

## Cost-Effective Connections

These cards offers suggestions for schools with limited budgets to create impactful events for families.

These ideas can help schools meet PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships.

Please customize for your school's use.

## *Elementary*

### Stay and Play Recess

**Grades: PreK-5**  
**Cost: Free to minimal for supplies**  
**Time: 30-60 minutes (come and go atmosphere)**

An activity encouraging families to play after school with their children on the playground. Link to learning by either tying activity to P.E. standards or showing how parents can use play to help their children learn.

**Supports PTA Standard(s):**

*1-Welcoming All Families into the School Community*

### Stay and Play After School

**Grades: PreK-5**  
**Cost: Minimal to cover supplies**  
**Time: 30-60 minutes (come and go atmosphere)**

Set up grade-level activities in classrooms or common areas of the school for parents to play educational games (manipulatives, smart-board activities, Everyday Math, commercial games etc.) with their student. Teachers and other staff members should be asked to stay and help supervise the games.

**Supports PTA Standard(s):**

*1-Welcoming All Families into the School Community*  
*3-Supporting Student Success*

### Stay and Play Music

**Grades: PreK-5**  
**Cost: Free to minimal for supplies**  
**Time: 30-60 minutes (come and go atmosphere)**

Have an afternoon sing-a-long with your children in the school's music room. Link to learning: musical selections could coincide with particular learning themes, character traits or could be planned for upcoming school musicals. Invite parents who attend to also participate musicals for those featured selections.

**Supports PTA Standard(s):**

*1-Welcoming All Families into the School Community*

## Stay and Play Gallery Walk

**Grades: PreK-5**

**Cost: Minimal to cover additional art supplies for families**

**Time: 30-60 minutes (come and go atmosphere)**

Create an art project for parents and their children to work on together that is centered on academic standards. Create gallery areas throughout school that feature the art.

**Supports PTA Standard(s):**

*1-Welcoming All Families into the School Community*

## Stay and Play after Parent-Teacher Conferences

**Grades: PreK-5**

**Cost: Minimal to cover games for families**

**Time: Runs concurrent with conferences**

Invite families to play a game with their child after their Parent-Teacher Conference. Set up the library or a common area with designated areas for grade level games. Games can be classroom games or commercial games. Ask specials teachers to sign up for supervision and to help assist families in playing the games.

**Supports PTA Standard(s):**

*1-Welcoming All Families into the School Community*

## Family Day at the Library

**Grades: PK-5**

**Cost: Free**

**Time: 30-45 minutes**

Invite families to come to the school library for a family book check-out time. Check-out procedures would remain the same as the book would be charged to the student's library account on behalf of the student's family. This after-school activity allows parents to familiarize themselves with the school library; their children's favorite reads and encourages reading at home. Consider offering tips to help families help their child to read or offer worksheets to help prompt discussion between participants and school staff members to maximize the time together.

**Supports PTA Standard(s):**

*1-Welcoming All Families into the School Community*

*3-Supporting Student Success*

*6-Collaborating with Community*

## Family Game Night

**Grades: PK-5**

**Cost: Free to minimal for snacks and/or board games**

**Time: 60-90 minutes**

Invite families to play linked-to-learning board games at school. Show a popular sporting game on a smart board or project screen in the gym or auditorium to add to the ambience and to build relationships.

**Supports PTA Standard(s):**

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## Show what you know

**Grades: PK-5**

**Cost: Printing**

**Time: 90 minutes**

This is an Assessment event to gather parents and discuss assessment information. Offer strategies to help them prepare their student(s). Allow time for Q&A. Have adults who attend make motivational posters for the school with slogans such as, "Show What You Know" to hang around the building. Take-home materials can be supplemental instruction from current curriculum. Could present as a brownbag special if event coincides with meal time. If intended for an adult-only audience, hold around lunch-time in parts of the school building that are not occupied with students.

