

POSITION STATEMENT—CHILD SAFETY AND PROTECTION

A founding purpose of National PTA is to promote safety for children and youth. National PTA urges its members at all levels to monitor, support, and advocate for laws and programs in the following areas:

SAFETY

- Assist in the identification and return of missing or runaway children.
- Prevent exploitation of children and unhealthy work environments.
- Heighten awareness of and help prevent child and youth suicide.
- Include safety education in school curriculum and community programs.
- Raise awareness of the need for safe recreational equipment and facilities, playground safety, protective sports gear, and school bus safety.
- Promote compliance with child support laws and orders.

JUVENILE JUSTICE

- Promote initiatives to address racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic inequities in the juvenile justice system.
- Encourage collaboration between law enforcement, the judicial system, and child welfare agencies.
- Promote alternative dispute resolution techniques that provide a range of possible sanctions.
- Prohibit youth who are charged with a serious crime from being tried in the adult court system unless there has been an opportunity for a judicial hearing and appeal.
- Prohibit the incarceration of youth in adult facilities.
- Assist youth leaving the juvenile justice system, and prevent their return.
- Support research and data collection regarding youth offenses.

VIOLENCE PREVENTION

- Protect children from violence.
- Inform the public of the sale, resale, and destruction of weapons that can cause injury and death.
- Raise awareness of gun safety and promote violence education.
- Address the dangers associated with gangs, cults, and other violent behaviors.



This position statement was written to update and combine resolutions and position statements concerning “Safety and Protection”. The original resolutions and position statements will be archived in the Historical Records as reference on this issue.

All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Safety; Ban on the Manufacture and Sale of Saturday Night Special/Junk Guns; Child Abuse and Neglect; Child Identification Systems; Child Labor Protection; Child Restraints for Passenger Vehicles; Confidentiality of School Records; Disposable Butane Lighters; Firearm Safety and Awareness; Gun Safety and Violence Prevention; In-line Skating and Skateboarding Safety; Limit the Sale of Martial Arts Weapons; Look-Alike Weapons; Missing Children; Non-powder Firearms; Parent notification Program; Playground Equipment Safety Standards; Polygraph Testing for Youth; Protective Helmet Use; Railroad Safety Education; Removing Children and Youth from Adult Jails and Lockups; Restricting Passengers in Cargo Areas of Light Trucks/Pickup Trucks; Safety; Sale and Distribution of Fireworks; Sale, Resale, and Destruction of Firearms; The Runaway Child; School-Age Children and Child-Care Facilities for Pre-School Children; School Bus Safety; Seat Belts in New School Buses; Seat Belts for Passenger/Multipurpose Passenger Vehicles; Violence Prevention; Violence in the Schools; Youth Suicide Prevention

For more information, please contact Elizabeth Rorick, Deputy Executive Director of Government Affairs and Communications, at erorick@pta.org.

RESOLUTION—SALE, RESALE, AND DESTRUCTION OF FIREARMS

- Whereas, Due to its tremendous impact on the health and well-being of our youth, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, has declared violence a public health problem which must be dealt with using many multi-disciplinary strategies and approaches; and
- Whereas, One of the leading causes of death for teenagers in the United States is homicide with the use of handguns, rifles, and assault weapons; and
- Whereas, Children and youth of all ages have been injured and killed in random shootings traumatizing entire communities and causing children to live with constant fear and stress; and
- Whereas, In some municipalities, guns and other weapons which are confiscated in the commission of a crime, through searches, or "turn in" programs are processed for investigative purposes, and when released by judges are then sold to gun shops for resale to the general public; and
- Whereas, The total number of weapons available is greatly increased by the resale of confiscated weapons, and
- Whereas, The street and home accessibility of these ever increasing numbers of weapons contributes to the often dangerous and violent environment which surrounds many of our children and youth; now therefore be it.
- Resolved, That the National PTA and its constituent bodies shall seek and support legislation requiring that all guns and other weapons, after being processed and released by the courts, shall not merely be dismantled, but destroyed; and be it further
- Resolved, That the National PTA and its constituent bodies support federal legislation to require a license to purchase a handgun; prohibit the sale of more than one handgun a month to any individual; prohibit gun possession by those convicted of spousal abuse and child abuse; require a special license for possession of a gun arsenal; require gun dealers to pay an increased annual license fee; mandate a federal tax on assault weapons ammunition; and, ban semi-automatic assault weapons, Saturday night special handguns, and non-sporting ammunition.

Adopted: by the 1994 Board of Directors Section II
Reviewed: by the 1998 Convention Resolutions Committee
Archived: by the 2002 Board of Directors

For more information, please contact Elizabeth Rorick, Deputy Executive Director of Government Affairs and Communications, at erorick@pta.org.

