

CONNECTION

Family Nights

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Building Student Success within a Strong School Community ®

Connection

A school community is strengthened when its members associate with one another and share common experiences. Activities that bring everyone together while also reinforcing one or more of the school community's goals are especially valuable. A family night devoted to reading fits the bill. If we choose to plan a Family Night on a theme other than reading, these ideas will still give us suggestions for making our Family Night interactive, whatever its topic.

Family Night

Most schools are familiar with Family Reading Nights at which parents, students, and teachers gather at school to read together, listen to stories, present skits related to a theme from literature, host guest readers from the community, and celebrate the joys of reading. Ideas are given here for a Family Reading Night that includes interactive reading.

Focus on Interactive Reading

Plan a Family Reading Night that will include an emphasis on reading interactively with small children and continued discussion of reading with children of all ages. The Family Reading Night will include activities that encourage parents and children to read together and to talk about reading.

Family Night Ideas

- **Theme Based** Select a theme and plan the evening events on that one idea.
- Classroom host the event Select different grade levels or classrooms to host the Family Night.
- Storyteller Drama Invite a local drama group (either high school or college) to act out the plot of a children's book.
- Author Night Invite a local children's book writer to the program or focus the event on the work of one author.
- Host Readers Invite local community leaders to read a story. If several community leaders can attend, each one can read to a classroom.
- **Sponsorships** Invite corporate or local businesses to sponsor the event. Have door prizes available for children and adults who attend.
- Book Fairs/Book Clubs Tie the event to book fairs and/or book clubs that are visiting your school.
- Make and Take a Book Have the children create their own books by creating the illustrations and story plot.
- Kick Off Reading Challenge Use the Family Reading Night to launch a reading challenge between students or grade levels. Another challenge could be to have the students read a set number of books, and a faculty member will do something funny such as get a pie in the face if the students reach the goal.
- Book Character Visits Take characters from a popular book; have them visit your reading night.
- **Puppet Show** Provide a puppet show based on a book.

The planning outline on the following page will help in planning a Family Night. Make sure to note who will be responsible for each item on the plan. The Family Night Report and Parent Feedback Forms help to document the event so that you can improve the event each time it is offered. Be sure to plan activities for preschoolers, and consider inviting neighborhood families with children of preschool age.

Family Night Plan

Today's Date:		
School:	District:	
City:	State:	
Proposed date:	Proposed time:	
Agenda/Program of the Family Night:		

Interactive activities:

Plan for promoting the Family Night: (don't rely solely on flyers)

Proposed expenditures for the Family Night:

PARENT FEEDBACK

Family Night

Date:			_		
School:			District:		
City:				_ State:	
Please let us know	what you thou	ght about our	Family Night.		
Will the informatio	on be useful in	your home?			
Yes	No				
Did you enjoy the i	nteractive acti	vity?			
Yes	No				
Please rate the Family Night. (1= POOR, 2 = OK, 3 = GOOD, 4 = EXCELLENT)					
1	2	3	4		
Suggestions/comm	ients:				

Children's comments: (parent or child may write)

Family Night Report

Date:	
School:	_District:
City:	State:
Activities:	
Participants (count each participant only o	once)
# of Parents # of Teachers # of O	thers
# of Children : Age 0 - 3 Age 4 - 5	_ Kindergarten and Above

Interactive Activity

Describe your interactive (parent-child) activity:

Question from Parent Feedback	Number	Number	Number	Number
	Rated 1	Rated 2	Rated 3	Rated 4
Please rate the Family Night				

Please give total of evaluations returned: _____

Please give total number of **Yes** answers to following questions:

Will the information be useful in your home? _____

Did you enjoy the interactive activity? _____

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to Just Connect®

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