

CAPITALIZATION

California Congress of Parents, Teachers and Students, Inc.

California State PTA – not CSPTA or CAPTA
State PTA

National Congress of Parents and Teachers

National Parent Teacher Association

National PTA

Parent Teacher Association

Parent-Teacher-Student Association

PTA or PTSA – no periods

Founders Day

Sacramento County, but Sacramento and San Joaquin counties

Nouns or Adjectives Forming Part of Proper Name of an Organization

Sun Elementary PTA

Hillside Council PTA

Twenty-Fifth District PTA

University of California

Do not capitalize association or unit, council, district PTA, university when used alone.

Terms Specific to California State PTA

Advisory Board

Board of Directors

Board of Managers

California State PTA Annual Convention

CALL (to board or convention)

Continuing Service Award – CSA

“*everychild. onevoice.*”

Golden Oak Service Award

Honorary Service Award – HSA

Mission Statement of the California State PTA

Purposes of the PTA – as title or in a sentence

Vice President for Communications (etc.)

PTA Projects, Programs or Workshops

PTA Leadership Training

Reflections Program

“SMARTS: Bring Back the Arts!”

State or National Government Terms

Titles (Governor, Senator and Assembly Member) capitalized ONLY when preceding a name

Legislature, Senate and Assembly capitalized when referring to the California bodies

TITLE CAPITALIZATION

- For titles in text, capitalize the first and last words and all nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, and subordinate conjunctions (therefore, however).
- Articles (a, an, the), conjunctions (and, or, for, but), and prepositions of three letters or less (for, to, on) are lowercase, unless they are the first or last words of a title or subtitle.
- The infinitive “to” should be capitalized.
- Use typeset *italic* or **boldface** for titles of books, periodicals, movies, videos, plays, operas, reports, pamphlets, and kits.
 - *California State PTA Toolkit*
 - *The Communicator*
 - *National PTA Quick-Reference Guide*
 - *Parents Empowering Parents (PEP) Guide*
- When the title or designation precedes the name, it is capitalized. If it follows the name, it is lower case.
 - President-elect Jones
 - Jane Jones, president
 - Sarah Smith, president-elect
 - Henry Jones, the principal of the school
 - James McCay, Ed.D., principal
- Capitalize schools of a university, but not courses or departments. Capitalize languages.
 - School of Journalism
 - biology department
 - UCLA Spanish department

DO NOT CAPITALIZE

- Association, unit, council, district PTA, or board of education unless used as part of a name of a specific group;
- Titles after the word “the” or after a name;
- Organizational terms such as bylaws, chairman, committee, director, parent education, preschool, policy, scholarship, grant, vice president, workshop;
- Seasons of the year, directions (north, southeast), state, nation, federal, flag.

NUMBERS

Spell Out Numbers

- At the beginning of a sentence, except for years;
- One through nine, 10 and above use numerals;
- First through ninth, after 10th use numerals;
- First grade, grade one, first-grader.
- 10th grade, grade 10, 10th-grader
- More than 100 (not over 100) and fewer than 100 (not less than 100).

Use Numerals for

- Large numbers such as million and billion
 - \$12 million
- Percentages
 - 15 percent (spell out “percent”)
- Ages
 - age 3 to 6
 - 26-year-old (hyphenate)
- Pages
 - page 2
- Ratios 3-to-1; No. 1 killer of teens

PUNCTUATION

Quotation Marks

- Always set outside the comma and the period;
- Always set inside the colon and the semicolon; and
- Set outside or inside the exclamation point, depending on whether the marks belong to the quoted matter.
- Use single quotation marks for quotations within quotations.
- A quoted passage of four lines or more may be used without quotation marks if indented from the body of material.
- Use quotation marks for themes, such as for conventions, workshops, or administrations.
- Avoid overuse of exclamation marks!
- Ellipses (...) should be treated as a word with a space before and after. At the end of a sentence, a period is still needed (for a total of four dots).
- Dashes require space before and after.