### **Supports PTA Standard(s):**

*1-Welcoming All Families into the School*

*Community*

*2- Communicating effectively*

*3-Supporting Student Success*

*4- Speaking Up for Every Child*

## Coaches' Corner

**Grades: PK-5**

**Cost: Printing**

**Time: 10 minutes to prepare/distribute**

Partner with local youth sport leagues and ask coaches or team staff to distribute academic-related information to adults during games.

### **Supports PTA Standard(s):**

*1-Welcoming All Families into the School*

*Community*

*6-Collaborating with Community*

## Zumba Family Jam

**Grades: PK-5**

**Cost: Water bottles**

**Time: 90 minutes**

Invite families, students and staff to participate in the exercise craze. Have Physical Education staff, teacher interns, or staff members of local fitness centers offer a Zumba class after school to promote physical activity among families while also allowing schools to connect informally. Order free health information materials from [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov) to give to families for participating.

### **Supports PTA Standard(s):**

*1-Welcoming All Families into the School*

*Community*

*3-Supporting Student Success*

*6- Collaborating with Community*

## Newsletters by the Curb

**Grades: PreK-5**

**Cost: Printing and copy paper**

**Time: 20-30 minutes**

Have staff members meet parents at drop-off or pick-up times with a school newsletter. This helps build relationships while also offering another way for schools to improve home-school communication.

### **Supports PTA Standard(s):**

*1 - Welcoming All Families into the School*  
*Community*

*2- Communicating Effectively*

*3- Supporting Student Success*

## Mission Milk

**Grades: PK-5**

**Cost: milk and materials**

**Time: 60 to 90 minutes**

Create a milk-tasting station featuring chocolate, strawberry and white milk. By the station, hang butcher block paper (brown for chocolate milk, pink for strawberry and white for white milk) by the stations. Have families taste the milk, then tally on the appropriate colored butcher block paper their favorite. Once complete, take families' pictures with milk moustache stickers or offer other free materials to promote health through resources available at: <http://www.midwestdairy.com> or [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov) or <http://teammnutrition.usda.gov/library.html>.

**Supports PTA Standard(s):**

*1-Welcoming All Families into the School Community*

*3-Supporting Student Success*

*6- Collaborating with Community*

## Are you smarter than a \_\_\_-grader?

**Grades: 3-5** (classroom or grade-level contests)

**Cost: Minimal to cover supplies**

**Time: 60 minutes**

Students vs.. Adults in *friendly* academic trivia game.

*Set up:* SmartBoard or butcher paper, index cards, white boards or Post-It notes, pens in a library or classroom.

*How to play:*

Use a SmartBoard or butcher block paper to display categories.

Use index cards to read off questions.

Use white boards or Post-It notes to display contestant answers.

*Incentives for student winners:* Sitting in the teacher's chair, doing morning announcements, face displayed on classroom or hallway bulletin board, first in line to recess, etc.

*Incentives for families:* Free educational support tools; parking in the Principal's spot for drop-off and pick-ups, picture on bulletin board.

**Supports PTA Standard(s):**

*1-Welcoming All Families into the School*

*Community*

*3-Supporting Student Success*

## Make-It Take-It

**Grades: PreK-5**

**Cost: printing and link-to-learning materials**

**Time: 60 minutes**

One hour before evening music programs, invite families to participate in a make-it take-it project that is linked-to-learning. Activities could come from classroom worksheets, Everyday Math homelinks, etc. Families who participate get priority seating at the program.

**Supports PTA Standard(s):**

*1 – Welcoming All Families into the School Community*

*2 – Communicating Effectively*

*3- Supporting Student Success*

## Giving Back

**Grades: PreK-5**

**Cost: Free to minimal to cover supplies**

**Time: 30-60 minutes**

Invite families to join students and staff in thanking businesses and community organizations that support the school. Activities could include delivering Thank You cards and posters, or hanging student artwork.

**Supports PTA Standard(s):**

*6- Collaborating with the Community*