

# Frequently Asked Questions about **p.a.p.a.** for Parents

## What is p.a.p.a.?

The p.a.p.a. curriculum contains 14 sessions of approximately one hour each. Most sessions include a 2-3 minute video and a lesson supported by group activities, handouts, and workbook exercises that may be done in class or as homework. Many sessions have voluntary research assignments. A summary of each of the 14 sessions can be found on the Texas Attorney General's website. [www.texasattorneygeneral.gov](http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov)

## I've never heard of p.a.p.a. where did it come from?

The roots of p.a.p.a. started in the 1980s when staff at the Texas Attorney General's Child Support Division were asked to talk about child support and parental responsibility to students in Texas public schools. The first official version of the curriculum was published in 1995. That same year, p.a.p.a. received a "Best of Texas" award from the Corporate Fund for Children and was included in a book, *New Expectations: Community Strategies for Responsible Fatherhood*, by James Levine. At its initiation, p.a.p.a. was reviewed and endorsed by the Texas PTA and all statewide teacher organizations. In 2003, a new version was issued and more than 2,000 Texas educators and community professionals were trained to use the curriculum. The 2008 edition of the curriculum will be distributed starting with the 2008-2009 school year.

## Is p.a.p.a. required?

The 80th Legislature passed HB 2176, directing the State Board of Education to work with the Office of the Attorney General to develop a parenting and paternity awareness program that school districts must use in the high school health curriculum, effective beginning the school year of 2008-2009. The OAG is providing the curriculum, training and support for school districts to comply with the legislative mandate of HB 2176.

## What does p.a.p.a. teach?

The goal of p.a.p.a. is to promote responsible parenthood; provide a basic understanding of paternity and child support laws; and encourage involvement of fathers in the formation of strong, stable families. The key message is that becoming a parent is more than giving birth; the responsibilities of parenting impact all areas of an individual's life, regardless of one's age when becoming a parent. It should be noted that p.a.p.a. is not a sex education curriculum.

## How does p.a.p.a. teach these things?

p.a.p.a. is not a lecture-driven curriculum. It is designed to be interactive, with teachers leading group discussions and activities that engage students while educating them. Students have an opportunity to hear young people tell their own stories about how their lives changed when they found out they were going to have children, how they face the challenges of teen parenthood, and what they would do differently if they could. A student workbook full of introspective exercises helps students apply the lessons to their own lives. Individual or group research projects give students an opportunity to learn more about specific topics.

## Why do my children need a course in parenting at school?

Four out of five children will grow up to be parents someday. p.a.p.a. is a reinforcement tool for parents to use in conveying important life lessons to their children. p.a.p.a. gives students the opportunity to consider their own futures in light of what the curriculum teaches.

## Does p.a.p.a. teach a particular style of parenting?

No. p.a.p.a. provides a larger picture of the time, energy, and tough decisions that come with parenting. It's not a how-to-parent curriculum (i.e., changing diapers and feeding), but a what-to-expect-when-you're-a-parent curriculum. p.a.p.a. emphasizes that a baby is a lifetime commitment and covers ideally what should be in place when a child is born.



## **How can I continue the discussion with my child about these issues?**

The curriculum is founded on the premise that students should first seek the advice of parents to achieve the goal of building strong, stable families. p.a.p.a. emphasizes the expectations of responsible parenthood and exposes students to skills needed to build strong families. p.a.p.a. does not take the place of parental guidance. A summary of each session in the p.a.p.a. curriculum describes the topics covered so that parents can follow up with their children and express their views and perspectives. Parents are a child's most important teacher. A child's participation in p.a.p.a. provides an opportunity to reinforce family beliefs and values. Talk to your child about the rewards and challenges of being a parent. Tell them real-life stories about what it takes to be a parent and how you are different or similar to your own parents.

## **What's actually in p.a.p.a.?**

The p.a.p.a. curriculum contains 14 sessions of approximately one hour each. Most sessions include a 2-3 minute video and a lesson supported by group activities, handouts, and workbook exercises that may be done in class or as homework. Many sessions have voluntary research assignments.

A summary of each of the 14 sessions can be found on the p.a.p.a. pages of the Texas Attorney General's website.

## **What do teachers say about p.a.p.a.?**

Based on an initial satisfaction survey of teachers trained in using the curriculum, 93 percent found it easy to use. All of the teachers thought it was successful in teaching students the rights and responsibilities of parenthood and helped the students visualize their own future as parents. When asked about the relevance of the information, teachers strongly agree that p.a.p.a. provides useful information for their students, and plan to continue using it.

## **What if I still have questions about p.a.p.a.?**

You are invited to browse the p.a.p.a. session materials for educators online. If you have specific questions, please e-mail your inquiry to [papa@oag.state.tx.us](mailto:papa@oag.state.tx.us).