

Planning Guide: Real-Time (In person or virtual) Smart Talk Program

This guide is designed to help your PTA plan your live Smart Talk event, whether you choose to have families participate in person or at home via a virtual platform.

BENEFITS OF FAMILIES LEARNING TOGETHER:

1. Fosters family discussion and learning among participants.
2. Encourages active participation.
3. Builds community.

EVENT GOALS:

1. Educate families about the importance of being safe, responsible and smart online.
2. Teach families how to use the Smart Talk tool.
3. Facilitate interactive family activities and conversations focused on digital safety.

EVENT TARGET AUDIENCE: Parents/caregivers and their school-aged children.

APPROXIMATE EVENT LENGTH: 45 minutes

EVENT REQUIREMENTS: To plan and run a successful Smart Talk event, it is recommended that your PTA:

1. Follow the Smart Talk session [agenda](#).
2. Use the Smart Talk session [presentation](#) and facilitator's [guide](#).
3. Distribute The Talk Before The Smart Talk family [worksheet](#).
4. Ask event participants to complete the session [evaluation](#).

ACTIONS TO TAKE

CREATE YOUR CORE SMART TALK PLANNING TEAM.

Your planning team should include diverse participants and represent the community you are serving. Consider inviting:

- School Principal
- Teachers
- Librarian
- School/council technology specialist
- Students
- Family members
- Other community members who care about children and their safety.

DECIDE ON AN EVENT DATE AND FORMAT.

- Choose a date and time for your Smart Talk event as soon as possible.
- Decide upfront the maximum number of attendees you can successfully and safely accommodate.
- Determine if you are going to have your event in person or virtually.
- Make a plan to reach families who cannot attend your “live” events. Consider sending a link to the pre-recorded “Smart Talk: At Home” learning module.

If your event is in person:

- Determine where in your school or community you will hold this event. This could be the school auditorium or classroom, or at a community center, library or church.
- Be sure to talk to your school administration and ensure you are following all CDC COVID-19 safety guidelines.

If your event is virtual:

- Determine which online platform your PTA will use to run the live, virtual event. Consider Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, or the technology platform your school is using for distance learning. School leadership and teachers may be able to provide your PTA with training and support on using the technology.

*Select a day, time and format that works best for the **most families** at your school.*

CREATE A TIMELINE AND BUDGET.

Consider what you will need to build into your planning timeline:

- Participant RSVP deadline (we suggest one week before the event)
- Event promotion (we suggest beginning promotion 4-6 weeks before the event)
- Speakers (we suggest inviting speakers six weeks in advance and hosting a speaker practice session one week before the event)
- AV testing (we suggest testing the session's AV at the same time as the speaker practice one week before the event)

If your event is in person:

- Setting up your event space (we suggest three hours before the event)

Consider what you will need to build into your budget:

- Inclusive accommodations. Consider the needs of families at your school and hire translators and/or sign-language interpreters and offer childcare and/or transportation if needed.
- Event giveaways can help drive registrations. Consider what may draw families to your event.

- Volunteer recognition. In addition to verbally thanking your volunteers at the event, consider offering a \$5 coffee card or PTA t-shirt as a thank you.
- Print outs and associated costs.
- Speaker fees if you are inviting a digital safety expert from your community to deliver the Smart Talk presentation.

If your event is in person:

- Audio visual equipment, including rentals. Space rental or donation fees.
- Food or drink costs for attendees.

If your event is virtual:

- Virtual platform costs (i.e. Zoom account).

DETERMINE AND INVITE SPEAKERS.

Consider these things when deciding on speakers for your Smart Talk event.

- Session facilitator role (ie: welcome attendees, keep time, introduce family activities)
- School technology expert role (ie: present The Smart Talk [presentation](#), facilitate the Q&A part of the [agenda](#)?)
 - Having a school technology expert participate is **NOT** a requirement. The materials are designed so for any PTA volunteer to easily deliver the education.
- Speaker invitation and session preparation.
 - It is recommended that your PTA invites speakers **1 month** before the session and walk through the session [agenda](#) and The Smart Talk [presentation](#) **2 weeks** before the session.

FIND VOLUNTEERS.

Volunteer roles may include

- Event planning and logistics
- Donation solicitation and collection
- Event promotion
- Online registration set up
- Participant/speaker/volunteer communication
- Day-of audio visual set up

For in person events:

- Coordinating food, snacks or beverages
- Printing handouts
- Day-of room set up and/or clean up

For virtual events:

- Running online technology
- Monitoring virtual waiting room
- Loading The Talk Before The Smart Talk family [worksheet](#) to the virtual platform.

