

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS MATTERS



PARTNERS IN SUCCESS

Family-School Partnerships: Making a Difference Together

Strong family-school partnerships make big differences. When families and schools work together, our kids win.

At school — Family-school partnerships equal academic improvement. It's a powerful strategy for achieving whole-school goals, such as reading at grade level, closing achievement gaps and motivating students for long-term success. Teachers and administrators can strengthen efforts by involving families in two-way, regular and meaningful conversations about students, giving parents good information about supporting our children and how grade-level expectations affect kids' academic progress.

At home — Families and caregivers become partners in success by creating a culture of authentic engagement in school life. Keeping kids focused on school readiness, learning and homework shows commitment to our children's academic growth and development.

PTA NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

As a PTA leader, you can boost family engagement at your school by relying on PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships. The standards offer a blueprint on how to connect families and schools to support student success. To get started, align your PTA communications and programs to the six standards:



- 1. Welcome All Families** – With activities for families to feel they belong at your school.
- 2. Communicate Effectively** – With pathways for families and staff to engage in regular, two-way communication.
- 3. Support Student Success** – With family activities linked to student learning and development.
- 4. Speak Up for Every Child** – With workshops on the education system and advocacy for parents to ensure all students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities.
- 5. Share Power** – With community surveys and forums for stakeholders to exchange views and shape school policies, practices and programs.
- 6. Collaborate with the Community** – With activities to expand access to learning opportunities, community services and civic participation. When families, schools and communities work together, all students have an opportunity to thrive in school and beyond. A booklet is available that summarizes the six standards and includes a sampling of indicators for each.

For more information: www.pta.org/home/run-your-pta/National-Standards-for-Family-School-Partnerships

School Smarts is California State PTA's award winning, research-based parent engagement program. This seven-session Parent Academy empowers parents of all backgrounds by focusing on the importance of parent involvement, how the education system works and how to communicate effectively to advocate for a quality education to support student success. The curriculum is available in six languages.



<https://capta.org/programs-events/school-smarts/>

THREE TIPS FOR YEAR-ROUND ENGAGEMENT

INVOLVEMENT MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE –

Research shows family engagement is a major factor in student success, with an [encouraging home environment](#) serving as a bigger factor in student achievement than a parent's income, education level or cultural background. Engaged parents take part in all aspects of their child's education and development from preschool to high school. And with parent involvement as one of the [eight key areas](#) in the new [Local Control and Accountability Plans \(LCAPs\)](#), authentic family engagement in schools is vital for school improvement and student achievement.

PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION IS KEY — Strong interaction, teamwork and partnership between [families and teachers](#) creates the optimal environment for student success.

Parents can make a difference by staying up-to-date on classroom and school news, attending school events whenever possible and addressing concerns or questions honestly, openly and early on.

PARENT-ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND – New state laws and standards mean new opportunities for parents to get involved in the education process. Parents' advocacy, involvement and feedback on school priorities are required as part of the new Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and related Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs), making family engagement more important than ever before. Families can contact their school districts to make their voices heard in the LCFF/LCAP process.

PTA FAMILY ENGAGEMENT GRANTS AND AWARDS

California State PTA Grants – Designed to help PTAs make a difference in our communities. These annual grants fund PTA initiatives in four key areas: Parent Education, Cultural Arts, Outreach Translation and Healthy Lifestyles. www.capta.org

National Jan Harp Domene Diversity & Inclusion Award – Recognizes PTAs for outstanding achievement in the areas of diversity and inclusion and efforts to end discriminatory practices. www.pta.org

Phoebe Apperson Hearst Awards – National PTA program to celebrate achievements in building effective family- school partnerships and family-engagement initiatives. Provides cash prizes. www.pta.org

Ways for your PTA to be Welcoming:

- Train a diverse group of existing members to be new family mentors
- Call new families with personal invites
- Solve transportation. Arrange pick up or carpool for new families
- Create a family resource center with info & handouts in multiple languages
- Remove economic obstacles, allowing all to participate
- Provide interpreters
- Provide childcare or hold family friendly meetings