

188 Ways to Increase Your PTA Membership!

These tips and tricks have been collected from PTAs over many years.

They may inspire you, make you laugh or scratch your head.

Keep the doors open to new and unusual ideas!

- 1. Use the energy and enthusiasm** of others — involve parents, teachers and students on your membership committee. Include men.
- 2. With membership enrollment**, include a questionnaire to be returned to your PTA. Explain PTA's efforts on behalf of children; ask for thoughts on programs and activities; ask for membership and participation. People who feel a part, take part!
- 3. If you have a real need in your community**, identify it. A cause around which people can rally is likely to increase membership.
- 4. Visit the senior citizen's centers** in your community. Tell them about today's PTA and welcome their membership. They have wisdom and time to offer — and you have chores and activities in which they can participate.
- 5. Have a "Grandparents' Day"** where students bring real or adopted grandparents to school for lunch or a tour of the building. Ask them to join your PTA.
- 6. Sponsor a PTA "open house"** before school opens in the fall to visit classrooms, meet teachers, and join PTA.
- 7. All board members should sign up** for PTA e-newsletters and let your general membership know they too, may benefit from them.
- 8. Display copies of PTA in California and Our Children.** Your PTA could display copies in the parent waiting area, teacher's lounge, and doctors' offices. Put a sticker on them to let readers know how they can reach you to join PTA.
- 9. Give a free subscription to *Our Children*** by drawing a name from those members who join at your first meeting.
- 10. Urge local TV and radio stations** to use the California State PTA public service announcements (PSAs) or the national "Join PTA" membership promotion spots.
- 11. Prepare your own TV and radio spots** about your PTA. Look into having students help for credit as a class project.
- 12. Contact your educational TV channel** and inquire about time during their programming to tell about the PTA. Many stations give up to 30 minutes each month.
- 13. Display membership posters** in appropriate places in your school and community.
- 14. Ask TV and radio stations' program directors** to include PTA in any interview or "talk" shows appropriate for parent involvement or views. Be sure to have articulate and well-informed PTA representatives.
- 15. Hang a PTA banner outside the school** or in a prominent place on a building in your community that is highly visible. Consider investing in a weatherproof banner that can be displayed year after year. Include your website address.
- 16. Send invitations to join PTA** throughout the entire PTA year. Don't stop because your major membership enrollment period is over!



17. **Ask to speak for five or 10 minutes** at a teachers' meeting. Publicize your year's activities and encourage teacher and trustee participation and membership.
18. **Request a space for a PTA bulletin board** or showcase; then keep it up to date. Post your latest newsletter and other PTA promotional materials.
19. **Hold a poster or slogan contest** for students with PTA membership as a theme. Plan the contest with cooperation of the teachers at the end of the year for next August or September.
20. **Membership should be diverse.** Supply membership information to various committee members with instructions and deadlines for contacting individual classroom parents, teachers, community groups, business leaders, retirement homes, etc.
21. **Be persistent with follow-up.**
22. **Approach community business owners** to join PTA. Remind them with a smile that it is the PTA of their community and their customers.
23. A **"Proud Member of PTA" award** or certificate may be presented to businesses that support the PTA.
24. **Ask for a "Membership Minute"** on the agenda of every PTA meeting all year. Keep the message before everyone who attends!
25. **Develop an information sheet** to be distributed to members and prospective members telling them what they get for their service fees — local, state and national. Use brochures available from the state office.
26. **See that your PTA has a budget** with copies available to all members to see how their \$ are spent to benefit children.
27. **Make sure money has been allotted** within the budget for the promotion of membership.
29. **Explain that membership dues are not a fundraiser.** Use newsletters to keep members informed when funds are raised and how they are used.
29. **Have a "Membership Kickoff" event** — make it festive and fun!
30. **Start your membership enrollment** with a neighborhood parade. Let children participate. They love it!
31. **Consult with local dairies, bakeries, groceries, or other stores** about the possibility of printing "Join PTA" on cartons or bags.
32. **Ask smaller businesses** to allow you to take bags and return them with colorful drawings individually colored by children to promote PTA!
33. **Don't forget to contact new families** as they move into your community and school. Welcome them with a personal call and invitation to join PTA.
34. **Place a letter of welcome, PTA materials, and a membership envelope** in the school office for distribution when new families come to register their children.
35. **If you have a "Welcome Wagon" in your town,** ask the representative to distribute the above materials.
36. **Ask businesses to put publicity** about PTA events on their marquees or reader boards.
37. **When you submit an article** to the newspaper promoting PTA membership for everyone, be sure to include contact information on how to join.

