



Illinois PTA Start the Art Week is an opportunity to provide your school's students with arts experiences. It's also an ideal time to inform families of the benefits of arts education and gain the support of the community. Show your PTA's commitment to arts education by observing **PTA Start the Art Week** with a one-day event or a weeklong celebration.

Give your students the gift of music, dance, theater, film production, video production, literature, and the visual arts! **Start the Art**—and keep it going!

Why Art?

Arts education not only cultivates imagination, self-expression, and creativity, but also plays a vital role in the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Research has shown that “arts education increases interest in academic learning, cognitive and basic skills development, and the development of academic achievement skills” (R.R. Konrad, *Empathy, Arts, and Social Studies*, 2000). Arts education presents a window through which students are exposed to a diverse and dynamic world of perspectives and cultures. And, arts education equips students with skills essential to succeed in the current economic environment.

Despite these findings and the fact that the arts are included as one of the “core academic subjects” in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), in many schools faced with budget cuts, the arts programs are all too often the first to go. Schools that provide little or no arts education are denying students the opportunity to hone those skills that will best prepare them for the highly competitive labor market of the 21st century. Arts education is a fundamental component of comprehensive learning for grades K–12.

Collaboration among parents, teachers, and community can create a powerful constituency advocating for arts programs in schools.

Start the Art Week involves parents in keeping the arts in schools. Ask for arts education throughout the year. Help turn passion for promoting the arts and children's success into powerful action by equipping advocates with knowledge and resources that will increase the impact of individual efforts.

For more information go to www.illinoispta.org.