

Parenting Education is ongoing skills training to assist parents and other adults with issues they face in nurturing the development of children in their care. Programs should help parents and other caregivers strengthen their parenting skills and family involvement in their child's life. Since parenting education covers many areas of PTA interest, the committee chairman should work with other chairmen, as appropriate, in planning activities.

DUTIES

- Appoint a committee. Work with the president and principal to have a broad-based committee appointed that is representative of the school community.
- Obtain or, if necessary, develop a procedure book that includes information from PTA materials such as the *Parents Empowering Parents (PEP) Guide* and other district, state and National PTA publications and resources.
- Survey parents to determine interests and needs in the home/school community. Work with other PTA board members and chairmen in planning programs that will meet the community's needs. Consider program topics such as parenting skills, reading, writing, math, health, violence prevention, the arts, and family life/sex education. Additional areas of interest may become evident through the survey and discussions within the PTA.
- Develop a program plan. Ask the principal or designee and representatives from other school site groups which include parent members (e.g., Title I, school site councils, bilingual advisory council) to work with the committee to develop a year-long program of parent education/involvement activities. Be sure to budget for program expenses.
- Present the plan to the PTA board for approval. Submit the recommendation of the PTA board to the association for their consideration and vote of approval.
- Collaborate with other PTAs and community agencies to obtain information, materials and speakers. Explore ways to work with them in providing and publicizing parent education activities and co-sponsoring events.
- Publicize the activities. To be successful, each program or activity must be well publicized through the use of the PTA newsletter, flyers, the principal's letter, local newspaper articles, and most important, through the use of personal phone calls. Contact local preschools, nearby schools, and neighbors to invite them to participate.
- Evaluate. In order to plan for the next year, evaluate the effectiveness of the current year's parent education program by using a year-end survey or an evaluation sheet filled out at each event.

SUGGESTIONS

- Work with school staff to develop an ongoing parent involvement action plan.
- Sponsor parent information programs on issues such as substance abuse, health, child development, parenting issues such as discipline and teaching decision-making skills, curriculum, textbooks and computer-assisted learning. Offer language translation when needed.
- Take meetings into the community to make parents and others feel welcome.
- Offer a variety of family activity opportunities. Use sensitivity in setting dates, times and places for programs and events.
- Promote teacher-parent communication, and encourage staff development training to assist teachers in working with and involving parents.
- Encourage parents to attend school-sponsored functions such as back-to-school nights and parent-teacher conferences.

SOME SPECIFIC IDEAS

- Put parenting tips in the school or PTA newsletter.
- Start a Parent Center at the school with information about parenting, community resources, school information and policy, curriculum, etc.
- Establish a Parent Shelf in the school office or library, where parents can pick up free materials or check out books, videos and tapes on topics of interest to parents.
- Create a welcome packet for new parents, with parenting and school-related information.

The National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs

National PTA, building on the work of Dr. Joyce Epstein of Johns Hopkins University, has developed six standards for effective parent involvement programs. The standards are guidelines for use in developing programs to involve parents and families. Comprehensive local parent/family involvement programs will be most effective if they include all of the standards. Keep these standards in mind when planning parent involvement programs and activities.

Standard I: Communicating – Communication between home and school is regular, two-way and meaningful.

Standard II: Parenting – Parenting skills are promoted and supported.

Standard III: Student Learning – Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.

Standard IV: Volunteering – Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought.

Standard V: School Decision Making and Advocacy – Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.

Standard VI: Collaborating with Community – Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families, and student learning.

RESOURCES

California State PTA 213.620.1100, www.capta.org,

List of PTA Materials:

Parents Empowering Parents (PEP) Guide (English or Spanish)

Parent Talk cards (set of 12 parenting tips in English or Spanish)

Parent and Family Involvement brochure

National PTA, 312.670.6782; www.pta.org

National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs

California Department of Education, Publications Division, Sales Office, 916.445.1260. See Educational Resources

Catalog, www.cde.ca.gov/publications/Pub.html

U.S. Department of Education; www.ed.gov/

EdSource, 650.857.9618; www.edsource.org

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