38. **Set up a PTA membership table** at kindergarten round-ups and secondary school orientations — encourage parents to become members from the very first opportunity.
39. **Give special considerations** to non-English speaking families. Make translated materials available and be conscious of different customs.
40. **Provide different colored nametags** to denote your members at meetings.
41. **Meet early with your committee** to set a membership goal. Make it realistic and don't give up until you pass the goal!
42. **Set up booths** at sporting events, music events and other community activities.
43. **Either mail or send home with students an invitation letter** with a membership envelope attached to make return of membership fees more convenient.
44. **Challenge each board member to recruit** at least one new member who has never been a PTA member.
45. **Offer a door prize to members only** at your PTA meetings — must be present to win!
46. **Place an ad in your local newspaper** promoting PTA and membership. Ask a local business to sponsor the ad.
47. **Ask local businesses to make a “pitch”** for PTA membership in their regular ads.
48. **Consider distributing one special issue** of your PTA newsletter to all residents in your school area. This is excellent public relations, and can realize memberships and participation from those with no children in school.
49. **Important! Always tell your PTA story** in terms of definite goals and achievement rather than in bland, general statements.
50. **Use every talent available** to promote membership. Ask a journalist to help with letters and articles, an artist for posters, sketches and logos, businesses for access to a copy machine, etc. Put a “Help Wanted” ad for talent in your newsletter.
51. **Remind meeting attendees** that only members make motions and vote — have them sign a separate sign-in sheet or column. Request that members show their cards when voting.
52. **Ask local preschool parents to join.** They are often full of energy and anxious to be involved.
53. **Keep members involved.** Mail a letter to all members (following the major enrollment period) addressed to them by name. Welcome them to the _____ PTA, reminding them of the next meeting. Make sure they know they don't have to volunteer but that their help is always welcome.
54. **Give away a token with each membership,** such as a sticker, button, pin, pen, or pencil inscribed with your PTA's name.
55. **Place a membership table at every entrance.** Place tables strategically so people must pass by to enter meetings or events.
56. **At open house, place a table** manned by a member of the committee or parent with a child in that classroom at each classroom door.
57. **Give special coupon incentives** with membership — one free popcorn, one book at the Used Book Fair, 25 cents off movie night admission, etc.
58. **Put PTA stickers on mailboxes** of all staff members who join PTA.
59. **On the first day of school,** place a small flower or welcome back gift and hand-written invitation to join PTA on each teacher's desk. Don't forget all other staff members.

60. After the big enrollment period, place a basket with apples in the staff room or school office. Add a large card thanking the staff for supporting PTA and note the date for the next meeting. Leave envelopes for those who may have overlooked the opportunity to join PTA.

61. Many PTAs have a teacher's luncheon or appreciation activity sometime during the year. Use this opportunity to give special recognition to staff members who serve on your board of directors or have contributed to your PTA in some way beyond the call of duty.

62. Customize the state membership theme to meet your PTA's goals. Be creative!

63. Utilize state membership recruiting resources found at www.capta.org.

64. Provide baby-sitting free or at reduced rates at meetings. Make sure you have responsible sitters and follow insurance guidelines.

65. Provide a quiet homework room for children of members during meetings.

66. Request PTA exhibit space in store windows, library showcases, banks, etc.

67. Ask your local teachers' association to put up a display promoting PTA membership in their offices during the year, preferably at the beginning of school.

68. Have a telephone committee to remind members of PTA meetings and other functions. This is a great activity for senior citizens.

69. Prepare a phone directory of students (with parent permission). Distribute free or at a reduced price to PTA members.

70. Plant a daffodil or other flower bulb for each membership in school or community park flower gardens. It's a great visual reminder of the beauty and strength of your PTA in the spring. Consider a theme like "Children blossom from seeds planted today — Join PTA!"



71. Arrange for a PTA float if your community has a seasonal parade.

72. Consider a special "members only" event — perhaps a dinner dessert with the featured speaker prior to your PTA meeting!

73. Ask for a few minutes at local government or service clubs (Rotary, Kiwanis, Elks, American Legion, Chamber of Commerce, etc.) to explain what your PTA is accomplishing. Invite their members to join PTA.

74. Make sure notices arrive home by mailing PTA information to parents of middle school, junior high and senior high school students.

