

The Parent and Family Engagement Connection

Home & School

"Together We Can Make a Difference"



Parent & Family Engagement Statewide Initiative Updates

The Parent and Family Engagement Statewide Initiative is continuing to work diligently on creating resources and toolkits, and planning events we hope will increase parent engagement in the educational decisions at local educational agencies and schools. We firmly believe that in the cohesion of home, school, and the community comes the betterment of our children and our society.

The Initiative will also continue to attend state and national events to increase our knowledge and understanding of the diverse needs of our entire state, as well as the techniques, strategies, and practices happening and showing success across the entire nation.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- *Virtual Best Practices expos on March 23, 2023 and April 20, 2023 (FREE)*
Register here: www.escweb.net/tx_r16/catalog/session.aspx?session_id=935879
- Mark Your Calendar for the 2023 Parent and Family Engagement Statewide Conference on October 4-6, 2023 in Corpus Christi, Texas. Register here: www.statewideparents.com

SENIOR TIMELINE

Important Dates for High School Seniors

MARCH

- Carefully evaluate college admissions decisions as they come in
- Revisit the campus if necessary
- Register to take the TSI test if you did not take it your Junior year of High School
 - ◊ This is required for any two or four-year public Texas colleges
 - ◊ Students with certain credentials may be exempt from the TSI (Consult with your college for details)
 - ◊ Refer to the college's website on requirements or ask your counselor if you have questions
- Continue to research and apply for scholarships
- You should receive admission decisions and financial aid offers by April
- Contact the college financial aid office(s) with questions



APRIL

- If you have not yet done so, visit your final college before accepting an offer of admissions. Many colleges have "admitted students' weekends" for this purpose
- Work with the financial aid office at your college to resolve any financial aid problems
- Contact your college if you have questions about housing
- Get your bacterial meningitis vaccination
- Send a COPY of the immunization to your college (if required)

MAY

- May 1st, notify colleges of your intention to enroll
- Make sure you pay the required deposits
- Send enrollment deposit only to the ONE college you will attend
- Request Final Transcript from your high school to be sent to your college choice
- Schedule orientation, CLEP, TSI exams or other requirements as directed by your college
- If you are a 504 or Special Education student, take a copy of your records to the disabilities services office
- If you were enrolled in Dual-Credit classes, request your college transcript from the college you received dual credit from to be sent to the college you will be attending in the fall

JUNE

- Pack and get ready for college
- Make sure you have AP score information ready to give to your college at orientation
- Inform your high school if you have changed your college destination since graduation (for your final transcript)
- Attend freshman orientation at your college



To enlist in the military there a few basic requirements:

- (<https://www.military.com/join-armed-forces/join-the-military-basic-eligibility.html>)
- ⇒ You must be a U.S. citizen or resident alien
 - ⇒ You must be at least 17 years old (17-year-old applicants require parental consent)
 - ⇒ You must (with very few exceptions) have a high school diploma
 - ⇒ You must pass a physical medical exam
 - ⇒ For each branch, there are slightly different enlistment requirements

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SENIOR TIMELINE

Important Dates for High School Seniors

Military Branch Requirements



Air Force

- Be between the ages of 17-39
- Have no more than two dependents
- Pass the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test (Minimum AFQT score: 36)

Army

- Be between the ages of 17-35
- Have no more than two dependents
- Pass the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test (Minimum AFQT score: 31)

Coast Guard

- Be between the ages of 17-27
- Have no more than two dependents
- Pass the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test (Minimum AFQT score: 40)
- Have a willingness to serve on or around the water

Marines

- Meet exacting physical, mental and moral standards
- Be between the ages of 17-28
- Pass the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test (Minimum AFQT score: 32)

Navy

- Be between the ages of 17-34 Pass the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) test (Minimum AFQT score: 35)

Parent Information on the School PFE Policy

Family involvement in a child's education is *twice as predictive of student academic success as family socioeconomic status. Because of that, schools are working to ensure regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities. Our goal is for families*

- to play an integral role in assisting their child's learning,
- to be encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school,
- to be full partners in their child's education,
- to be included in the decision-making,
- invited to serve on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child, and
- to be included in other activities are carried out as described in the Every Student Succeeds Act.

