



ORGANIZE AN INCLUSIVE PTA EVENT

Advertise PTA events through all possible electronic methods, social media, print, mail, and school backpack. Assure event fliers and invitations are translated into all languages spoken in your school community. Avoid communication and participation barriers ensuring all attendees can participate no matter what their spoken language and physical or mental abilities are. Provide clear and transparent explanations of all PTA events and activities, especially to first timers not familiar with the activities, past traditions, and customs of the PTA. The better informed and prepared everyone is, the more comfortable they will feel and more likely to return.

Anticipate potential need for anything participants might need to attend and take part in the event such as transportation, directions, time commitment, special accommodations, material, or electronic devices. Support remote platforms providing virtual options such as Zoom and Google Meets when possible. They present great opportunities for families with time restraints and travel or accessibility challenges.

Consider holding certain events at locations other than the school building, taking the event to the people you seek to engage. Alternate locations so everyone can feel important and embraced. Provide calm or quiet spaces if your event has the potential to be loud or filled with excitement. Sensory overload affects many people, young and old. Make sure to advertise that these spaces are available on your communication materials. You can also consider holding “Sensory Friendly” events, like a Bedtime Book Reading family engagement activity or a board game night, or by limiting the number of families who can attend an event at a time and simply offer more of those events. Utilize icebreakers (see *Icebreakers* later in this section) at the start of events as they present a great tool to put everyone at ease.

Consider inclusive, culturally sensitive, and diverse topics and speakers and invite others to make suggestions for topics they would like to see addressed. Food, beverages, giveaways, and prizes can be utilized as attractive incentives for participation. Families with children are more likely to attend and stay through events that feature fun and engaging activities for children of different ages and abilities.

Your PTA’s DEI Committee can plan a school or district-wide DEI event that promotes diversity and inclusivity through themes, messages, and activities. Celebrate our differences! Promote and organize events where all groups can educate others, share information, promote, and advocate for themselves. Connect and collaborate with community-based organizations that share a focus on diversity and inclusion. Engage in active and two-sided dialogue, allowing for opportunities for all stakeholders to express their opinions and needs and those organizing the event, not only speaking, but actively listening and following up.

In addition to families, be sure to invite teachers, school and district administrators, staff, and community partners to PTA events. Building strong connections with all groups assures good relations and positive outcomes for children and families. Organize events that develop positive relationships between teachers and families to help overcome cultural barriers that interfere with active family engagement in children’s education and schools. Plan PTA events that help level the parent/family education field and close the information gap that may hinder family involvement in their child’s education. Events may include family math or science nights, technology, child development topics, and college or career prep and funding, to name a few.