
Advocacy

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What Is Advocacy?

PTA Advocacy is speaking up for children in schools, communities, government bodies, and other organizations that make decisions that affect children. Advocacy is working to make things better; speaking to someone in power to fill a need; raising funds to support needs; talking to a teacher about a problem and forming a solution; and simply, working to achieve a change. LAPTA does advocacy work at the federal level and state levels. While National PTA determines the resolutions and stances at the federal level, LAPTA decides what issues to support at the state level.

When dealing with a local issue and before taking a big action, poll your membership to find out where they stand on issues to correctly speak for the voice of membership. The LAPTA Advocacy Toolkit contains details on how to best advocate. It explains how to strategically attack an issue, recruit supporters, build coalitions of like-minded groups, structure the arguments, and communicate effectively.

National PTA Legislative Conference (LegCon)

National PTA's annual public policy agenda guides the federal advocacy work. Local PTAs may not contradict National PTA resolutions or position statements. See pta.org/home/advocacy/federal-legislation/Key-legislation. The Annual National PTA **Legislative Conference** (LegCon) is held in Washington, D.C. PTA Leaders meet with their state's congressional delegation to promote certain "Asks" by NPTA. The 2024 Asks were to promote digital safety of children and youth online; strengthen Family-School Partnerships and invest in meaningful family engagement; fully fund essential programs supporting children, families, and schools; and support children impacted by trauma, substance use, and mental health challenges. The goal is to influence how congressional delegates vote on bills and resolutions. LAPTA will attend the next LegCon on March 2-4, 2026.

Mission Partners (LouisianaPTA.org/missionpartners)

Mission Partners are nonprofits or other groups that join forces with LAPTA to support our overlapping missions. Their main focus usually is to somehow improve the lives of children. The types of groups are endless but might include a teachers or librarian group, foster care state entity, a mental health group, and so many more. LAPTA is always looking for more Mission Partners! Our current Mission Partners are The Kids Mental Health Foundation, Seymore D'Fair Education Foundation and Prevention Coalition, Voter Voice, Children & Youth Prevention Coalition of St. Tammany, and Louisiana Partnerships for Children & Families.

Healthy Minds & Healthy Lifestyles

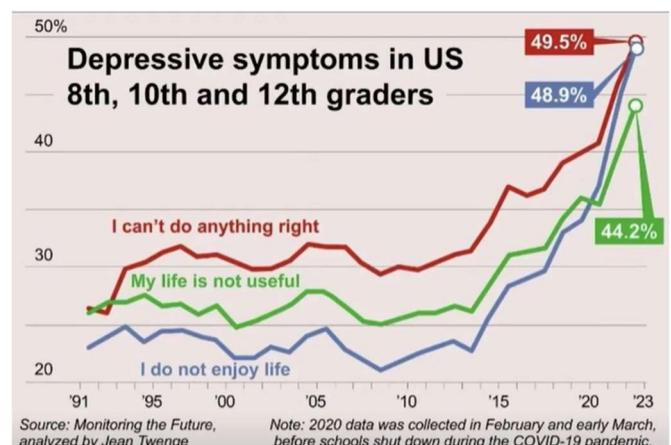
OPEN, LAPTA Healthy Minds Champion

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Facebook – Search "Louisiana PTA Healthy Minds"

Mental Health Statistics

- Rates of major depression is increasing in the US youth: 1 in 5 children struggle with mental health challenges.
- Over 60% of youth with major depression do not receive any mental health treatment.
- Louisiana is ranked 48th in the US with 16.6% of youth ages 12-17 experiencing at least one major depressive episode in the last year according to the Mental Health in America Report in 2023.



Healthy Minds Program (PTA.org/HealthyMinds)

National PTA developed the Healthy Lifestyles Program which includes 1) Healthy Bodies, 2) Healthy Minds, and 3) Healthy Earth. The PTA can help families understand that children must be physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy to thrive. Connect what happens in families' homes to what happens within the school building. PTA can support school leadership with school-based mental health support by teaching positive social and emotional skills to students. Be sure to include diversity, equity, and inclusion considerations with all mental health efforts.

- **Listen** – Learn the mental health needs of your community and identify gaps in existing services and supports.
- **Partner** – Form a Healthy Minds Team. Discuss how PTA can enhance school-based mental health support.
- **Share** – Promote and distribute National PTA's Healthy Minds family tools and resources.
- **Build** – Host a "PTA Healthy Minds Sessions" to allow families to learn together and discuss important topics.

Visit [PTA.org/HealthyMinds](https://pta.org/HealthyMinds). Scroll down to Healthy Minds Resources and click on "**For PTA Leaders.**" Host in-person or at home events that can be in real time or self-paced. Current sessions include PTA Healthy Minds 101, Building SEL Skills at Home, and Building Resilience. See LouisianaPTA.org/grants for LAPTA Healthy Minds Grant and [PTA.org/grants](https://pta.org/grants) for National PTA grants.

Resources at [PTA.org/healthyminds](https://pta.org/healthyminds) for Families and PTA Leaders

Follow the hyperlinks available in the PDF file at LouisianaPTA.org/training or LouisianaPTA.org/healthyminds.

- [Healthy Minds Overview](#)
- [Family Discussion Guide](#)
- [Grief & Loss](#)
- [What Your Family Can Do to Build Healthy Minds](#)
- [Building Healthy Minds](#)
- [Building Resilience](#)
- [How to Get Help to Build Healthy Minds](#)
- [Anxiety](#)
- [Social Emotional and Service Learning](#)
- [Depression](#)
- [Loneliness & Isolation](#)
- [Family Action Plan](#)

SPED Student Support

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Special Education and Special Populations

Some students face unique challenges and benefit from additional support and consideration in school settings. These students may have disabilities, sensory sensitivities, language barriers, economic hardship, unstable housing, or be in foster care. The goal is to create an inclusive environment where all students can thrive through thoughtful accommodations and support. Simple adjustments can make a big difference, helping more families feel welcome and engaged. Providing accessibility and inclusion doesn't take anything away from others. Families navigating special education often seek meaningful connections and want to be involved and contribute. Supporting students with special needs aligns perfectly with the PTA's mission. Parents with experience in the IEP process can be valuable resources for those just starting the journey. PTA offers a welcoming space for families, especially those who may feel isolated, and fosters connection, support, and understanding. Please reach out. It can make all the difference.

Make Changes & Take Action

- Modify Events to make all PTA events inclusive, such as providing sunglasses for light sensitivities.
- Organize an Awareness Day. Students wear a certain color to show support. Have activities to teach sensitivity.
- Host a fundraiser to purchase items for sensory room or universally designed equipment.
- Have a SPED Committee to offer accommodation suggestions and build an inclusive community.
- Have a Buddy Bench to support friendship needs.