

The Difference Between PTA And Other Parent Groups

The most fundamental difference between a PTA and other independent parent groups centers around their mission. PTOs focus exclusively on their individual schools, advocating for and sometimes funding initiatives to enhance their children’s educational experience. PTOs do not have an organized structure for involvement at the district, state, or federal level, and there are no nationwide programs.

PTAs also focus on their individual schools and advocate for and fund initiatives to enhance their children’s educational experience. But, in addition, PTAs are part of an organized, nationwide association that provides parents a way to influence all the factors that impact their children. PTA brings the voice of millions of parents, not just the parents in one school. Many of the benefits our children receive today, such as kindergarten, school lunches, and a juvenile justice system, are the result of PTA’s work over its more than 100-year history.

Other Differences

PTA	Other Parent Groups
Once a group decides to form a PTA, the state PTA assists in setting up bylaws, filing paperwork, and securing non-profit status. There is no fee to file as a non-profit since local PTAs fall under the state PTA.	A parent group that wants to form as a non-profit must file directly with the IRS. Fees are \$400 or \$800, depending on gross receipts. This cost does not include attorney or legal fees. IRS approval can take up to 18 months.
State PTA resources and National PTA Service Representatives in the field are readily available to assist new units with their startups. There is NO FEE for this service.	Other parent groups either have no support or pay for similar programs and services.
Most state PTAs offer local units low-cost insurance either included in their dues or at an additional cost.	Other parent groups must find their own insurance and pay for it on their own. Many insurance options are more expensive than the state PTA plans.
To assist with non-profit filing requirements and non-profit responsibilities, PTA provides this information to units, publishes Quick-Reference Guides for continual reference, offers training, and provides trained individuals at the state and local level that are ready to assist.	Other parent groups do not have this type of knowledge base to assist in meeting the non-profit filing requirements.
PTA members become part of a powerful network of almost 5 million people who advocate on behalf of children. Membership benefits all children—even the children of nonmembers and children in schools without a parent group or with an independent parent	Independent parent group members have no such network or powerful advocacy beyond the local level.

group.	
PTA members benefit from a 115-year-old brand synonymous with service and advocacy for children. PTA is so highly respected that its recent partners have included the White House and NBC News. Other alliances include Consumer Reports, Coalition of Juvenile Justice, Action for Healthy Kids, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Harvard Family Research Project.	Independent parent groups have no such alliances to build on.
PTA members can effectively engage in advocacy on the national level by simply subscribing to PTA Action Alerts and by using National PTA's advocacy toolkits. National PTA policy experts also educate members about important federal policies on education, child safety, juvenile justice, and child health.	Independent parent groups have no voice in Washington nor any policy experts to educate members.
National PTA invests more than \$1.4 million—41% of its budget—in recruiting, training and supporting our state and local leaders to ensure PTAs remain strong and relevant to their members.	Independent parent groups make no investment in leadership development beyond the unit itself.
The national scope of PTA and its millions of united voices have helped secure millions of dollars in grants from businesses and organizations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Target and Verizon to help build the capacity of our state and local units.	Independent parent groups are not able to secure grants of this magnitude. These groups have access to grant programs, but the impact of the awards is limited to the local level.
PTA partners with international retailers like Sharp and secures sponsors such as Target to provide members with benefits and cost savings.	Other parent groups do not provide member benefits of this caliber.
PTA's list of resources currently includes 6 major programs, 5 award and grant programs, 1 annual convention (and 1 state convention in each state), a national legislative conference, <i>Our Children</i> magazine, a resource-filled website, 4 e-newsletters (as well as state newsletters and websites), membership marketing materials, 16 e-learning courses, an idea-sharing network, and live workshops. Most products and services are free as part of membership.	Other parent groups do have access to resources, including free ones, but often have to pay for the programs and services a la carte or in tiered pricing levels.

Information source: www.pta.org, the National PTA website