Any school that accepts Title I, Part A funds, is required to involve parents and family members in the planning and implementation of all Parent and Family Engagement (PFE) programs, activities, and procedures. One of those required procedures is the creation of a School PFE Policy. This policy must be distributed to parents in an understandable and uniform format in a language parents can understand, must be available to the community, must be updated periodically to meet the needs of parents and the school. The school PFE policy must include:

- information about the PFE program, funding & possible review by TEA,
- information about family activities & meetings (including the Annual Title I Meeting) which must be offered at *flexible times (different days at different times)*,
- information on how to be involved in the planning, review, and improvement of PFE programs and the policy
- a description and explanation of the school's curriculum,
- forms of academic assessment,
- expected achievement levels on academic assessments,
- ways to request regular meetings,
- School Parent Compact (*optional*),
- a translation statement stating where/how the policy can be accessed in other languages (in the other language).

Now that it is the spring semester of the school year, this policy should have already been put into place, distributed, and made public. Title I, Part A funded schools should also have hosted PFE activities throughout the year, and might still have some planned. The spring is a good time for schools to review and improve their PFE programs, activities, and procedures including the School PFE Policy. This process needs parent and family input, so please talk to your school about how you can help improve parent and family engagement at your child's school, and how you can give feedback on the PFE program and its procedures.

Setting and Keeping Technology Boundaries

Parent Cue

Technology—it's a blessing and a curse for many parents.

What can provide ten minutes of entertainment for a crying toddler, and the resulting quiet that comes with it, can eventually turn harmful to an iPad-addicted ten-year-old. And, these days, it's not a matter of if your kid will be using technology in school. It's simply a matter of when.

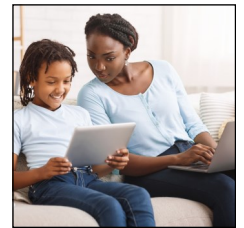
iPads and laptops are everywhere, and for parents who want to put limits on their kids' screen time, it can be difficult to find a healthy balance. So what should a parent do?

1. Make a plan.

School homework is a given. But when it comes to the more "fun" screen time, sit down with your child and set specific guidelines. Be clear and consistent with them—and follow through. Too many times, it's easy to stick to it for a few weeks, then fall back into old habits. Whether it's hours per week, specific times of the day, or even certain rooms where iPads aren't allowed (like bedrooms), make sure your kid knows exactly what's okay and what isn't, when it comes to screen time.

2. Use parental controls.

This is just a basic, practical way to make sure your kid isn't overdoing it. Go into the settings and set limits on what your child can see and for how long they can use the device. This is an easy way to start putting limits on screen time outside of school work.



3. Set an example.

It's hard to enforce screen time rules when you don't have any for yourself. If you're constantly bingeing on Netflix or Hulu in front of the kids, then it's much more difficult to preach about screen time balance. Give yourself certain parameters—like no screen time in bed or after a certain time of day—and then stick to it.

4. Keep screens off the dinner menu.

This one is so important! After long days at school and work, dinner time should be family time—the one part of the day where you can all sit down and engage with each other. Screens not only take away from that opportunity, but they limit your child's ability to use and grow in their social skills.

5. Limit online capabilities for safety.

Screen time is one thing, but screen time with access to online functions within an app is an entirely different thing. You need to be aware of what apps your kid is using and what online features they have. If one particular app is popular with kids, you can be sure that predators will be on there as well—especially if it allows them to interact with kids. Know who your kids are talking to and disable communication features if necessary.

6. Have fun!

It's so easy to get worried, as parents, about the dangers of technology that we forget to have fun with it as well! iPads and the like offer so many exciting features that can benefit our kids in their intellectual and emotional growth. Let's use those to our benefit and enjoy them, while also simply being aware of the negatives that are out there. As long as we're plugged in to what our kids are doing, we can be confident that we're using technology in a positive way.

Like all the generations before us, new forms of technology (radios to TVs to game consoles to iPads) will always present both pros and cons. And just like our parents and their parents, we'll need to navigate through these new forms of entertainment to learn how to best use them with our kids.

These days, schools are using iPads to teach our kids in completely new ways—and that's amazing! As long as we're balancing the way our kids use screens when they get home, there's no reason we can't help them develop a healthy relationship with technology for years to come.

35 Spring Break Activities and Ideas for Kids at Home

Stuck at home during spring break? Make the most of the vacation with these fun indoor and outdoor activities for the entire family.

For most students, spring break is a much-needed respite from classes, homework, and daily routines. Don't have a vacation scheduled? No problem—you can still give your children a memorable spring break at home!

