Tips for Hosting a
Family Reading Night at Your School

Sample Family Reading Night objectives:

- Increase the knowledge level of parents and family members about things they can do at home to help nurture readers.
- Involve more parents and family members in the education of their children and help them feel welcome as learning partners.
- 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.

Issue a **reading challenge**. Set a goal for how many minutes families can spend reading at the event. Provide lots of fiction and non-fiction books and magazines. Consider using listening stations to play audio books.

Building Stations or Construction Zones. Set up a series of stations around the library or school. Give families a customized menu card and let them complete stations on their own. Determine if a certain number of stations must be completed, or if prizes will be awarded for completion.

> **Sample Literacy Stations:**
> Infants, toddlers and preschoolers: Set up ICfL's Early Literacy Stations around the room or distribute throughout the school.
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> Create a reading corner with themed books to read and support material from Read to Me program-*Rhymes, Songs, and Fingerplays*.
>
> **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.
>
> 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; summer learning loss; or other topics that will help children become proficient readers.

Increasing Parent Attendance:

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. See the programming folder for fun snack ideas!

Coordinate with another event at the same time, such as the book fair.

Include a **performance** by the choir, band, orchestra, step team, etc. If the children are required to be at school the parents are more likely to attend.

School Librarian and classroom teachers design a project involving the students' favorite book or the last book the students' read in class and create an **art show** that is displayed on Family Reading Night.

Ask the mayor, meteorologist, local high school or college athletes, or some local **celebrities** to read as an opener or closer.

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 **reading initiatives** that your school may have, or information about **Idaho Core Standards**.

Costumed characters can be borrowed from Barnes and Noble or www.costumespecialists.com/index.html.

Other Considerations:

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

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

http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/reading_indicator/docs/parents/New%20Parent%20Brochure2011.pdf

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 (see Planning and Marketing section).

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.

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IDAHO FAMILY READING WEEK

Sponsored by Read to Me, a program of the Idaho Commission for Libraries. libraries.idaho.gov/readtome