PTA’s process for building successful partnerships starts with the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships

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<th>National Standards for Family-School Partnerships</th>
<th>Ways PTAs Can Support Special Education Families</th>
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| **Standard 1:** Welcoming All Families into the School Community | • Include families of children with special needs in every way other families are included in the school  
• When planning PTA meetings and events, create an environment that is accessible to all families, including those with special needs  
• Develop an proactive outreach strategy that considers other challenges and barriers to participation in the school community (e.g., poverty, language, cultural barriers)  
• Understand not all families want to be identified |
| Families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other—to school staff—and to what students are learning and doing in class. | |
| **Standard 2:** Communicating Effectively | • Include discussion opportunities relevant to special needs, especially at PTA meetings, back to school nights and parent-teacher conferences  
• Survey all families and include questions that relate specifically to families of students with special needs  
• In communicating with parents about your school’s special events, include methods of communication such as braille and sign language so that parents feel welcome in the wider community |
| Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication about student learning. | |
### Standard 3: Supporting Student Success

Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students’ learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.

- Use information from www.pta.org/specialneeds to inform families about their rights, especially through IDEA and American Disabilities Act (i.e., Individualized Education Plan and Section 504 Plan)
- Invite all families in the school to a gathering where a special education teacher or parent shares information about resources available for families of students with special needs
- Educate teachers, parents and students to increase their awareness about the issues related to special needs

### Standard 4: Speaking Up for Every Child

Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly, and to have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.

- Establish a special needs committee at each local PTA to foster collaboration among families and educators
- Support and empower families of students with special needs to fully and effectively advocate for their children
- Encourage parents to advocate for all students with special needs by becoming active in the PTA’s legislative committee

### Standard 5: Sharing Power

Families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families, and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices and programs.

- Hold meetings and conferences for families to collaborate with educators and administrators to identify and address unmet needs of students with special needs
- Encourage families of students with special needs to take leadership roles in both PTA and the broader school community

### Standard 6: Collaborating with Community

Families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services and civic participation.

- Hold community service events and activities that are inclusive and accessible to all those in attendance
- Invite citizens with special needs from your community to participate in your school’s “career day”
- Recognize community businesses and organizations that provide resources to families of students with special needs