Colons and Semicolons

- Use a colon only if the introductory phrase can stand alone as a sentence.
- Do not use a colon after a verb.
- Capitalize the first word after a colon if it is a proper noun or the start of a complete sentence. For a vertical list, capitalize the first word of each item, use commas or semicolons with a final period if the phrases are lengthy.
- Use semicolons to separate elements of a series when the individual elements contain information that is set off by commas or to join two clauses when a coordinating conjunction (and, but, for) is not present.

Commas

Use a comma:

- Before the conjunction only when the series of items or phrases is complicated or lengthy.
 - *The flag is red, white and blue.;*
- Before an independent phrase: *“He gave me an apple, and I ate it.”*

Commas cont.

- Between names of states and nations used with cities
 - *Los Angeles, California, is a big city.*
- For dates with month, day, and year
 - *October 30, 2007;*
- When the day of the month is omitted, so is the comma
 - *June 2007.*

Apostrophes

- Singular possessive - *PTA's office;*
- Plural possessive nouns not ending in "s"
 - *children's books;*
- "It's" meaning "it is"; not the possessive, "its size";
- Plural possessive nouns ending in "s"
 - *unit PTAs' collaboration;*
- Not with plural nouns, figures
 - *PTAs advocated for arts education*
 - *legislation in the 2000s.*

WRITING STYLE

Use:

- Active tenses, not passive;
- Verbs, not adverbs;
- 4 p.m., 10-11 a.m., noon and midnight;
- Chairman, not chair or chairperson;
- People, not persons;
- Parent involvement;
- Either Dr. Jane Jones or Jane Jones, Ed.D., not Dr. Jane Jones, Ed.D.;
- United States as a noun, U.S. as an adjective.
- Rewrite to avoid using *etc.*, *and/or*, *he/she*, *s/he*. (Usually, a plural form does the trick: "A student likes his/her homework" becomes "Students like their homework.")
- Beware singular noun plural pronoun problems. "Speak with the teacher about your child's homework. Their success depends on it." This is incorrect because the antecedent of "their" is the singular "child." Better: "Speak with the teacher about your child. Your student's success depends on it."
- The term *disability* is preferred to *handicap*.
- Use "people first" style – "a student with a disability," rather than "a disabled student"
- Include the year of passage with the names of all laws except those passed in the current legislative session.
- No all cap headlines (except CALL to Convention).
- Conform to time, date, place format: meeting is at 10 a.m., May 4, at the Capitol

OFTEN-USED PTA WORDS

after-school programs	flier (NOT flyer)	preschool
at-risk	fundraising activities	president-elect
back-to-school	fundraiser (noun)	preteen
bylaws	handout (noun)	school-based
caregiver	health-care clinics	seat belt
citywide	HIV/AIDS	self-esteem
curricula (plural)	Internet	statewide
curriculum (singular)	kindergartner	teenage/teenager
day care (noun)	nationwide	T-shirt
day-care (adjective)	noncommercial	vice president
dropout	nonpartisan	Washington, D.C.
e-mail	nonprofit	website
extracurricular	nonsectarian	well-being
	online	year-round

PTA'S VISUAL IDENTITY

Phoebe Apperson Hearst

PTA[®]

cadaniño.unavoz.

See the National PTA website www.pta.org regarding use guidelines for the logo and tagline. Customize the logo for the unit, council or district PTA using Arial Black or Helvetica Black font for the PTA name. Use Times Roman font for the tagline. Black or dark blue color is preferred, or reverse white on a colored background.

Mission Statement of the California State PTA

The mission of the California State PTA is to positively impact the lives of all children and families by representing our members and empowering and supporting them with skills in advocacy, leadership, and communications.

California State PTA Board of Managers, July 2007

California State PTA

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California State
PTA[®]
everychild. onevoice.



**Capitalization,
Number Use,
Punctuation,
Spelling, Terminology
and Visual Identity
for
PTA Publications**