POSITION STATEMENT—GUN SAFETY AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Given National PTA's history of advocacy for the safety of children and youth, National PTA supports federal efforts to protect children and youth from gun violence. National PTA also advocates restricting access to guns from persons who may endanger public safety.

School safety is a critical priority for all parents, educators, students, and community members that cannot be taken for granted. We must make every attempt to reduce violence, especially incidents that involve firearms. National PTA recognizes the importance of parent involvement in the decision-making process in the development and implementation of school policies, including crisis response plans.

National PTA's "Components of an Effective School" recognizes the importance of a safe learning environment and describes an effective school's climate as one with settings that are "safe and encourage the highest level of student learning and achievement." In order to achieve an effective climate, schools must "have a gun-free environment."

Examples of ways to improve youth safety and to restrict guns to only responsible owners include advocating for the following:

- gun safety locks and other safety devices to prevent young children from accidentally discharging a gun
- alternative educational settings for youth who have brought a firearm to school, along with appropriate evaluation and counseling
- restrict Internet gun sales, including kits that can be used to make/modify guns
- enforce federal and state minimum age requirements for handgun purchases
- raise the minimum age to 21 to be allowed to buy a handgun from nonlicensed dealers
- allow at least three business days to conduct background checks
- require non-licensed dealers to conduct background checks and fill out proper paperwork so that guns can be traced
- increase penalties for the transfer of handguns or semiautomatic assault weapons to juveniles for use in a crime
- revoke the license of dealers who knowingly sell to minors
- establish education programs to teach students, parents, and community members about gun safety and violence prevention
- prevent juveniles who commit violent crimes from buying guns as adults

These and other measures are some of the ways National PTA believes that gun violence can be decreased in order to make our schools, as well as our communities, safer. National PTA believes we must enact legislation that will reduce gun violence and help protect all children and youth.



Adopted: by the 1999 Board of Directors
Archived: by the 2002 Board of Directors

Section II

For more information, please contact Elizabeth Rorick, Deputy Executive Director of Government Affairs and Communications, at erorick@pta.org.

RESOLUTION—SAFETY

- Whereas, The National PTA in its purposes, programs, and PTA Handbook promotes safety for children and youth; and
- Whereas, The hazards encountered by children in their schools, homes, and communities vary widely in different localities and cannot be specifically enumerated or predicted at the national level; and
- Whereas, State laws, local ordinances, and administrative regulations by necessity carry different wording, intent, and impact on hazardous conditions; and
- Whereas, Detailed resolutions dealing with hazards faced by children in particular locations are inappropriate for national consideration and action; therefore be it
- Resolved, That the National PTA urge its state branches, councils, and local units to work with other community groups and agencies to maintain a continuing surveillance of safety matters in their areas; and be it further
- Resolved, That state laws and local ordinances be monitored to assure adequate safety regulations for the protection of children and youth; and be it further
- Resolved, That the National PTA support the inclusion of safety education in the curriculum at all levels of public schools.

Adopted: by the 1977 Convention Delegates Section II
Reviewed: by the 1993 and 1998 Convention Resolutions Committee
Archived: by the 2002 Board of Directors

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POSITION STATEMENT—FIREARMS

Given the history and tradition of strong support for the safety and protection of children and youth, the National PTA supports federal restrictions on firearms that would:

- require, prior to purchasing a firearm, a waiting period and background check to screen out illegal firearm purchasers such as convicted felons and drug-related offenders;
- outlaw military-style semi-automatic assault weapons; and
- require knowledge of appropriate firearms use and safety practices.

Military-style semi-automatic assault weapons would include those firearms which:

- were originally designed for military or law enforcement purposes; and for fully automatic purposes;
- are designed to be fired in full or semi-automatic mode in combat;
- are designed to accommodate a large capacity combat magazine.

These weapons include:

INTRATEC TEC-9, Street Sweeper and Striker 12, Colt AR-15 and CAR-15, MAC 10 and MAC 11 in addition to five firearms that are in the government's ban, including Norinco, Mitchell, and Poly Technologies Automat Kalashnikov S (all models), Action Arms Israeli Military Industries UZI and Galil, Fabrique Nationale FN/FAL; FN/LAR, and FNC, Steyr AUG.

