



Oakland Reads 2020

Family Reading Night Grants Program

GUIDE TO HOSTING A FAMILY READING NIGHT

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

- Fostering a culture of reading
- Engaging families in their children's literacy development
- Helping families access literacy resources
- Building community while having fun!

STEPS TO PLAN YOUR EVENT:

1. **Select the date for Family Reading Night.** Consider other events happening at the school to avoid booking too many activities in a short time span. Allow for enough time to promote the event.
2. **Select the time for the event.** Consider time of year (people may not want to stay out late when it gets dark early), pick up times for after school programs, and teacher and school staff scheduling preferences.
3. **Confirm any special arrangements for accessing the building** after hours and staffing janitorial services.
4. **Select a theme.** Organize all of the evening's activities around the theme. Ask teachers about topics they are focusing on in class, and consider school values or upcoming holidays.
5. **Order/obtain books for book giveaway.** Remember to purchase board books for students' younger siblings not yet in elementary school. You may want to purchase books in Spanish or another target language, depending on the needs of your student body. Order books at least 1 month in advance to allow enough time for delivery.
6. **Decide on the entertainment or whole-group activity.** Showcase student work, lead students in a sing-along, or invite students to read their stories or poetry aloud. Hire a local children's book author to perform a read-aloud. Children's entertainers such as musicians, puppeteers, or magicians are also an option. Allow plenty of time to book any outside performers.
7. **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 children's librarian to lead an activity or provide information about free services families can access at their local library.
8. **Get the word out!** Print posters to publicize the event and hang them around the school. 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 your school's robo-call system if you have access to one.
9. **Finalize the agenda and assign all participating teachers and community partners to a role.** Share the plan at least 1 week before the event so everyone has clear expectations. 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 to build a successful event at your school!

Time Needed	Activity
10 minutes	Welcome and introduction by school leader (<i>opportunity to share important school messages and announcements</i>)
5 minutes	Presentation from Oakland Public Librarian (<i>resources and programs available at library, how to get a library card</i>)
20 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	Break-out group activities in classrooms or stations around cafeteria/multi-purpose room (<i>read-alouds, art projects, literacy games</i>)
20 minutes	Dinner
5 minutes	Raffle and prizes
5 minutes	Book giveaway and goodnight

SUPPLIES LIST:

- Sign in sheets and pens
- Raffle tickets, collection bucket, and prizes
- Activity supplies (arts and crafts materials, books for read-alouds, etc.)
- Microphone and sound system in the main meeting area
- Copies of the agenda to distribute to everyone working the event
- Food service rubber gloves for plating dinner
- Paper plates, napkins, utensils, water/juice (if not provided by caterer)
- If serving pizza, veggies to go alongside (carrots & dip work great)
- Handouts for parents with tips on promoting literacy at home
- Books to giveaway at the end of the night

TIPS FOR SUCCESS:

- Involve parents and teachers in planning and promoting the event.
- Celebrate student work and 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.
- If ordering pizza for dinner, ask the restaurant to cut slices in half to provide child-sized portions.
- 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.

HELPFUL RESOURCES:

ENTERTAINMENT

- **Oakland Public Library** (www.oaklandlibrary.org): invite your local public librarian to conduct a read-aloud and to share the resources available to families at the public library. Contact Laurie Willhalm at LWillhalm@oaklandlibrary.org or your local branch.
- **ConnectingAuthors*** (www.connectingauthors.org): A fabulous organization that can help connect your school with a local, published children's book author or illustrator to present at your event.
- **Williams & McKennie Music Academy*** (www.wmmusicacademy.org or (510) 387-9670): Local musicians who offer a fun and interactive "Drum, Percussion and Storytime" presentation for children ages 2 and up.

*Indicates paid performer

BOOKS FOR GIVE-AWAY

- **First Book MarketPlace** (www.fbmarketplace.org): A great resource for low-cost, new books and book donations.
- **Scholastic** (www.scholastic.com): Offers steep discounts for teachers and literacy programs purchasing books for children.
- **East Bay Children's Book Project** (www.eastbaychildrensbookproject.org): Free, used and new books. Only 30 books can be picked up at a time.

DINNER CATERERS

- **Mountain Mike's Pizza** (www.mountainmikes.com): Ask for a school discount!
- **Revolution Foods** (norcalinfo@revolutionfoods.com or (510) 596-9024): Fresh and healthy meals prepared locally.

Oakland Reads 2020 is an initiative of the Oakland Literacy Coalition, a network of literacy service providers and supporters committed to the goal that Oakland students read at or above grade-level by the end of the third grade. Oakland Reads 2020 focuses on four key levers that contribute to reading success: school readiness, attendance, summer learning, and family engagement. www.oaklandliteracycoalition.org & www.oaklandreads.org