We've rounded up 35 fun indoor and outdoor spring break activities for kids. There's guaranteed to be something for every child on the list, whether they're in preschool, kindergarten, or elementary school.

Outdoor Spring Break Activities

Does your child love spending time outside? Take advantage of the warmer weather with these at-home spring break ideas. But we warned: some of them may require your kid to get a little muddy!

- Plant an edible garden
- Learn to fly a kite
- Sleep underneath the stars by camping in the backyard
- Plan an outdoor scavenger hunt
- Have a picnic near the garden
- Break in the bonfire pit and make s'mores
- Decorate the driveway with chalk



Indoor Spring Break Activities

If the weather is cold or rainy, simply bring the fun and games inside. These spring break activities will be loads of fun for everyone involved.

- Build a fort with blankets and pillows
- Test out a new recipe
- Host a fashion show to mix-and-match fun outfits
- Practice a new skill, whether it's making paper airplanes, juggling, or doing magic tricks
- Plan an at-home spa day
- Have a photo shoot throughout the house
- Ponder these trivia questions about science, Disney, history, and more

Crafty Spring Break Activities

If your kid loves arts and crafts, these spring break ideas will be perfect for them. Grab some supplies and get started!

- Make a collage with nature (twigs, leaves, flowers, etc.)
- Whip up some homemade slime
- Create paper bag puppets—then put on a puppet show for the whole family
- DIY bird feeders to hang in the yard
- Paint rocks to use as decorative paperweights
- Make a castle out of a cardboard box
- Create homemade cards for friends and relatives
- Get excited about learning with interactive STEM activities
- Design a time capsule about your family—then bury it in the backyard

Energetic Spring Break Activities

After months of sitting in class, your children are probably full of pent-up energy. Let it loose with these action-packed spring break activities to do at home.

- Set up an obstacle course (you can do this indoors or outdoors)
- Throw a dance party with your family's favorite tunes
- Learn classic yard games like Red Rover, Hopscotch, or Kick the Can
- Go bowling outdoors; you simply need some bottles and a ball
- Try out an online exercise video
- Host your own family Olympic games in the backyard
- Play "floor is lava"

Parent Corner

If the school your child attends is a Title I, Part A school that receives Title I, Part A ESSA funding, you have certain rights as a parent. A few relevant during the spring months include:

- According to section 1111 (h)(1)(B) and (h)(2)(B) of ESSA, Annual State Federal Report Cards as well as Annual Local Educational Agency Report Cards shall be disseminated to the public. These reports are typically released in December, and can be found on the TEA website [here](#).
- Your school leaders have the opportunity to attend the Association for Compensatory Educators of Texas (ACET) Conference. (April 26-28 in San Marcos)
- Your school leaders had the opportunity to attend the National ESEA Conference. (Hybrid event in Indianapolis February 1-4)
- According to section 1116 (a)(2)(D) of ESSA, your school leaders should schedule, consult, and conduct with parents and families an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parent and family engagement policy and program toward improving the academic quality of the schools.
- According to section 1114 (b)(2) of ESSA, your school should consult with parents and families in the development, review or revision, and evaluation of the Schoolwide Plan/Campus Improvement Plan and the District Improvement Plan.
- The third week of April is Public School Volunteer Week. Ask your school how you can volunteer. Ideas might be making weekly copies for a grade level or teacher, help with an upcoming event, be a bathroom monitor during state testing, help the librarian, do a read aloud, cut out flashcards or laminated materials, chaperone a trip or event, ask local businesses for donations, etc.
- According to section 1112 (e)(1)(B) of ESSA, your school must provide parents information about the level of achievement of the child in each of the required state academic assessments. (If this cannot be completed before the school year concludes, this is to be done as soon as practicable.)
- According to section 1116 (e)(1), each school and local educational agency shall provide assistance to parents of children served by the school or local educational agency, as appropriate, in understanding such topics:
 - ⇒ the challenging state academic standards,
 - ⇒ state and local academic assessment
 - ⇒ the requirements of this part, and
 - ⇒ how to monitor a child’s progress and work with educators to improve the achievement of their children.

The Parent and Family Engagement Connection is posted on our website four times a year for parents and educators of Texas. This newsletter is available in Spanish, Vietnamese, German, Tagalog, Korean, and is also published on SMORE.

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