

Themed Family Literacy Events

All aspects of the event focus on one theme:

- › Book/s › Decorations › Costumes › Music
- › Prizes/Incentives › Readings/Skits › Games/Activities
- › Snacks/Meal

THEME IDEAS:

- Animals
- Beach Party
- Camping Out/Hiking
- Christmas
- Circus/Clowns
- Cookies/Cooking
- Dinosaurs/Dragons
- Dr. Seuss
- Fairy Tales/Folk Tales
- Foreign Lands
- Gardening/Plants
- Harvest/Fall
- Hats/Dress-up
- Historical Event
- Kites/Juggling
- Letters/ABCs
- Martin Luther King Day
- Music
- Native Americans
- Nature/Forests/Smokey The Bear
- Numbers/1-2-3
- Nutrition/Health
- Parents/Grandparents
- Pets
- Pirates/Sailors
- Poems/Tongue Twisters
- President's Day
- Snow/Rain/Wind
- Spring
- Sports/Olympics
- Teddy Bear Pajama Party
- Trees
- Universe/Moon/Planets/Stars/Sun
- Valentine's Day
- Water/Lake/River/Ocean
- Winnie the Pooh

A-Z Literacy Activity Idea List

for the Home, the Classroom or Family Literacy Events.

101 DALMATIANS

Children track reading for 101 minutes. Poems, drawings and songs about dogs are submitted. A dog trainer or veterinarian is invited as a guest reader.

ABC MEMORY GAME

Cut pictures of objects from magazines, one for each beginning sound of the alphabet. Make flashcards for each letter. Have students match each picture with the corresponding letter.

ALPHABET HUNT

Organize a scavenger hunt where children seek out items that begin with certain letters of the alphabet. The hunt can be in the home, classroom or outside.

ALPHABET MATCHING GAME

Print and cut out upper and lower case letters. Have students match the upper and lower case for each letter.

AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS (OR WITH 80 BOOKS)

It's nearly 25,000 miles around the world. Set goals for how many pages of reading are equivalent to miles around the world. Make a reading list with books about other countries and cultures and use a world map and/or "passport books" to log the countries and miles of reading.

ARTFUL READING

Hang a large picture frame on the wall. Provide a book list about art and artists. Make paint splatters from different colors of paper. Children write their name and the book on a paint splatter and add it to the frame.

AUTHOR'S PARTY

Parents & children gather to listen to a local author do a guest reading from their book. The reading is followed by Q&A and refreshments.

Each family leaves with a signed copy of the book.

A BALANCED DIET OF BOOKS

Design a reading menu to encourage variety and stimulate lifelong reading.

- Fruits & Vegetables - Poetry
- Soup - Current Events
- Fish - Science/Nature
- Meat - Biography/History
- Dessert - Fiction/SciFi
- Milk - Sports/Hobbies
- After-Dinner Mint - Comics

THE BEAT GOES ON

Beat and timing can effect speech flow and motor skills. Being able to keep beat helps children in sports, mathematics and reading achievements. Here's some ideas that are easy to replicate in the home:

- Have a musical parade. Walk, hop or clap in time to the music.
- Dance with different rhythms, tempos (fast & slow), pitches (high & low), and volumes (soft & loud).
- Clap with the rhyme of words in a poem.
- Use homemade instruments to keep the beat with a song. (drums, finger bells, shakers, kazoos, rubber band guitars, paper cup maracas, tambourines, rhythm sticks, etc.)

BINGO

Bingo games can be packaged in a bag for take home family activities OR set up as group games for Family Literacy Events.

- Alphabet Bingo
- Picture Bingo
- Sight Word Bingo
- Rhyming Bingo
- Homonym Bingo
- Synonym Bingo
- Initial Blend Bingo
- Ending Blend Bingo
- Syllable Bingo
- Vowel Sound Bingo

BOOK CLUB

Children are challenged to read the same book during a holiday or weekend and then a discussion circle or game is played as a way to discuss the book. See: Story Trivia for one idea.

