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You may be surprised to know that the National PTA ...

- Is the largest volunteer child advocacy organization in the U.S. with more than 6 million members.
- Was founded in 1897 as the National Congress of Mothers by Alice McClelland Birney, a twice-widowed working mother, who served as president, and Phoebe Apperson Hearst, who served as first vice president and was the mother of publisher William Randolph Hearst. Second vice president was Mrs. Adlai Stevenson, wife of the vice president of the United States.
- Originated with a mission statement that called upon parents “irrespective of creed, color, or condition,” creating a commitment to tolerance long before issues of diversity came into focus.
- As early as its first convention in 1897 has advocated for sex education to be taught to children in order to decrease teen pregnancies and avoid the spread of sexually transmitted diseases.
- Had a voice in government even before its predominantly female members could vote. The National Congress of Mothers was a leading voice in lobbying for child health and safety issues. Their efforts were instrumental in establishment of the Children’s Bureau of the U.S. Public Health Service, passage of the 1906 Food and Drug Act, which revolutionized our nation’s food industry, and the enforcement of child labor laws.
- Has acted as a media watchdog for almost 100 years. In 1910, the PTA passed a resolution recommending the supervision of motion pictures and vaudeville because of the influence these entertainment forms have on children. In 1998, PTA passed a position statement on technology safety to voice its belief that parents, the online industry, technology companies, the FCC, and content providers have a responsibility to monitor and provide quality content for children and youth.
- Offers practical resources for parents and teachers on a broad range of topics ranging from strengthening family communication to dealing with TV and media violence and helping children deal with a school bully.

Sources: *The PTA Story: a Century of Commitment to Children*, published by the National PTA, 1997; *Where We Stand*, National PTA, 2000.

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