

**California State PTA Style Guide
(From California State PTA Toolkit – 2006)**

CAPITALIZATION

- California Congress of Parents, Teachers and Students, Inc.
- California State PTA (do not use CSPTA)
- National Congress of Parents and Teachers
- National PTA (do not use NPTA)
- Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
- Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PTSA)
- PTA, PTSA (no periods)

NOUNS OR ADJECTIVES FORMING PART OF PROPER NAME OF AN ORGANIZATION

Sun Elementary PTA

Twenty-Fifth District PTA

Hillside Council PTA

University of California

Note: Do not capitalize association, council, district PTA, university when used alone.

- Advisory Board
- Board of Directors
- Board of Managers
- California State PTA Convention
- *CALL* (to board or convention)
- Continuing Service Award, CSA
- Golden Oak Service Award
- Honorary Service Award, HAS
- Mission Statement of the California State PTA
- Purposes of the PTA (not mission of or Objects of...in a sentence)
- PTA Leadership Training
- The PTA Mission (National PTA)

***SPECIAL PROJECTS, PROGRAMS OR WORKSHOPS OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE PTA
OR NATIONAL PTA***

Parents Empowering Parents (PEP) Guide

“SMARTS: Bring Back the Arts!”

Reflections Program

TITLES

- 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 four letters or less (with, to, on, upon, into) are lowercase, unless they are the first or last words of a title or subtitle. The infinitive “to,” unless it is the first word of a title, should be in lowercase.
- 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 Guide
Involvement Makes a Difference (brochure)

- Any title or designation immediately preceding, but not following a name.
President Jones
Mrs. Jane Jones, president
James McCay, Ed.D., principal

Note: All titles are capitalized in addresses, in printed programs, and at the close of letters.

TERMS CONNECTED WITH STATE OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Governor Legislature Senator Attorney General

CAPITALIZE SCHOOLS OF A UNIVERSITY, BUT NOT COURSES OR DEPARTMENTS

School of Journalism department of biology

- Capitalize names of any race or nationality except black and white. Hyphenate references to dual heritage except Latin American and Native American.

DO NOT CAPITALIZE

- Parent teacher association, unit, council, district PTA, board of education unless used as part of a name of a specific group;
- Names of school studies except languages;
- 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; or
- Seasons of the year, directions (north, southeast), state, nation, federal, flag.

NUMERALS

WRITE OUT OR SPELL NUMBERS

- At the beginning of a sentence, except for calendar years;
- One through nine; above 10 use numerals;
- First through ninth; after 10th use numerals; and
- Round numbers, *two hundred children*.

USE NUMERALS FOR

- Large numbers such as million and billion, *\$12 million*;
- Percentages – spell out word percent, *15 percent*;
- Ages, *age 3 to 6, 26-year-old* hyphenate);
- Grade levels, *grades 3 and 4, 3^d grade* (hyphenate *3^d-grader*); and
- Pages – *page 2*.

PUNCTUATION

USE THE APOSTROPHE WITH

- Singular possessives (the PTA’s state office);
- Plural possessive nouns not ending in “s” (children’s books);
- Plural possessive nouns ending in “s” (Unit PTAs’ collaboration); but

- *Not* with plural nouns, figures (PTAs advocated important arts education legislation in the 2000s).

QUOTATION MARKS ARE

- Always set outside the comma and the period;
- Always inside the colon and the semicolon; and
- 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 titles of songs, articles, periodicals, and lectures.
 - “California Here I Come”
 - “The Collective Bargaining Process”
- Use quotation marks for themes, such as for conventions, workshops, or administrations.
 - “everychild. onevoice.”

COLONS, SEMI-COLONS, AND COMMAS

- 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 semi-colons 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.
- Use a comma before the conjunction when the series of items or phrases are complicated or lengthy.
 - The flag is red, white and blue.

USE A COMMA WITH THE FOLLOWING

- Names of states and nations used with cities.
 - Los Angeles, California*
- Dates that use month, day, and year.
 - October 30, 2002* (A comma is not required when the date is omitted: June 2002)

WRITING STYLE

USE THE FOLLOWING STYLES

- Active tenses, not passive;
- Verbs, not adjectives;
- 4:00 p.m., noon, and midnight;
- Chairman, not chair or chairperson;
- People, not persons;
- Education reform, not educational reform;
- Parent involvement, not parental involvement;

- Either Dr. Jane Jones or Jane Jones, Ed.D., not Dr. Jane Jones, Ed.D.; and
- United States as a noun, U.S. as an adjective.
- Rewrite to avoid using *etc.*, *and/or*, *he/she*, *s/he*.
- Include the year of passage with the names of all laws except those passed in the current legislative session.
- A disability is a functional limitation or handicapping condition that interferes with a person's ability to do such things as walk, hear or talk. A handicap is a situation or barrier imposed by society, the environment or oneself.

SPELLING LIST OF OFTEN-USED PTA WORDS

after-school programs	hand out (verb)	school-based
at-risk	health-care clinics	schoolteacher
back-to-school	HIV/AIDS	seat belt
bylaws	kindergartner	self-esteem
caregiver	latchkey	statewide
citywide	nationwide	teenage/teenager
curricula (plural)	noncommercial	T-shirt
curriculum (singular)	nonpartisan	vice-president
day care (noun)	nonprofit	videocassette
dropout	nonsectarian	videotape
e-mail	online	Washington, D.C.
extracurricular	outreach	website
fund raiser (verb)	playground	well-being
fund-raising activities	preschool	worksheet
fundraiser	preteen	year-round
handout (noun)	reproducible	