75. Recognize new members by name — introduce them at your PTA meetings.

76. Thank your members and list their names in your newsletter. Add names as new members join.

77. Don't forget to ask the superintendent and others in central administration departments to join PTA. Many education employees don't work at a specific school site.

Membership Commission

78. **Create a “brag board”** for display at all PTA and school events and “travel” to local businesses, city offices, or libraries to promote your PTA’s accomplishments and goals.
79. **Set up a membership table** during adult education classes.
80. **Contact every parent** of a Cub Scout, Girl Scout, Campfire or Boy Scout group about membership.
81. **Give prizes** to “sales people” who sell the most memberships during the first month of your membership drive.
82. **On registration days**—kindergarten, secondary school, others — be there!
83. **Stage an Election Day bake sale** for voters and have a membership display and application to join your PTA prominently displayed.
84. **You might give an award** to the media in your community that publish news about your PTA regularly — this can be a great council activity too!
85. **Ask local realtors to promote PTA** with an ad in their publications or mailings to local homeowners.
86. **Slip a little “note of thanks!”** in with the PTA membership card when you return it to the new member.
87. **Check last year’s membership list** against this year’s. Call, e-mail or send a reminder note to members who have not renewed their membership. Maybe they’ve been too busy, overlooked your request, or have a problem that needs to be heard.
88. **Invite dynamic speakers** with timely, relevant topics to speak at PTA meetings.
89. **Produce a calendar** for members with PTA and school activities clearly displayed.
90. **Develop programs** and activities that foster inclusion. Consider forming a single parent or senior citizen network to bring together people with special circumstances. For instance, single parents could form a support network; senior citizens could tutor students in reading. Work at providing programs that are appropriate to individual members’ needs.
91. **List a month-by-month “show your PTA membership card”** privilege in your newsletter. For example, local merchants could give 10% off purchases, free soft drink with burger and fries, or free line of bowling when you purchase two. Or, PTA could give a discount on T-shirt purchases this month, free popcorn at movie night the next month, etc. Make your members check the newsletter for this month’s good deal!
92. **Provide plastic badge holders** for members to wear their PTA card at meetings.
93. **Put your button machine to work** — proudly wear an “I joined _____ PTA” button.
94. **Show your goal** and track your membership success for all to see. Use a giant thermometer in the hall, a large jar filled with jellybeans on the office counter, or numbered happy faces in the windows, etc. Make it visible, don’t give up, and celebrate when you reach your goal.
95. **Why do people join the PTA?** Probably to be better parents or teachers or grandparents. Or to help children do better in school. So explain how the PTA can help in your promotional literature. For instance, “The PTA brings you together with others who share your concerns and experiences. The PTA can keep you informed about your child’s school even if you can’t be there. The PTA conducts programs to teach children to stay safe. The PTA can help you know how to talk to your kids about drugs.”



Membership Commission

- 96. Use familiar street signs** as an attention getter. PTA membership “yields” results (draw a yield sign). “Stop” (draw a stop sign) and consider the benefits of PTA. There’s only “one way” to get all the support you need. “Do not pass” this opportunity to be a member of an organization as strong as PTA!
- 97. Determine exactly what you’re “selling”** and know whom you’re selling to. You may need to use different approaches for different audiences.
- 98. Use big, bold graphics** to attract attention. A big checkmark might highlight the line, “Check the things PTA is doing for you in the coming year!” Use smaller checks to make each point.
- 99. Get straight A’s** from the PTA: Action, Activities, Answers, Acquaintances, Advice, Accomplishments! You could use these as newsletter headlines.
- 100. Help new members** become acquainted with each other with triads. Put members in groups of three and tell each to learn at least five interesting things about one another. Write the items on 3 x 5 cards and take instant photos of everyone and display them. Help your members know each other and feel part of the team!
- 101. Personal discussions or calls** are the most effective and productive way to win new members. A call shows sincere interest in the individual. And it provides you with a chance to learn how that individual feels about your PTA.
- 102. Some neighborhood newspapers accept free ads.** Why not run an ad to encourage joining your PTA?
- 103. Never let a meeting go by** without making an appeal for membership. Set up a table for selling memberships in your library, the bank, or local supermarket. Have a membership table at all PTA and school functions.
- 104. Keep informed** with what’s happening in PTA on council, area, state and national levels as well as on the local level. To promote PTA well, you must know it.
- 105. Display membership awards** received at meetings or hang them in the school.
- 106. Use an enclosure to catch attention.** If you’re sending an envelope, enclose a piece of string to tie on a finger as a reminder to join PTA.
- 107. To find out what your members are thinking,** paste a penny to the top of your member survey to offer them “A penny for your thoughts.”
- 108. Pat your PTA on the back for a job well done.** Develop an ad that may be placed in school papers, shopper newspapers, and other newsletters. Use a headline like “We’re bragging!” followed by, “We wanted to be subtle, but decided that we are really doing too many good things for kids to be low key.”
- 109. “Everyone will be a star for 15 minutes”** according to one saying. Consider profiling a different PTA member in each issue of the PTA newsletter or ask the school newspaper to do so.
- 110. Try this headline** on your next recruiting letter. “Almost 5 million people can’t be wrong!” Go on to tell that the PTA is the largest child advocacy association in the United States.
- 111. Outline pieces of a puzzle** with a headline such as, “The PTA helps the pieces fit together.” Your copy can then follow with, “Does being a parent sometimes have you puzzled? We can help you put the whole picture together.”
- 112. For those who say they don’t have time,** ask them to sign a “CALL ME ONCE” sheet. Ask parents to volunteer just once during the year. They can relax about the time commitment and still be part of PTA. Being called for help for only a few hours one time seems manageable for even the busiest person.
- 113. Recognize classes** with 100% membership enrollment.
- 114. Challenge each existing member** to recruit just one additional member. The result is a 100% membership increase.
- 115. When a member recruits** another member, enter the recruiter’s name in a drawing for door prizes at selected meetings.