BOOK HUNT

Make a list of clues that will assist children to find a particular book in the library. The first one to find the book wins a prize.

BOOK-IN-A-BAG OR BACK-PACK

Students take home a bag with a book for family reading time. Drawing and writing materials, as well as Information for parents (recommended reading lists, reading strategies) can also be included. The bags are rotated so that each family has an opportunity to read each book provided. Each bag can focus on a different theme.

BOOK SWAP

Families bring gently used books from home to a literacy event and trade for another book.

BOOK TALK

The purpose of a Book Talk is to convince someone to read a book just as the purpose of a movie trailer is to get someone to see a movie. Book Talks are meant to capture the listeners attention, lead up to a climactic moment, and stop, without giving away important parts in the book. A Book Talk never gives away the ending! A good Book Talk involves the audience so they become not merely listeners, but participants by using props, Q & A, etc.

BOOK THEME FOR THE MONTH

Families read a book from a chosen theme (airplanes, bears, etc). Students draw a picture of the cover and label the picture with their family name. The book cover illustrations are hung in the classroom.

BOOK WALK

Play "Book Walk" like a Cake Walk with letters on the floor and the prize is picking out a book to take home.

BOOKS FOR BREAKFAST

Families make story reading a regular menu item for breakfast at home.

Schools host a weekly or monthly event where parents are invited to come to breakfast and to read a book with their child before they go to the classroom.

BRAINSTORM THE SOUND

Give the student a sound and have them come up with as many words as they can that start with that sound.

CAN YOU MAKE ME BUY IT?

Families collect advertising from newspapers, "junk mail", etc. A sheet with 3 columns gives a place to list 1) product or services 2) Why I might buy this product or service and 3) Why I would not buy this product or service. Families brainstorm to list as many ideas and reasons as they can. Discussion can include examining the strategies used by the advertiser.

CLASSROOM FAMILY BOOK

Each family prepares one page for a classroom book. Family photos are provided by the families or the photos can be taken in the classroom. Each family page can include a photo, a sentence or two describing the family and drawings representing the family interests/activities. The pages are put together in a book for all the students to view in the classroom. Families can "check-out" the book for an evening.

CLASSROOM FAMILY NIGHT

A regularly scheduled evening with parents, students and teacher. Any of the activities listed here would be fun and appropriate.

CLASSROOM FAMILY RECIPE BOOKLET

Families write out a favorite dessert or salad recipe and these are compiled into a booklet. A photo of each family can be included. Families all prepare their recipe as an at home learning experience and bring their dish to a classroom event. Everyone has an opportunity to "taste" each recipe and the Classroom Family Recipe booklet is copied and prepared for each family to take home.

COOKIE SHEET SPELLING

Provide a cookie sheet and magnetic letters for hands-on spelling. This is great for an activity center, the kitchen table or riding in the car. Start with the letters A and T and see what words you can spell by adding just one more letter. FAT, TAN, HAT, etc. As appropriate, move on to more letters and bigger words .

CULTURE SURF

Families surf the internet to find out about a culture: country, customs, food, weather, traditional clothing. Children prepare one page of drawings and key words to depict each culture. Yarn can connect the culture page with a world atlas for location affiliation.

FAMILY BIOGRAPHIES

Families pick a grandparent, uncle, aunt or other family member to write a brief biography. They interview the family member with a list of questions about their life, ie: birthplace, occupation, marriage and family. A simple narrative is written and a few photos added. A family biography album can become a fun project for the entire family to do together. It can be a simple or elaborate design, what ever style suits the family.

FAMILY GAME NIGHT

Parents and students gather in the classroom with educational board games at each table: Candyland, Chutes & Ladders, UNO, Scategories, Leap Frog Letter Factory, ABC Letter Pre-school Game, Word Bingo, Letter or Word Matching & Memory games, Rhyming games, Quizzler, etc.

