

Laugh it up! at your library

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.
- 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.
- Create a reading corner with themed books to read and support material from Read to Me program-Rhymes, Songs, and Fingerplays.



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



- 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.
- 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.