brain responsible for impulse control only fully mature at about age 25.

Exploring their own limits and abilities, as well as the boundaries you set as a parent, is part of how teenagers develop their identity and become their own person.

Here are some effective ways for parents to navigate the teen years:

**Keep Communicating** – Maintain easy, two-way communication and develop a supportive relationship that encourages your teen to talk openly with you

**Set Family Ground Rules** – While teens often push against these rules, learn to be flexible in negotiating new limits as they mature and show they are ready for new responsibilities

**Stay Connected** – Know where and how to reach each other by phone and who your teen is hanging out with

**Reinforce Values** – Talk often with your teen about how decisions, behavior and actions reflect values and character and affect others in your community

**Manage Risk-taking** – Help your teen learn how to assess risk and channel risk-taking tendencies into more constructive, adrenaline-charged activities such as playing sports or performing in drama or the creative arts

**Model Behavior** – Be a good role model to help guide your teenager's behavior and actions as they mature and grow

**Be There** – Show and tell your teen how much your family supports, loves and cares for him/her

When parents encourage their teenagers to become more self-sufficient and provide strong, family support, adolescents are better equipped to meet the expectations, challenges and responsibilities they will face as young adults.

**TAKE ACTION:** For more tips and information on the development and growth of teens, visit the Kid's Health website: [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)

## Student Learning

Every child is unique and learns in different ways. Knowing more about how a student processes information supports learning activities at home and at school.

Decades of research identify the primary learning styles of students as:

**Visual Learners** – Gather and remember information by looking, reading and watching

**Linguistic/Auditory Learners** – Learn well by listening, talking and discussing ideas

**Bodily-Kinesthetic Learners** – Learn by doing and gather meaning through touch, movement and physical interaction

**Logical-Mathematical Learners** – Learn best by analyzing, breaking down and arranging information logically

**Global Processors or Learners** – Absorb information by clustering it into wholes and focusing on the big idea underpinning the details

While most children have a preferred learning style, all have a mix of styles. For this reason, teachers often use a multi-sensory approach in class.

When learning to read, for instance, a student who might not learn words or letters by looking at them (Visual Learning) will be encouraged to trace letter shapes with their finger (Bodily-Kinesthetic Learning).

Since schoolwork is largely based on reading, non-visual learners need to rely on other approaches and methods of teaching.

If your child learns best by hearing, touching or other senses and is having difficulty in class, ask the teacher and school how to best accommodate your child's needs. Provide family learning experiences such as hands-on museums, theater or dance classes, or listening to audio books to enhance learning.

**TAKE ACTION:** Get parenting tips on learning styles by visiting the Family Education website: [www.familyeducation.com](http://www.familyeducation.com)

## Early Childhood Education Counts

High quality early learning experiences help a child get ready to learn and succeed later in school. As research indicates, they have a positive impact on school readiness, learning outcomes and student achievement from preschool to high school.

Children who attend quality preschool are better prepared for kindergarten, behave better in class, have higher math and reading skills, and are more likely to graduate from high school and go to college.

A quality preschool provides the opportunity for children to learn and enhance a range of new social and developmental assets including how to:

- ☐ Interact, engage and socialize with peers and teachers
- ☐ Pay attention, follow directions and finish tasks
- ☐ Develop large and small muscles as well as gross and fine motor skills
- ☐ Practice new skills by him or herself and be persistent when learning something new
- ☐ Build a strong foundation in cognitive skills such as pre-reading and early math

Acquiring these important assets and skills at preschool significantly benefits a child's school readiness and later success in school.

**TAKE ACTION:** For tips and activities to support a young child's growth and development, go to the First 5 California website: [www.first5california.com/parents/learning](http://www.first5california.com/parents/learning).

For preschools in your area, explore the California Child Care Resource & Referral Network website: [www.rnetwork.org/parents](http://www.rnetwork.org/parents)

To learn more about Early Head Start and Head Start Programs, visit: [www.prekkid.org](http://www.prekkid.org)

For information on why and how early childhood education matters, check out the Early Edge California website: [www.earlyedgecalifornia.org](http://www.earlyedgecalifornia.org)

## Classroom Learning

How we prepare students today for tomorrow's world has changed. With the implementation of new standards for all students, called Common Core State Standards (CCSS), learning in class will look different for your child from kindergarten to high school.