Adopted: by the 1990 Board of Directors Section II
Reviewed: by the 1993 and 1998 Convention Resolutions Committee
Archived: by the 2001 Board of Directors

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RESOLUTION—FIREARM SAFETY AND AWARENESS

- Whereas, In a statement of PTA Principles, National PTA believes that all children and youth should have an education that develops safe habits and attitudes, and should live in an environment free of avoidable physical hazards; and
- Whereas, 1992 statistics indicate that the number of motor vehicle-related deaths in the United States decreased while the number of firearm-related deaths increased, and gunshot wounds were now the leading cause of deaths among teen-age boys in America; and
- Whereas, Gun education programs are widely available and heavily promoted; or the American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Injury and Poison Prevention cautions educators to choose educational programs and approaches carefully, avoiding those that might inadvertently encourage or promote children's access to firearms; and
- Whereas, In the Lewis Harris Poll for the Harvard School of Public Health (1993) more than one in five (22%) of the students claimed that they carried a weapon to school during the last school year, with 4% saying that the weapon was a handgun; and
- Whereas, One of the objectives of Goal #6 of the National PTA's "PTA National Education Goals" states, "By the year 2000, parents, businesses and community organizations will work together to ensure that schools are a safe haven for all children;" therefore be it
- Resolved, That the National PTA urge its constituent bodies, and the Department of Defense Education Activity, to participate in firearm safety and awareness programs carefully chosen to avoid those that might inadvertently encourage or promote children's access to firearms; and be it further
- Resolved, That the National PTA encourage its constituent bodies, and the Department of Defense Education Activity to educate parents, children, youth and communities about the importance of firearm safety and awareness; and be it further
- Resolved, That the National PTA urge its constituent bodies, and the Department of Defense Education Activity to promote public education campaigns to alert parents and community members about the harm and injury which handgun violence is inflicting on children and youth; and be it further
- Adopted: by the 1996 Convention Delegates Section II
Reviewed: by the 1999 Convention Resolutions Committee
Archived: by the 2002 Board of Directors

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RESOLUTION—VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

- Whereas, The incidence of unrest and disruption in schools of our nation is steadily increasing; and
- Whereas, Children need to feel secure traveling to and from school and within the school building for adequate learning to occur; and
- Whereas, In 1987, a federally funded 20-state National Adolescent Student Health Survey of more than 11,000 adolescents found that an average 34.5 percent were threatened with violence while at school or on a school bus; now therefore be it
- Resolved, That the National PTA shall make available to its constituent bodies information as to the causes of school violence which would assist in the development of state/local school guidelines for school safety; and be it further
- Resolved, That the National PTA urge its state PTAs to request their state boards of education to require school districts to develop school safety guidelines; and be it further
- Resolved, That local parent/community safety advisory teams be formed to assist with the development of guidelines which address discipline, safety and procedures for crisis intervention; and be it further
- Resolved, That the discipline and school safety guidelines be available for parental and community review before adoption by the local school board or the local governing body.

Adopted: by the 1990 Convention Delegates Section II
Reviewed: by the 1993 and 1998 Convention Resolutions Committee
Archived: by the 2002 Board of Directors

For more information, please contact Elizabeth Rorick, Deputy Executive Director of Government Affairs and Communications, at erorick@pta.org.

RESOLUTION—MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- Whereas, The National PTA has long been committed to providing improved mental health programs and services to children and youth; and
- Whereas, The National PTA, through convention action in 1969, reaffirmed this commitment; and
- Whereas, All children and youth have the right to mental health treatment; therefore be it
- Resolved, That the National PTA reaffirm its 1969 resolution on Children's Emotional Health*; and be it further
- Resolved, That the National PTA and its branches encourage each community to make available mental health programs and services which will meet the needs of all children and youth.

***CHILDREN'S EMOTIONAL HEALTH**

- Whereas, The National Congress of Parents and Teachers is deeply concerned about the increasing number of children suffering from serious mental and emotional disorders; and
- Whereas, It is engaged in an expanded program of mental health through the project on Children's Emotional Health in cooperation with the National Institute of Mental Health; and
- Whereas, It recognizes that sound mental health is essential to constructive family life and personal happiness and to the acceptance of civic responsibility; and
- Whereas, It realizes that mentally healthy home, school, and community environments are essential to the development of proper attitudes towards oneself and others; therefore be it
- Resolved, That the National Congress of Parents and Teachers strongly endorses efforts to:
1. Establish comprehensive community mental health facilities to provide preventive and treatment services to children and adults.
 2. Improve teacher and administrator understanding of child growth and development to insure the provision of an emotional climate in the school conducive to good mental health.
 3. Promote educational programs for parents to improve the atmosphere of the home.
 4. Provide special preventive services in the school to detect impending difficulties early.
 5. Urge that teacher-training institutions incorporate in their programs courses designed to give greater emphasis to children's emotional health.
 6. Improve community conditions adversely affecting children's emotional health.



