

The Need for a Real Partnership

Today, there is an undeniable need for parents and teachers to work together to build strong partnerships in education. In PTA, parents and teachers working to improve education and the well-being of children and youth.

With nearly one million members in California, PTA is both the largest and most active child advocacy organization in the state. PTA volunteers are part of a network unlike any other parent organization. As such, they have extensive resources and impact when advocating for improved education within a community.

Home and school are a child's major influences. The partnership between teachers and parents can help children develop into responsible and reliable citizens.

Children and youth need the support of both teachers and PTA.

Parents/Guardians are a child's first educator and school partner

Parents/Guardians share responsibility for their children's education by:

- Sending to school a child who is ready and eager to learn, self-disciplined and prepared to accept the authority of school staff.
- Seeking the advice of teachers to understand their children's growth and learning—and sharing information that will help school staff plan for their children.
- Showing commitment to education by attending parent-teacher conferences, open houses, PTA meetings, student concerts and other school programs, whenever possible.
- Attending programs to learn about current issues and trends in education.
- Understanding and working for the passage of school measures.
- Learning about and actively supporting school programs, curriculum, regulations and procedures.

PARTNERS IN EDUCATION:

The Teacher and PTA

California State
PTA[®]
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Partnerships, teamwork and cooperation are the building blocks of education leadership today.

Teachers and PTA form an effective partnership to achieve quality education. PTA has always considered teachers an integral part of the PTA organization.

Education studies show that parent involvement plays an important role in learning. Parent involvement in the classroom is enhanced by a positive parent-teacher relationship. Teachers are the critical link in a successful partnership between home and school. PTA is an effective means of bringing parents and teachers together.

Building a partnership

Through PTAs and PTSAs (Parent-Teacher-Student Associations), parents and teachers may work together to achieve common objectives. They may work to:

- Promote education, health and well-being of children in the home, school and community.
- Offer parents programs to improve parenting skills.
- Secure passage of adequate laws for the protection of children and youth.
- Strengthen home-school cooperation and communication.

Fostering parent involvement

Parent involvement in education becomes a reality when there is strong support from the school site. When teachers effectively partner with parents, they strengthen children's education as well as their school community.

The teacher's role

Teachers can encourage parent involvement in their school by:

- Setting a friendly tone in communication with parents.
- Instituting a regular means of communication with parents/guardians throughout the school year, including weekly classroom print or electronic newsletters, teacher-parent journals, good news phone calls or weekly student folders.
- Establishing a clear policy on homework, its purpose, how much time it should take and how parents can help.
- Making sure that parents/guardians understand classroom programs and policies, and the importance of parent support.
- Supporting parent and community volunteers in the school.
- Sharing with the PTA current topics in education and issues of concern to teachers.
- Joining PTA and attending PTA meetings, serving on committees and in leadership positions and joining in PTA programs and projects.
- Discussing PTA programs at teachers' meetings and sharing tips about successful ways to involve parents in the classroom and on the school campus.

PTA's role

A PTA can encourage parents/guardians to be involved in their children's education by:

- Informing parents of school policies and programs.
- Helping parents understand the importance of school rules and procedures.
- Strengthening communication between teachers and parents through classroom newsletters, workshops, and invitations to classroom events and activities.
- Providing information to parents on parenting skills and ways to support children's learning at home.
- Encouraging volunteer programs in the schools and in classrooms.
- Assisting parents through outreach programs and referrals to community resources.
- Ensuring that parents are full participants in parent/teacher conferences.

How PTA helps teachers

A PTA can assist teachers in creating an environment favorable to learning by:

- Helping to integrate in-school and out-of-school activities.
- Providing insight into family and community structures, attitudes and influences that affect children.
- Working to improve curriculum.
- Offering programs that improve the lives of children and youth (Red Ribbon Week, alcohol and drug abuse prevention, civic responsibility).
- Encouraging informal discussions between parents and teachers.
- Working for adequate funding for schools.
- Making parents and other members of the school community more aware of what is happening in their school.
- Recruiting room representatives and skilled volunteer aides to assist at the school and in the classroom.

How teachers help PTA

The teacher can assist a PTA in promoting the education, health, and well-being of children and youth by:

- Becoming an active PTA member.
- Attending PTA meetings, serving on PTA committees, and participating in PTA programs and projects.
- Encouraging other teachers, parents, and students to join PTA.
- Alerting PTA to parents' needs that are not being met.
- Notifying PTA of school concerns such as absenteeism and safety to and from school.
- Encouraging the school to participate in the Reflections Program, National PTA's cultural arts project.
- Explaining to parents the school programs and policies and the importance of parental support.

- Advising parents on how they can reinforce learning at home.
- Assisting parents to become more involved in their children's education. • Helping to establish coalitions of organizations that work for children.
- Writing state legislators and members of Congress on matters that concern children.

Building community support

Educating children is a shared responsibility. Positive results occur when parents and teachers support each other. Working as a team, parents and teachers can enlist community support for education, as well as improve the well-being of all children.

By working together, PTAs and teachers can encourage community members to support education by:

- Encouraging community members to become informed about education issues.
- Working to maintain a strong public school system with quality educational programs for all children and youth.
- Supporting training for teachers, site administrators, school board members, parents and community members in their roles as shared decision-makers.
- Urging communities to support professional development for teachers.
- Providing parent education and training programs for parents and community members.
- Furnishing opportunities for parents to focus on school and student successes through school site management councils, exhibits, open houses, award ceremonies, performances, and other such events.