The new standards mean deeper, richer, more relevant instruction for your child with:

- Clearly defined learning goals for each grade level that build from year to year
- A focus on key knowledge and skills, including communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity

These academic standards are important because they help ensure that all students, no matter where they live, are prepared for success in college and the workforce. They also help set clear and consistent expectations for students, parents and teachers; build your child's knowledge and skills; and, help set high goals for all students.

**TAKE ACTION:** Find out what the Common Core State Standards are for each grade level in the *Parents Guide to School Success* on our website: [capta.org](http://capta.org)

## Student Assessment

The overall goal of any student assessment program is to identify what students know and how well they can apply that knowledge.

As part of the transition to the new CCSS standards, California is implementing a new testing system, called Smarter Balanced. It evaluates student achievement in a more meaningful way by leveraging technology to tailor questions to student responses.

It also measures student progress toward college-and-career readiness, enabling educators to diagnose any problems and intervene earlier.

A statewide assessment program is an integral part of the instructional process. When linked to established curriculum standards, it supplies information on the effectiveness of instructional delivery and curriculum support materials.

Assessment tied to standards also provides important information to students, families and communities about how students are progressing in their learning. It can also be used to identify and address inequalities in access to learning opportunities.

Some other statewide tests in California schools for students include:

- **Physical Fitness Testing (PFT)**

The physical fitness test (PFT) for students in California schools is the FITNESSGRAM®. Its main goal is to help students start life-long habits of regular physical activity.

Students in grades five, seven and nine take the fitness test. The test has six parts that show a level of fitness that offer a degree of defense against diseases that come from inactivity. Test results help students, teachers and parents better understand a student's fitness level.

- **California English Language Development Test (CELDT)**

Students in kindergarten through grade twelve, whose home language is not English, are required by law to take an English skills test, called the CELDT in California.

This test helps schools identify students who need to improve their skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing in English. Schools also give the test each year to students who are still learning English.

- **California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE)**

All high school students must pass a test, called the CAHSEE, to earn a high school diploma in California.

The test was created to improve student achievement in high schools. It helps to ensure that students graduate from high school with grade level skills in reading, writing and math. Some students with disabilities do not have to pass this test.

Students first take this test in grade ten and, if they do not pass it at that time, they have more chances to take the test. In grade eleven, they can take the test two times. In grade twelve, they have up to five times to take the test.

The main purpose of the CAHSEE is to ensure that all students graduate from high school with the skills and knowledge needed to be successful in college or the workplace.

- **California High School Proficiency Examination (CHSPE)**

The CHSPE is a test for students who need to verify high school level skills. In some cases, students take the test and leave high school early to work or attend college.

Those who pass the test receive a Certificate of Proficiency from the State Board of Education, which is equal by law to a California high school diploma.

The test covers reading, writing and math. There is a fee to take it and it is given three times each year at many sites in California.

**TAKE ACTION:** For more information on student assessments and testing, visit the California Department of Education website: [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov)

## Arts Education Matters

The arts are critical for developing 21st Century skills, student engagement, creative expression, and play an important role in the educational development of students.

Research shows, for instance, that arts education closes the opportunity and achievement gaps between underserved students and those with greater access to resources.

Students with a high level of arts engagement from kindergarten through sixth grade have higher test scores in writing and science by their 8th grade year. Having access to arts education also reduces the drop out rate for at-risk students from 1 in 4 (25%) to 1 in 25 (4%).

Making the arts part of every child's education helps ensure that students are college, career and citizenship ready.

**TAKE ACTION:** Find out more about why arts education matters and what you can do on our SMARTS Parents for the Arts Network webpage at: [capta.org](http://capta.org)



## College and Career Planning

It is never too early for students to plan for the future and prepare for life after high school.

Students can begin to explore their interests, abilities and career goals by meeting with school counselors, starting in middle school. They can also get more information on what school programs and courses are available to help them reach those goals.