Adopted: by the 1973 Convention Delegates Section XI
Reviewed: by the 1993 and 1998 Convention Resolutions Committee
Archived: by the 2002 Board of Directors

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POSITION STATEMENT—ELEMENTS OF COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH PROGRAMS

National PTA believes that health is based on the quality of life of the whole child—emotional, environmental, intellectual, physical, social and spiritual. All elements must be considered before optimum health can exist.

National PTA recognizes that:

- Social changes have produced major health problems among our children that have a direct impact on schools and their ability to educate;
- Early diagnosis and treatment of children’s vision problems is a necessary component to school readiness and academic learning; and that vision screening is *not a substitute* for a complete eye and vision evaluation by an eye doctor. Comprehensive eye and vision examinations by an optometrist or ophthalmologist are important for all children first entering school and regularly throughout their school-aged years to ensure healthy eyes and adequate vision skills essential for successful academic achievement;
- Academic achievement and student self-esteem and well-being are interrelated;
- While the well-being of children is primarily the responsibility of the home, responsibility for the emotional, intellectual, physical, and social health of children is shared by the whole community and of all its institutions;
- That, after the home, the school is often best positioned to serve as the community’s center for meeting the needs of the whole child; and
- By encouraging creative integration of education, physical and mental health, housing, employment, and other social services, we can reach vulnerable families.

National PTA believes that a comprehensive health program, encompassing health education, health services and healthy school environment includes the following components:

Policy and goals established by local school boards in partnership with parents, students, educators, community health care providers and others, and includes the development, implementation and evaluation of a comprehensive school health program.

Health Curriculum that is comprehensive for all students preschool through 12th grade, sequentially developed, age and culturally appropriate, reflects current health issues of the community, and is taught by educators qualified to present health instruction. The curriculum and instruction program should include the following content areas: accident prevention and safety, community health, consumer health, disease control

and prevention, environmental health, eye and vision health, family life education, mental and emotional health, nutrition, personal health, self-esteem building, substance abuse prevention, and violence prevention.

Health Services that appropriately reflect the educational and community commitment to address identified health problems that limit students' abilities to learn.

Healthy school environments that demonstrate care for physical facilities, stress the importance of positive mental health and emotional climates within the school setting, and ensure the physical safety of the students and staff.

School-site health promotion programs for faculty and staff that include wellness components, which will increase job satisfaction, morale and a healthy quality of life.

Integrated school and community health promotion efforts that acknowledge the shared responsibility for student health with the home, public and private health care systems, law enforcement and justice systems, government, environmental agencies, business, religious organizations, civic groups and the media.

Physical education programs that promote lifelong physical activities and fitness, higher order cognitive and affective objectives, and health-related fitness testing.

Food service programs that reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of students and staff, encourage and promote the health and well-being of students through the serving of nutritionally adequate quality meals, and provide a program of nutrition education.

School counseling programs that work with students, families and school personnel in the areas of emotional, mental and social growth and development; and collaborate with community professionals in order to serve the whole child.

Parent, family and community education that includes research and awareness of issues that affect children's health and welfare. These education and awareness campaigns should be encouraged and promoted at national, state and local levels.

Dissemination of information through use of National PTA resources and relationships with cooperating organizations.

National PTA believes that comprehensive school health programs are an essential link in the health education/health care chain.

In order to fulfill the responsibility of offering educational opportunities to all children, we need to recognize and deal with their health needs as they impact our schools and communities.

Therefore, parents, schools, and communities are encouraged to work together in partnership to provide effective, comprehensive health programs and policies.

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Revised: by the 1992, 1996 and 2002 Board of Directors

Reviewed: by the 1993 Convention Resolutions Committee

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This position statement was written to update and combine resolutions and position statements concerning “Comprehensive Health Programs”. The original resolutions and position statements will be archived in the Historical Records as reference on this issue.

School-Based Health Care Clinics, Cigarette Additives, Tobacco-Free School Environment; Secondhand Tobacco Smoke; Pesticide Residues; Scalds and Burns; Adolescent Sexual Behavior and Pregnancy; Infant Mortality Reduction; Tourette Syndrome Awareness; Awareness Program; Awareness Program for Organ Donation and Transportation; Blood Pressure Screening; Learning Related Vision Problems Education and Evaluation; Reyes Syndrome; Fluoride in Water; HIV Infection in Women and Children; Special Supplemental Food Programs for Women, Infants and Children; Summer Food Service Programs; mental Health Program and Services; Required Immunization; Tuberculosis Testing; Escherichia Coli (E.Coli) and Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention

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