

TELL ME A TALE

Tips on Motivating Families to Attend Your Family Reading Week Event

Communicating with your regular library customers, storytime parents, and library supporters is an easy place to start building your audience for your event, but don't stop there. There are many parents who do not use the library, for various reasons. How do you motivate them to participate? Recognize that not all parents are motivated by the same things. Communication is key. You must tell people why it's important they be involved and let them know what's in it for them (and their children): connecting with their children and helping their children become strong readers.

- Make your event as comfortable and welcoming as possible. Offer food, door prizes, and something fun for families whenever possible. If you are offering any of those things, be sure to promote them!
- If you are trying to attract families whose first language is not English, consider recruiting bilingual parents to greet and interpret for these families. Request bilingual books from ICfL.
- Use the sample News Release provided on the website to let your local media know about events planned.
- Work with a community partner to involve them in inviting families to attend, and see if your partner can attend as well. If possible, survey parents or at least ask partners to find best times and dates. Put a sign on your partner's door the week of your event.
- Local schools and libraries are natural partners for Family Reading Week. Put notices in the school newsletter and distribute at least one other postcard, invitation, or flyer.
- Don't overlook the personal touch. The more people you talk to—both inside and outside the library-- the more “buzz” you can create about your event.
- Speaking of buzz, remember that many people live online. Use social media, like Twitter and Facebook, email and your library website to get the word out.



IDAHO FAMILY READING WEEK
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libraries.idaho.gov/readtome



- If you can, set your date as far in advance as possible, and get it on as many school and community calendars as you can.
- Offer to take family photos during your event. It's a great keepsake that will make their library memory even happier.
- If there's any way to involve the kids, that works well -- from displaying their artwork in the library to involving them in a group activity that you can highlight during your event. Include child's first name and age on the art, and mat it with construction paper or tag board frames.
- Bring local "celebrities" on board, such as the school principal, classroom teachers, high school or college athletes, authors/musicians/artists, political figureheads, etc.
- Support Materials: Read to Me has a wide variety of publications and support materials to distribute to parents and children during your events. Ordering is easy and free:
<http://libraries.idaho.gov/page/read-to-me-support-materials-order-form>