Attending 'Career Days' and 'College Nights' and looking for information online are also good ways to learn more about what college/career options might be a good fit.

Students and their families should start early to ask questions and become better informed about:

**Graduation Requirements** – Minimum requirements for high school graduation are set by the California Legislature. But students also need to know the graduation requirements adopted by their local school district. With this information, students can better plan to enroll in the courses that they need to graduate.

**Career and Technical Education** – Opportunities for students to take career and technical education classes start at the middle school level. These classes often reinforce the academic curriculum and prepare students for post-graduation options such as apprenticeships and formal employment training.

**Linked Learning** – Some high schools offer Linked Learning courses that bring together strong academics, demanding technical education and real-world experience for students. With this approach, students follow industry-themed pathways in a range of fields. This includes fields related to engineering, arts and media, biomedicine and health to connect learning with students' interests and career aspirations.

**College Entrance Requirements and Tests** – Many colleges and universities require students to take an entrance exam such as SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) or ACT (American College Testing Program) as part of the application process. Check with a school counselor to get more information about what the entrance requirements and tests are for colleges and universities that a student is interested in attending. It is possible to take college entrance tests as early as junior year in high school. Go online to college websites to learn more about their entrance requirements and application process including deadlines.

**Financial Aid and Scholarships** – College can be pricey. But there are a number of ways that students can obtain financial aid. Students should work closely with their high school counselor as well as the college financial aid office to explore all possibilities for student support in both the public and private colleges.

Early planning for college and career helps students stay on track to achieve their dreams. By enlisting the help of their family and school counselors, students can make a successful transition from high school to college and careers.

**TAKE ACTION:** To get started in college and career planning, check out the U.S. Department of Education website: [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov) and the website: [www.icanaffordcollege.com](http://www.icanaffordcollege.com)

## Creating a Partnership Between Home and School

### How to Support Student Learning At Home

Parents are a child's first teachers and the home is a child's first classroom. As key resources for learning and growth, parents help to shape a child's social, emotional and physical development so that he/she can thrive in school and beyond.

Supporting student success starts with a shared agreement among families, schools and the community to work together and it involves committed actions to make it happen.

#### 10 Tips for Parents

As a parent, you can do your part at home to reinforce this important family-school partnership. To help prepare your children for school readiness to stay on track and expand their learning opportunities:

- ☐ Set up a daily family routine, including healthy eating and sleeping habits
- ☐ Provide a place and time at home for homework
- ☐ Check on assignments, homework and projects
- ☐ Talk each day with your child about his/her activities
- ☐ Promote literacy by reading to your child and by reading yourself
- ☐ Limit and monitor TV watching, gaming, social media and computer time
- ☐ Express high expectations and standards for your child's learning
- ☐ Attend parent-teacher conferences, Open House and Back-To-School events
- ☐ Participate in decisions that affect your child's education
- ☐ Tap into community resources with visits to a library, museum, zoo or theater and encourage participation in after-school clubs, sports and art activities

Engaged parents are a key factor in helping students and schools succeed. With families, schools and communities working together as partners, student achievement is enhanced and children are better prepared to do well in school.

#### Keep in the Loop

With pre-teens and teens, staying connected with student learning remains critical. Yet, studies show that

family engagement in school drops as students move from elementary to middle and high school.

With this transition to higher grades, parents often face new challenges including figuring out ways to best support student success at home.

Parent involvement at middle and high school takes many forms. Whether it's checking homework, talking more about college and career choices, attending Open House or volunteering for PTA and booster clubs, your engagement makes a difference.

By knowing what's happening in the classroom and on campus, you can help your student to focus on coursework and school activities to ensure college and career readiness.

**TAKE ACTION:** For parent tips on how to support student success and stay connected in middle and high school, visit our website: [capta.org](http://capta.org)

## Boost Literacy Skills

Student success in school depends heavily on an ability to read and write at every grade level. Yet, the starting line for many children is different, depending on their zip code. By age 3, there is a 30 million 'word gap' between children from well off and low-income families.

As studies show, this 'word gap' can lead to disparities not just in vocabulary size but, also, in school readiness. It can even affect long-term educational and health outcomes, earnings, and family stability decades later.

