Tips on Hosting a Family Reading Night at Your School

Sample Family Reading Night objectives:
1. Increase the knowledge level of parents and family members about things they can do at home to help nurture readers.
2. Involve more parents and family members in the education of their children and help them feel welcome as learning partners.
3. Host a fun, free, multi-generational activity where families and teaching staff can show students that they value reading and learning.

Ideas for Family Reading Night:
Teachers and guest readers can read with students in classrooms while families listen to a guest speaker.

Create literacy stations where guest speakers present briefly about different literacy skills.

Sample Literacy Stations:
Infants, toddlers and preschoolers: Create a reading corner with board books to read and support material from Read to Me program—Music for Babies and Rhymes for Babies.

Paperback book exchange: Encourage students to bring in a book or two to exchange for different books. Have a dozen or so books to initiate the exchange.

Poetry readings: Invite students and teaching staff to share poetry.

Do mini-workshops on literacy development—phonemic awareness and other literacy skills; the important role of males as reading role models; how to motivate reluctant readers; guided reading; the importance of family reading; or other topics that will help children become independent readers.
Bookmark or journal making station: Have paper, stamps and stamp pads, markers, scissors and staplers available to make bookmarks and journals.

**Other Details:**

Parent handouts might include: agenda for Family Reading Night, list of sponsors, presenters’ bios, public library information, Parent’s Guide to the Idaho Reading Indicator


Door prizes: Invite all participants to write their name, phone number, and the title of a good book they’ve read. Prizes could include book bags, gift certificates, etc.

Refreshments: It is fun to have the refreshment tie into the theme of your Family Reading Night.

Book drive for Operation Wishbook: advertise the drive and your goals for it on your Family Reading Night flyer.

Community sponsor tables: local library, Reading Labs, GED programs, etc.

Information table about Accelerated Reader, IRI, Book It, or other reading initiatives that your school may have.

Costumed characters can be borrowed from Barnes and Noble or [www.costumespecialists.com/index.html](http://www.costumespecialists.com/index.html).

Ask teaching staff to decorate halls and event space with students’ literacy projects.

Send invitations to school board members, superintendents, local legislators, city council members, business leaders, public library staff and others who have an interest in student achievement and reading.

Send a news release to the media.

Take photos of the event to display in school, place in your school newsletter, and distribute to people of interest. Write a brief follow-up story for the school newsletter thanking people who supported the event.