This sample volunteer [invitation letter](#) has language you can use.

PLAN FOR PHOTO/VIDEO/STORY COLLECTION.

If you are a Smart Talk grant recipient, your PTA is required to collect and share photos, videos or stories of families participating in this event with National PTA.

- Each participant must sign a media release [form](#). Include a link to this form in your registration and any follow up emails.
- Encourage families to take photos/videos of themselves while they're participating in the events to share with your PTA.
 - If families share the photos/videos on social media and tag your PTA, they do NOT need a signed media release form for your PTA to be able to share these photos.
 - If a family emails your PTA photos/videos, your PTA must get them to sign a media release form before you can share those photos.

For virtual events:

- If your PTA plans to record the session or take screenshots, you must inform participants at the beginning of the session.
- Participants who do not wish to be recorded or appear in a screenshot should mute their microphone and turn off their camera.

SET UP REGISTRATION.

Having families register to participate in your Smart Talk event helps your PTA to anticipate the size of your event and gather contact information for non-member families.

- Set up registration using an online platform, like Sign-up Genius, SurveyMonkey, Google Forms or with your school's existing technology platform (such as the registration feature built into Zoom).
- Determine if you want to select a day where you close registration.

For in person events:

- Send people the day, time and location of your in-person event when they register. Resend this information in a reminder email three days before the event and again on the day of the event.

For virtual events:

- Send people a link to your virtual event when they register. Resend the event link in a reminder email three days before the event and again on the day of the event.

This participant registration [template](#) has suggested registration fields to include.

PROMOTE YOUR EVENT.

- Use the sample [media advisory](#) to spread the word throughout your community.
- Use the sample [invitation](#) to reach new families.
- Use your school's social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter) to provide frequent updates about the upcoming event and this sample [social media and eblast messaging](#) to get started.
- Write an article for the school, principal or PTA newsletter/e-newsletter.
- Include the sample [event flyer](#) in student's backpacks.
- Promote the event in your school's morning announcements.
- Post the date and reminders on outdoor signs near student drop-off/pickup locations.
- Find ways to spread the word informally, including asking room parents for support.

Include the registration link in all promotional materials.

COORDINATE PARTICIPANT HANDOUTS.

- Families will need to use The Talk Before The Smart Talk family [worksheet](#) during the event.
 - Determine if you are distributing The Talk Before The Smart Talk family [worksheet](#) before the event. If yes, ideas for how include:
 - Email handout to participants.
 - Print and give out handout while distributing other things like class assignments, parent forms, food or other school supply pickups at school.

HOST YOUR EVENT.

Practice once or twice, have all materials ready, check technology, and be ready to have fun.

- Use the Smart Talk [presentation](#) and Facilitator [guide](#) to facilitate the event.
- Guide participants through using The Talk Before The Smart Talk family [worksheet](#) during each activity.

For in person events:

- Print and give The Talk Before The Smart Talk family [worksheet](#) to participants during the event.

For virtual events:

- Include a link to The Talk Before The Smart Talk family [worksheet](#) in the chat box during the event.

GATHER FEEDBACK.

- Allow attendees time to complete National PTA's online [evaluation](#) at the end of the session.

For in person events:

- Include the URL to the online survey on the last slide: [PTA.org/Survey](#)
- Include the URL to the online survey at the bottom of the [agenda](#): [PTA.org/Survey](#)

For virtual events:

- Include the URL address to the online survey in the chat box: [PTA.org/Survey](#)

KEEP FAMILIES ENGAGED.

Consider how you can use this event to keep families engaged throughout the year or boost membership.

- Share information on how to join your PTA at your event or in follow-up communication.
- Send a thank you email to all families who participated in your event.
 - Include information about any upcoming digital safety events your school is planning.
 - Include a link to the event survey.
 - Include a link to the Smart Talk tool: [TheSmartTalk.org](#).

This sample participants [email](#) has language you can use.

THANK SPEAKERS AND VOLUNTEERS.

Within a day after the event:

- Send a thank you email to all volunteers and planning team members who helped make the session possible.
- Send a thank you to all guest speakers.

These [volunteer](#) and [speaker](#) thank you email templates have sample language you can use.