By talking, reading and singing more to a child, the 'word gap' is reduced and his/her chances for later success in school and beyond improved.

### 4 Tips for Parents

You can give your young child a strong start to build pre-literacy skills for school readiness. Whether at home, on a walk or doing errands, help him/her from an early age to become a successful reader by:

- Playing simple name games by asking 'what is this'?
- Labeling things at home such as a door or a cup and reading the labels together
- Showing the ingredients as you cook and naming them together
- Reading aloud the words on signs and in stores

**TAKE ACTION:** For hands-on, family literacy activities, download the calendar, *30 Days of Families Learning Together*, from the National Center for Families Learning, in English or in Spanish at: <http://30days.familieslearning.org>

## Raise a Reader

Everyday activities are a perfect setting for children to develop language skills and become a lifelong reader. When you make reading and writing a natural part of your day as a family, students acquire strong literacy

skills and a bigger vocabulary to help them achieve academically.

To build these skill sets at home:

**Encourage Literacy** – Encourage your child to help make shopping lists, draw and write thank-you notes, write grocery lists and create menus for meals.

**Tap Into Your Community** – Check out materials such as toys, CDs and books from libraries. Participate in activities held by libraries and bookstores, such as story time, writing contests and summer reading programs.

**Make It Easy** – Keep reading and writing materials such as books, magazines, newspapers, paper, markers, crayons, scissors, glue and stickers accessible at home.

**Read Together** – Read books and rhymes and play language games such as tongue twisters and puzzles with your child. Point out the letter-sound relationships your child is learning on labels, boxes, magazines and signs.

**Share Stories** – Keep a notebook and write down stories your child tells you so that the child may see the connection between oral language and text.

**Be A Reader** – Children observe and learn from people around them. Let your child know you are proud of his/her reading.

When reading and writing are part of your family routine, your child will enhance the skills needed to better prepare him/her to do well in school.

**TAKE ACTION:** For more ways to help ensure your child is ready to learn, download the U.S. Department of Education's resource, *Parent Power: Build the Bridge to Success* at: [www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/parentpower/booklet.pdf](http://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/parentpower/booklet.pdf)

## Make STEAM Count

Today, the fastest growing job sectors are related to science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM) and 60% of college majors require a math background. In our technology-rich world, acquiring strong STEAM skills matters more than ever for college and career readiness.

In elementary school, students start to develop confidence in their ability to do the basics of math and science. They also begin to learn more about visual and performing art techniques and how technology and engineering work.

As studies show, with steady encouragement, learning and practice, parents can help their child to excel in these subjects from pre-school to college.

### 5 Tips for Parents

**Make It Real** – Connect math and science to the real world in your everyday activities as a family. When you go to a store, bank or restaurant, talk about how math is used on bills, deposit slips, menus or for tipping. At the park or beach, observe wildlife and plants, let your child draw what he/she sees and go online at home to discover even more.

**Play Games** – Provide puzzles and games at home that involve decision-making or strategy to build reasoning skills. Card games like ‘Go Fish’ teach children to count, sort and use strategy. Games like Scrabble involve spelling and math. Playing games in the car that estimate distance or listening to music, audio books and podcasts help grow STEAM skills.

**Feed Curiosity** – Borrow science, technology, art and math books and materials from the library and explore these topics online. Visit science museums, zoos, aquariums, theaters and state parks to discover what excites and interests your child. Talk with teachers about your child’s studies to find out ways to reinforce STEAM skills at home.

**Encourage Discovery** – Teach your child how to find information and encourage them to solve science and math problems on their own. As a child tries to solve a problem, ask helpful questions and let him/her take time to find out how to do it. Learning how to find answers helps to develop critical thinking.

**Expand Horizons** – While young children may want to be doctors or firefighters, widen their awareness of other interesting careers. Pilots, mechanics, software engineers, forest rangers, video game developers and biologists, for instance, are all jobs requiring STEAM skills. Go online together to explore the range of career options available with a foundation in STEAM.

Making STEAM learning an everyday part of family life promotes student achievement. Encourage your PTA or school to host activities such as Career Days, Science Fairs, Math Competitions, Arts Festivals and Robotics Clubs. That way, students will learn more about STEAM and how their interests can connect with career goals in these fields.

