



A Campaign of the
Oakland Literacy Coalition

Family Reading Celebration Planning Guide

Hosting a Family Reading Celebration offers many benefits to your school or community, including:

- Fostering a love of reading in children and families
- Engaging families to support reading at home
- Connecting families with literacy resources
- Building community while having fun!

Steps to Plan Your Event

1. **Select the date for the Family Reading Celebration.** Plan far enough in advance to allow for enough time to get the word out to families.
2. **Select the time for the event.** Consider time of year (people may not want to stay out late when it gets dark early), after school pick up times, and staff preferences.
3. **Confirm any special arrangements** for accessing the building and janitorial services. Special event permits may be required.
4. **Select a theme.** Organize all activities around the theme. Align with classroom curriculum, school values or any upcoming holidays.
5. **Order/obtain books for book giveaway.** Remember to purchase at least one book per child and select books for a wide range of ages. Some students may come with their siblings. Try to find books that are culturally and linguistically responsive to your families.
6. **Decide on the agenda and activities.** All events must feature a read aloud and/or workshop to model strategies for families to supporting reading at home. See the resource list on the next page for professional resources you can bring in to lead these activities. In addition, local children's book authors, musicians, puppeteers, or magicians are popular entertainment. Arts and crafts can be selected to fit the event theme as well.
7. **Take the opportunity to reach parents.** Many programs make the most of parents' presence at a celebration by offering workshops or activities especially for adults. There are a variety of professional resources geared just towards parents that provide information on supporting literacy development in the home.
8. **Get the whole school community involved!** Share the date and time with teachers and school partners and ask them to host a break-out group activity or station. Include the school librarian, after school programs, literacy intervention program providers, and parent groups. The Oakland Public Library can often send a librarian to lead an activity and share info about free services.
9. **Get the word out!** Print posters to publicize the event. Print flyers in English and any other target language and send them home with students. Make sure teachers know about the event and encourage their students to come. Be sure to include the event on any calendars or newsletters that get sent home to parents. Begin outreach 2-3 weeks in advance, and continue on a regular basis until the day of the event. Use the school's robo-call system if you have access to one.
10. **Finalize the agenda and assign all participating teachers and community partners to a role.** Share the plan at least 1 week before the event. Tasks may include:
 - Staffing the sign-in table
 - Making the welcoming remarks
 - Providing translation for any presentations and activities
 - Leading break-out group activities
 - Being the point person to accept the food delivery
 - Plating and serving dinner
 - Supervising book distribution
 - Announcing raffle winners
 - Clean up

Sample Agenda

The following agenda is intended as a planning tool to help you get started. Get creative and tweak as needed.

Time Needed	Activity
10 minutes	Welcome and introduction by school leader (<i>opportunity to share important school messages</i>)
5 minutes	Presentation from Oakland Public Librarian (<i>resources and programs available at library, instructions for how to get a library card</i>)
15 minutes	Whole group entertainment/activity (<i>student performance, read-aloud from local author, puppet or magic show, sing-along with local musician</i>)
25 minutes	Activities in classrooms or stations around cafeteria/multi-purpose room (<i>read-alouds and art projects for kids, workshops for adults on how to support reading at home</i>)
20 minutes	Dinner
5 minutes	Raffle and prizes
10 minutes	Book giveaway and event closing

Supplies List

- Sign in sheets and pens
- Raffle tickets, collection basket, and prizes
- Activity supplies and books for read alouds
- Microphone and sound system in the main meeting area
- Copies of the agenda for everyone working the event
- Food service rubber gloves for plating dinner
- Paper plates, napkins, utensils, cups
- Handouts for parents with tips on supporting reading development at home
- Books to giveaway at the end of the night

Tips for Success

- Involve parents and teachers in planning.
- Celebrate student work & give students a chance to perform.
- Serve dinner and host the raffle at the end of the evening to encourage families to stay and participate in the activities.
- Take plenty of pictures and post them afterwards.
- If your school is very large, you may want to invite selected grades instead of the entire school.
- Reach out and invite families from on-site or nearby preschools or child care centers that feed into the elementary school.

Resources

Professional Read Alouds & Parent Workshops

- **Tandem, Partners in Early Learning** | www.tandembayarea.org | Read aloud performances and workshops for parents. Contact info@tandembayarea.org or (510) 296-5464.
- **LitLab** | www.litlab.org | Read aloud performances and workshops for parents. Contact info@litlab.org or (510) 250-2497.
- **Oakland Public Library** | www.oaklandlibrary.org | Invite your local branch librarian to conduct a read aloud and to share information about the resources available to families at the public library.
- **ConnectingAuthors** | www.connectingauthors.org | Arrange to have a local, published children's book author or illustrator present at your event. Contact connectauthors@aol.com or (866) 528-9269.

Books for your Giveaway

- **First Book MarketPlace** | www.fbmarketplace.org | Online marketplace for low-cost, new books and book donations. In order to qualify for an account, organizations must serve predominately low-income students (at least 70 percent).