

Inclusion Committee: Considerations for PTA Events, Clubs and Classroom Parties 2024/2025 Academic School Year

As you plan PTA events, parties and activities, please keep in mind the following considerations to make these programs more inclusive for all students. We know it is impossible to make every event fit the needs of everyone, but this is a positive first step!

Our Diverse Lincoln Community

We celebrate the diversity of students, staff, and families and believe that these differences are what make our community unique and beautiful. As you know, some differences are obvious and visible (i.e. limited mobility) while others are more subtle or invisible (i.e. limited income, neurodiversity). There is always more than meets the eye!

Below is a short list of student/family needs to consider:

- ❖ Limited mobility
- ❖ Use of a wheelchair
- ❖ Hearing impaired
- ❖ Visually impaired
- ❖ Medically fragile/immunocompromised
- ❖ Sensory sensitive
- ❖ Neuro-diverse (autism, ADHD, etc.)
- ❖ Difficulty with transitions
- ❖ Uses assisted communication technology (AAC)
- ❖ Identify as transgender/non-binary
- ❖ Language differences (ESL)
- ❖ Limited access to technology
- ❖ Limited income
- ❖ Diverse family unit (two working parents, one parent, same sex parent, foster family, guardian, etc.)
- ❖ Religious/cultural/spiritual beliefs
- ❖ Race/ethnicity
- ❖ Allergies

Planning Considerations

- ❖ Consider reaching out to classroom teachers/parents upfront and ask if there are any students/families that may need some special accommodations
- ❖ Does the event conflict with any culturally significant holidays such as Yom Kippur, Ramadan, Diwali, Eid, etc.? Please refer to the National PTA's 2023/2024 National Cultural Calendar for important dates and holidays (link below)

<https://www.pta.org/docs/default-source/files/runyourpta/2024/multicultural-calendar-2024-2025.pdf>

- ❖ Does the event/activity/club have any associated fees? Can financial assistance be available to those in need?
 - Any PTA program or event that has an out of pocket expense should include mention that confidential financial assistance is available by contacting Dawn Scholl, Lincoln Social Worker at dscholl@d41.org. **It is up to the Committee Chairs to ensure this is included as part of your communications**

- If a family contacts Dawn, Dawn will work with the PTA to get fees covered/reduced in a discreet, confidential manner
- ❖ Consider spacing out events that have a financial component - for example: there are a lot of upfront expenses at the beginning of year with school supplies, school fees, school pictures, etc. and money might be tight for some
- ❖ Try to use a variety of communication platforms - for example: not everyone is part of our "Leopard Spot" Facebook page and not everyone joins the PTA and receives the weekly emails.
 - Principal Rodriguez is happy to send emails out to all families to ensure everyone receives important communication
- ❖ Try to use inclusive language whenever possible - for example: not everyone receiving communications is a parent - parent/caregiver typically covers it all
- ❖ What else can be done to go the extra mile to make everyone feel welcome and included? Consider the physical layout of the space, mixing up friend groups, wearing name tags, etc.

For Classroom Parties

- ❖ December theme should be more Winter/seasonal and not reference any specific holiday
 - ❖ Consider sharing the details of the party with teachers/parents a few days beforehand so everyone can prepare and line up additional supports if needed ➤ Many kids struggle on party days because the routine is different. Knowing in advance what to expect on that day goes a long way for these families
- ❖ During the party, keep an eye on the classroom landscape and be aware of those that might be left out or overshadowed by those with bigger personalities
- ❖ There is no pressure to participate - it is okay for kids to just watch or do another quiet activity on their own
- ❖ Positive body language like smiles, laughs, fist-bumps, etc. can go such a long way for those with language and social difficulties

How The Inclusion Committee Can Help

- ❖ Create visual schedules for large, school-wide PTA events and activities
 - Classroom-specific supports can be done on a case-by-case basis
- ❖ Offer ideas on how to make these experiences at school more inclusive and accommodating
- ❖ Help connect you to other resources like Community Outreach, translators, student services, etc.

Questions/Concerns/Suggestions

Feel free to contact the Inclusion Co-Chairs at inclusion@abelincolnpta.org