**TAKE ACTION:** Check out what fun, hands-on STEAM activities you can do at home on the PBS website: [www.pbskids.org](http://www.pbskids.org)

## Monitor Homework

Parents and families play an important role in the homework process. They can help children develop good study habits and attitudes that lead to becoming lifelong learners.

Teachers give homework to help students better understand, review and learn more about what has been covered in class. By working on assignments, students learn how to find and use more information on a topic, how to follow instructions and complete tasks and how to be responsible and engaged in learning.

As a parent, your job is not to do the work for them. But, by providing support, encouragement and asking questions, you can help them arrive at the answers themselves.

Homework time and strategies can vary from teacher to teacher and school to school. But most educators agree:

- For children in grades K-2, homework is more effective when it does not exceed 20 minutes each school day

- Older children, in grades 3-6, can handle 30-60 minutes a day
- For kids in middle and high school, two hours of homework maybe assigned

Your child's teacher can tell you, usually at Back-to-School Night, how much time he or she expects students to spend on homework.

Find out, too, if class assignments, grades and attendance are posted online so you can check on a regular basis. This can be an invaluable source of information that allows you to keep on top of any issues before they become problems.

Ask your principal, school site council or PTA if your school or district has a homework policy, including how to handle homework if your child needs to be absent.

**TAKE ACTION:** For tips on homework help, visit the U.S. Department of Education's parent portal at: [www2.ed.gov/parents/landing.jhtml](http://www2.ed.gov/parents/landing.jhtml)

Check out practice exercises and instructional videos for students on the Khan Academy website at: [www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org)

## Summer Learning

All students need ongoing opportunities to learn and practice essential skills, especially in the summer, to succeed in school and in life. Yet, each year, there's a brain drain. Over the summer break, most students lose about two months of grade level equivalency in reading achievement and math skills.

This summer learning loss affects a student's ability to build on what they are learning at school and to reach their potential. It also contributes to the achievement gap between lower- and higher-income students.

As research indicates, more than half of this gap is explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities. As a result, low-income students are less likely to graduate from high school or go to college.

Increasing access in a community to quality summer-learning opportunities is an effective way to avoid summer learning loss. By working together, schools, community organizations and families can make these anywhere anytime learning experiences happen so all students can thrive.

**TAKE ACTION:** See why summer learning matters on the National Summer Learning Association website: [www.summerlearning.org](http://www.summerlearning.org)

Check out *Six Signs of a Great Summer Learning Program* on the Summer Matters website: [www.summermatters.org](http://www.summermatters.org)

## Tips for Parents

The summer months are a particularly good time for parents and families to bond and enjoy some quality time together with fun, learning activities. At home, at the beach or on a road trip, you can find everyday ways to support student learning:

- **Indoors**

**Literacy** – Make time every day for your child to read and talk about a story they like best. Make a sock puppet of a favorite character and re-enact the story.

**Math** – Prepare meals together using measuring spoons and cups or kitchen scales for ingredients. Have kids feed pets using a measuring cup to dispense dog or cat food.

**Art** – Keep markers, pencils, paper, paint and other supplies on hand for art projects. Gather up recycled materials and clothing for skits, dances or plays.

- **Outdoors**

**Physics** – At the beach or in a sand box at the park, compare the depth of big and small footprints due to weight differences.

**Science** – Go on a scavenger hunt on a walk or hike to find and identify 5 plants, 5 animals and 5 birds together. Gather a few fallen leaves to take home to make leaf prints with paint and paper.

**Health** – Use a pedometer to count steps throughout the day, aiming for 11,000 daily steps (ages 6 to 17). Help your child choose an activity such as walking, basketball or bike riding and encourage one hour of exercise every day.

- **On the Go**

**Literacy** – Play word games in the car such as I Spy to strengthen skills in vocabulary, observation and description.

**Geography** – Keep a list of car license plates by state and see who can spot the most states.

**Math** – On an outing to a museum, beach or park, have your child show the way on the map. Estimate the distance, and then check to see how close you came.