Membership Commission

- 116. Ask stores to place membership brochures** or envelopes in their school supply aisle.
- 117. Attract attention to your second request letter** by crumpling it up, then flattening it out and writing in red across the top, “I’m sure this got lost in the pile of paperwork that comes with the start of school!”
- 118. Demonstrate how much of a bargain PTA is.**
Compare membership fees to those of other local associations. Or, figure out how much your fees are each day. For instance, if membership fees are \$5, that comes to only a little over a penny per day.
- 119. Arrange for discounts** to athletic events to those who have PTA membership cards.
- 120. Sponsor academic events,** spelling bees, math competitions, etc., and admit spectators with their PTA membership card.
- 121. Have an art fair** and decorate the school with children’s artwork. This will draw a big crowd and provide a great opportunity for membership promotion.
- 122. Focus on instrumental and vocal students.**
Sponsor a concert with a big PTA membership night.
- 123. Remember to use existing billboards** to promote your membership drive. Perhaps a business might donate or provide funding to rent a portable signboard.
- 124. Train a “speakers’ bureau” group** to go to various groups and speak about the benefits of PTA. Perhaps a parent, teacher and student could speak together.
- 125. Give an award to PTA members** who don’t miss a meeting all year.
- 126. Have a PTA sponsored craft fair** where only members can exhibit and sell their wares. If you charge admission, give a discount to PTA members.
- 127. Have a “new parent coffee get-together”** — for parents of kindergarteners and first graders to deal with first day jitters and an opportunity to join PTA.
- 128. Place a star** beside the names of parents and staff who are PTA members in your PTA-sponsored phone directory.
- 129. Establish a special grandparents award** — for the grandparents most actively involved in your PTA.
- 130. Plan an all-school reward** – ice cream, a free movie, etc. – when you reach your membership goal.
- 131. Distribute membership dues envelopes** to each board member to sign up new members.
- 132. Encourage friendly challenges** or competitions between schools of similar size or within your district. Split the cost of a “traveling” trophy.
- 133. Have a prize drawing** at each PTA meeting for anyone bringing two additional people to the meeting. First timers may like what they see and wish to join!
- 134. Send a valentine** to PTA members – “We love our members”.
- 135. Budget money and encourage** your membership chair to attend state and district leadership conferences.
- 136. Establish a special grandparent program.**
Retired community members can share their talents and learn how schools and their needs have changed.
- 137. Ask the drama class** to present a short membership skit about what PTA does for kids at a PTA meeting or school activity.
- 138. Have a parents’ day out** once a month or on an early release day. PTA members may leave children for a free afternoon – staffed by other members – on a volunteer, rotating basis.
- 139. Ask the Chamber of Commerce** to encourage local businesses to display posters for joining PTA as school begins in the fall.
- 140. Have the staff challenge the** staff from another school of similar size to a membership contest.

