

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

Some ways to promote Physical, Mental and Emotional Health Education are to:

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

Recommended Action

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

- Support comprehensive health education instruction at all grade levels, in compliance with the California Standards for Health Education, including first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) training. See Education Code 51202.
- Promote hand washing in classrooms, especially prior to eating and after using the restroom.
- Promote increased access to fruits and vegetables and free, fresh drinking water.
- Submit health-related articles for unit newsletter. Ask the school nurse for articles and suggestions or use health articles from State PTA publications, PTA allied agencies and health websites.
- Use social media to promote health and wellness messages and tips.
- Participate in ongoing health projects of the National PTA and California State PTA.
- Support health-related events, such as Red Ribbon Week, National Immunization Month, School Nurse Day, Children's Health Month, Yellow Ribbon Month, National Nutrition Month, Dental Health Month, World AIDS Day, and the Great American Smoke Out.
- Work with local school districts and statewide policymakers to ensure policies are enacted to provide appropriate health leadership by credentialed school nurses, including adoption of the recommended nurse-to-student ratio of 1-to-750.
- Educate school staff and families on the importance of healthy indoor air quality and its relationship to student and staff health, academic achievement and absenteeism.
- Educate students, parents, school personnel and the community about the high incidence of skin cancer and recommended strategies for reducing risk for this disease.
- Educate school staff and families on the importance of comprehensive school health programs including dental programs.
- Encourage schools to implement Public Access to Defibrillator Programs (PADs).

Additional Projects Might Include

- Establish a School Health Council.
- Represent PTA on allied agency committees and school district committees or task forces.
- Plan a community or school wellness fair including speakers, health-related demonstrations, displays and video materials provided by local agencies (Community and Wellness Fairs).

- Advocate for school or community fruit and vegetable gardens and farmer's markets.
- Encourage adult and youth participation in first aid, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) classes, and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) training, and Public Access to Defibrillator Programs throughout the community.
- Prepare and distribute a list of community health agencies, hotlines for drug/alcohol abuse, child abuse, and crisis intervention.
- Support school-based immunization programs and parent education related to the benefits of immunization.

Additional Resources

Action for Healthy Kids, California tab (www.afhk.org)

Alliance Working Antibiotic Resistance Education (AWARE) (www.aware.md/)

American Academy of Pediatrics (www.aap.org)

American Cancer Society School Health Programs (www.cancer.org/schoolhealth)

American Dental Association (www.ada.org)

American Diabetes Association (www.diabetes.org)

American Heart Association (www.heart.org)

American Lung Association (www.lungusa.org)
(www.californialung.com)

California Association of Public Hospitals (www.caph.org)

California Association of School Based Health Centers (www.schoolhealthcenters.org)

California Dental Association (www.cda.org)

California Department of Mental Health (www.dmh.ca.gov)

California Department of Public Health (www.cdph.ca.gov)

California Dietetic Association (www.dietitian.org)

California Environmental Protection Agency (www.calepa.ca.gov/education)

California Food Policy Advocates (www.cfpa.org)

California School Boards Association, School Wellness (www.csba.org)

California School Nurses Organization (www.csno.org)

California School Nutrition Association (www.CalSNA.org)

California State PTA, Council or District PTA Health Chairs

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov)

California Department of Education, Learning Support

Division, including School Nutrition, Health, Counseling and Support and Safe Schools (www.cde.ca.gov)

Children's Environmental Health Network (www.cehn.org)

Coordinated (Comprehensive) School Health (<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/CSHP/>)

County Health and Mental Health Departments

County Health Department Health Educator (www.cdph.ca.gov)

Dairy Council of California (www.healthyeating.org)

Environmental Protection Agency (www.epa.gov)

Food, Allergy, Research & Education (www.foodallergy.org)

Healthy Kids Resource Center (www.hkresources.org)

Institute of Medicine of the National Academies (www.iom.edu/)

Kids' Safe and Healthful Foods Project (www.HealthySchoolFoodsNow.org)

Local county or city health department bulletins

Mental Health America (www.nmha.org)

National Association of School Nurses (www.nasn.org)

National Association of State School Nurse Consultants (www.nassnc.org)

National Center for Health Education (www.nche.org)

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) (www.drugabuse.gov)

National Institutes of Health (www.nih.gov)

Natural Resources Defense Council (Environmental) (www.nrdc.org)

School Nutrition Association (www.schoolnutrition.org)

The Center for Health and Health Care in Schools (www.healthinschools.org/home.asp)

The Via Foundation (www.TheViaFoundation.org)

PTA Resources

PTA in California (official newsletter of California State PTA)

California State PTA Health Pocket Pal

California State PTA website (capta.org)

Insurance and Loss Prevention Guide (English and Spanish) mailed annually to PTA presidents

Our Children (National PTA magazine)

Back-to-School Kit for Leaders (National PTA)

National PTA website Health and Safety webpages

California State PTA Vice President for Health & Community Concerns (health@capta.org) or 916.440.1985 ext. 306

1/2013