Making family time for fun, learning experiences and staying active during the school break ensures that children and teens continue to grow their skills for success in school and beyond.

**TAKE ACTION:** For ideas on fun, art activities to do at home, check out the resources on our SMARTS Parents for the Arts Network webpage at: [capta.org](http://capta.org)

## Reflections Program — Revised

January 2010 – Programs and Member Services

### Program Themes:

2025-26 “I Belong”

The National PTA Reflections Program is an arts recognition and achievement program for students. The Reflections Program provides opportunities for students to express themselves creatively and to receive positive recognition for original works of art inspired by a pre-

selected theme, while increasing community awareness of the importance of the arts in education.

The Reflections Program was established in 1969 by National PTA board member Mary Lou Anderson. Since that time, more than 10 million students have participated in the program. The program’s longevity and participation figures attest to its strength. The excitement and enthusiasm that the program generates for children, parents, schools and communities is unmatched.

Participation and appreciation for the arts is the Reflections Program’s goal. Although the Reflections Program follows a “contest” format, winning should not be the emphasis. Participation in the Reflections Program is a great way for students to explore and learn about various art forms. Creating art is a valuable learning process that challenges students to use their critical thinking skills as well as their creative talents to create art that supports a specific theme.

Students may submit an entry in any of the six arts areas listed below. Only original works of art are accepted. Depending on state and local PTA guidelines, students may enter more than one work of art. The six arts areas are as follows.

- **Literature**
- **Music Composition**
- **Photography**
- **Visual Arts**
- **Dance Choreography**
- **Film Production**

Participation in the Reflections Program is organized by school grade. Student works are critiqued with others in the same grade division. This allows recognition and judging of artworks by appropriate developmental age and skill levels. The five grade divisions are as follows:

- **Primary:** Preschool – Grade 2 or up to age 7
- **Intermediate:** Grades 3-5 or ages 8-10
- **Middle School:** Grades 6-8 or ages 11-13
- **High School:** Grades 9-12 or ages 14+
- **Special Artist:** Ungraded

The Reflections Program is structured for PTAs to recognize students at the local unit, council, district, state and national PTA levels. Entries are first judged at the local unit level, where selected works are chosen to represent the PTA at each subsequent level depending on each state PTA structure. Once entries reach the state level, the state PTA may select entries to submit to the National PTA. Awards of Excellence and Awards of Merit are recognized at the annual National PTA convention and are displayed as part of the program’s traveling exhibit.

Participation in the California Reflections Program is open to all students in attendance at PTA/PTSA schools where the program is sponsored. Entries are forwarded through channels. Each unit, council and district PTA establishes its own due dates, allowing adequate time for displaying and judging of entries. PTA units should



require due dates from their council and district PTA. Only district PTAs may submit entries to California State PTA.

Please remember that:

- Students may submit entries only through a PTA or PTSA in good standing.
- All entries submitted must be original works and must relate to the annual Reflections Program theme.
- Each entry must be the work of only one student. Assistance from teachers, parents or friends is not permitted, except in special cases (such as for those with visual or physical disabilities).
- Participation encourages creativity and exploration. Students should do their best, but crooked lines, incorrect musical notes, or misspelled words do not disqualify anyone.

### Future Reflections Program Theme

The National PTA is looking for a theme for its next Reflections Program. A student's suggestion(s) for the theme ideas may be sent to the state office by the individual student or by a local PTA/PTSA. The theme may include a wide variety of subjects that will appeal to students in preschool through grade 12. The winning student will receive \$100.00 and recognition at the National PTA Convention held in June. See [capta.org](http://capta.org) for more information.