Membership Commission

141. **Ask a local self-defense expert** to conduct a special workshop for PTA members.
142. **Hold aerobics or exercise classes** for PTA members.
143. **Check with your local hospital** for CPR or first aid classes for members only.
144. **At each meeting, focus on different staff** — such as lunchroom, custodial, office, etc., and recognize their contributions to the school and encourage them to be members.
145. **Ask your principal** to challenge the parents or staff to 100% participation by promising something fun. One principal moved his desk to the roof for the day, and another shaved his beard off! Both were so outrageous that even the local press arrived!
146. **Strong PTAs invite** local parent organization or booster groups to attend PTA meetings to see the value of belonging.
147. **Give someone you love** a PTA membership on Valentine's Day!
148. **Set your membership goal early** and announce it to everyone.
149. **Publicize what members get** for their membership dues.
150. **Invite PTA members of yesteryear** to a fancy dessert. Encourage them to again join your PTA.
151. **Have a tear-off application to join** PTA in every PTA newsletter.
152. **Send a note home** in a brown lunch sack that says, "Remember your child needs a healthy lunch tomorrow and we need you as a member for a healthy and growing PTA!"
153. **Set up a parent notification program** staffed by PTA members to tell parents if their children do not arrive at school.
154. **Hold an orientation for students** and parents who'll be advancing to your campus the next school year. Invite their PTA president or membership chair to attend and get membership started for the new school.
155. **Include information that goes home** to parents at the beginning of school that includes last year's PTA accomplishments along with this year's goals and plans.
156. **Host a Business Leaders Day.** Invite business leaders who have joined your PTA to come for special recognition and an opportunity to see inside the school.
157. **Sponsor a financial aid workshop** for parents and high school seniors, and make seniors aware of the scholarship opportunities, including PTA scholarships.
158. **Recognize new families** at each meeting. Get this information from the principal and invite them to join PTA with a phone call and note immediately.
159. **Send your PTA announcements home** to be colored by children and brought back for display at meetings.
160. **Keep a record of PTA volunteer hours** and publish them in your newsletter, local newspaper or on a sign.
161. **Divide your board into membership teams** and give them specific assignments for getting new members.
162. **When you leave a PTA school, make sure you take PTA to the next school.**
163. **Give children stickers** that say "PTA Meeting Tonight" to take home as reminders for their parents.
164. **Sponsor a contest** — Have students write a sentence or paragraph "My family joined PTA because"
165. **Try a "30 Day Wonder."** — Can you get 30 new members in 30 days?

Membership Commission

166. **Ask others to celebrate** Thanksgiving for all PTA does for children by joining PTA so the harvest may be even more bountiful.
167. **Make a list** of some of the things members get with their PTA membership and use as a handout or poster.
168. **Send birthday greetings** to PTA members.
169. **Sell memberships** at the PTA-sponsored concession stand or school store.
170. **Submit news** about your PTA activities to the media regularly.
171. **Promote the Reflections Program**
172. **Attend the Retired Teachers Association meeting** and ask attendees to join PTA.
173. **Contact your local elected officials** about membership.
174. **Make sure each of your school board members** is a card-carrying PTA member.
175. **Have a PTA booth** at local festivals or fairs.
176. **Give a 10% discount to members** at your bake sale.
177. **Send graduates and alumni parents a letter** inviting them to join PTA.
178. **Have a special door prize drawing** for PTA student members at their dances.
179. **Set up a PTA sponsored homework hotline.**
180. **Ask local realtors to include a welcome** from PTA to new buyers with children.
181. **Offer a discount if both parents join PTA.** But make sure if you offer a family membership that state and national fees are fully covered, and that it is written in your PTA bylaws.

182. **Don't overlook any potential member.** All members of the community have a stake in the future of all children. Tell them how they can help by joining PTA!
183. **Get creative; get energized;** just get out there and do it!

For Councils & Districts

184. **Ask your school superintendent** to encourage PTA membership for the district school employees in a letter or district newsletter or at a principals' meeting. Emphasize membership and strength in numbers district wide.
185. **Ask a well-known personality** in your town to be Honorary Membership Chairman. Publicize.
186. **Ask the mayor to proclaim** a PTA Membership Enrollment Day, Week, or Month. Publicize it.
187. **Approach local businesses** for discount coupons for goods and services and provide reproducible newsletter pages for local units to give as a membership special privilege.
188. **Print tray liners and place mats** and ask local restaurants and fast food chains to use them. Include a number or address where people can write for PTA membership or program information.