### Responsibility

- Become familiar with the materials on the California State PTA website at [capta.org](http://capta.org), the National PTA website at [pta.org](http://pta.org), and the Reflections Packet sent to presidents in the service mailing.
- Develop a Reflections Program planning calendar using council and district PTA due dates; identify key steps to meet calendar due dates. (Note that this program runs early in the school year for local units; therefore the chairman may have to work around athletic events when planning the calendar.)
- Submit a Reflections Program budget to the budget committee for approval.
- Explain the Reflections Program to the principal and school staff; encourage their support and participation. Inform parents and community members. Share information about the Reflections Program at a PTA/PTSA meeting, share examples of last year's entries and have current entry forms and rules for distribution.
- Publicize the Reflections Program, theme and due dates in the school or PTA/PTSA newsletter. The local newspaper or cable TV station also could be contacted for publicity.
- Select impartial, qualified judges. Inform judges of the criteria to be used in evaluating/judging Reflections Program entries. (Refer to the rules for each art category.) Remember to accept the judges' selections of winning entries. Offer sample judging rubric:

Interpretation of Theme: 5 points

Artistic Merit/Creativity: 3 points

Mastery of Medium: 2 points

**IMPORTANT:** Do not show student information (name, address, etc.) on entries displayed for judging.

- Suggestions for recruiting judges: ask local newspaper or magazine editors, local authors, music instructors, professional photographers, local artists, next-level teachers or professors in respective area, dance studio professionals, professional videographers, film school professors.
- Follow guidelines from council and district PTA regarding the number of entries that may be submitted. Adhere to council and district PTA due dates!
- Make certain each entry meets all judging criteria with regard to size, mounting, etc.
- Be sure the Official Entry Form (found in Reflections Packet sent to each unit president in the service mailing sent in summer) is completely filled out, signed by both student and parent, and attached securely to each entry, according to the National PTA rules.
- Complete and send Participation Form A (found in Reflections Packet sent to each unit president in the service mailing sent in summer) with entries, according to National PTA rules.
- Keep a copy of all Official Entry Forms and Participation Form A.
- Keep a copy of all CDs and DVDs.
- After the program, give each participant a certificate of participation.
- Return entries to students whose work was not selected for the next level of judging.
- Update the Reflections Program procedure book.
- Announce the new Reflections Program theme as soon as it is available. The theme is announced at the annual California State PTA convention.
- Publicize any awards given to local students at other levels of judging.

Please share the Reflections Packet (sent in each summer service mailing from the California State PTA office) with the current Reflections Chairman.

**Important:** Do not show student information (name, address, etc.) on entries displayed for judging.

Reflections Program pins, medals, certificates and stickers are available from the PTA Store, [capta.org](http://capta.org).

**Suggestions for judges:** local newspaper or magazine editors, local authors, music instructors, professional photographers, local artists, next-level teachers or professors in respective area, dance studio professionals, professional videographers, film school professors

### Recommended Activities

- Hold a Reflections Program workshop or a Family Arts Night on Saturdays, after school or at lunch and provide supplies for students to work on their projects.

- Enlist support of local businesses for supplies, awards and display of Reflections Program entries.
- Ask stores in the area to print student artwork on their bags.
- Inquire with local businesses that print calendars about possible use of student artwork.
- Plan a local traveling art show.
- Print a Reflections Program Awards booklet listing the program participants as well as the award recipients. Acknowledge those who supported the program including parents, staff and community members.
- Display local entries in school (e.g., hallways, display case, library); at PTA functions; in local community buildings (e.g., libraries, museums, banks, hospitals, nursing homes).
- Publish student entries in a special Reflections Program booklet or calendar. Award it to Reflections Program participants, give as a gift or present as a thank you to judges, teachers and volunteers.
- Tape musical compositions and play them at PTA functions and school events. Give a copy to a local radio station to play.
- Organize a special program/reception/assembly where Reflections Program photography and visual arts entries can be displayed, musical composition entries performed, literature entries read aloud, and dance choreography and film/video production entries shown.
- Make all Reflections Program entrants feel special. Consider awarding students with certificates, ribbons, medallions, buttons, plaques, trophies, art supplies, film, music supplies, dance performance tickets, DVDs, gift certificates, books and bookmarks. Send congratulatory letters to students.

#### Additional Resources

National PTA Reflections Packet mailed to unit, council and district PTA presidents during the summer

National PTA website, [pta.org](http://pta.org)

California PTA website, [capta.org](http://capta.org)

**For additional information,** contact the California State PTA Reflections Program Coordinator at [reflections@capta.org](mailto:reflections@capta.org) or 916.440.1985 ext. 329.



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