FAMILY HISTORY STORY PROMPTS

The idea is to simply open the floodgates to memory and give the families a fun and quick way to enjoy those memories together. Children interview their parents during a group storytelling session: 1) The teacher asks a question and the students repeat the question to their parents. 2) A two or three minute timer lets the teacher know when it's time for the next question. Here's some interview question ideas:

- Tell me about your grandpa or grandma.
- Tell me about your first day at school.
- Tell me about a family holiday and one thing you did that was special.
- Tell me about your favorite childhood game and how you played it.

FAMILY JOKE BOOK

Children interview family members to write down a

favorite joke for each family member. A Family Joke Book is made with one joke for each page. The name of the family member who “submitted” the joke is also listed on the page and illustrations can be added.

FAMILY LIBRARY FIELD TRIP

Parents and students are guided through the local public library by the library staff. The proper care of books, how to find a book, how to return a book, how to access the internet, etc. are all good topics. Families can acquire library cards and check out books.

FAMILY MEMORY BOXES

Families decorate a box to hold special memories. Students write letters to relatives asking them to write a story about when they were younger. Relatives who live close by can be interviewed for stories. A notebook with a list of all family names, birth dates and birth locations is included. Wedding invitations, birth announcements and other family event memory items are also included. Special “treasures” (ie: a sea shell from a trip to the coast) can be included with a note describing why the item is special to the family.

FAMILY NATURE WALK

Families use a resource to identify birds, trees, flowers and other elements of nature. They record information in a journal and take photos. They produce their own family story book about the nature walk.

FAMILY PERPETUAL STORY BOOK

One family starts a story by writing one paragraph on a given topic. The next night the story goes to another family who will add the second paragraph and so on until each family has added one paragraph to the story. Instructions should include the maximum length for each paragraph. The teacher can write the concluding paragraph. This will be read aloud by the teacher at the next Classroom Family Night.

FAMILY POEMS

Families write a short poem about their family. These are shared during a Classroom Family Night.

FAMILY READING ACTIVITY NIGHT

Parents and students gather in the classroom with

craft supplies to make their own reading journals, bookmarks, literacy games, tactile letters, wordless story books or to help put home literacy kits or story bags together.

FAMILY READING HAND-IN-HAND

Parents and students trace their hands on bright colored paper. Each name is written on the palm. During a given time period, families write the names of the books they read together on the fingers (one book per finger). The hand-prints are displayed as family groups with the fingers inter-locked.

FAMILY READING JOURNALS

Families create journals for logging their family reading. Children can illustrate the book cover, write in the title & author and write a sentence or two describing what they liked about the book.

FAMILY STORIES

Parents are provided with information and tools that encourage them to share family stories (stories about the grandparents, stories about growing up, etc) Stories can be recorded or written out. Memory boxes or memory books can be created.

FOREIGN TRADITIONS

Invite several community members who grew up outside of the USA to come and share about traditions from their native lands.

FAVORITE BOOK CHARACTER PARADE

Students or families come dressed up as a favorite book character for a Family Literacy Event.

GRAND CONVERSATIONS

Each participant receives a set of cards.

- I wonder...
- I noticed...
- I know.....
- That made me think of something...

A passage or article is read out loud to the group. The leader begins with a statement about the passage. Participants toss their card toward the center of the table if they have a comment or question about the reading. Taking turns, each

person makes their comment or asks their question. The round table discussion on the reading continues until either 1. every person has had opportunity to share in the conversation or 2. all the cards have been "used". Note: If the cards are color or symbol coded, then it's easy to see which card belongs to whom.

GRANDPARENT'S STORY

Families listen to a grandparent's story of an event from their youth. They record the story via video tape, tape recorder or in written form.

GUEST READERS

Guest Readers to come to the classroom or event and read aloud to the group.

- Ideas for Guest Readers & VIP guests:
- Public Safety Chiefs (police, sheriff, fire chief)
- Local Government (mayor, city manager, district and state representatives)
- Local Celebrities (news anchor, DJ, talk show host, musician, author, illustrator, etc - visit their website for information about how to request a personal appearance)
- Local College or High School (administrator, coach, teacher, student, etc)

HOME LITERACY KITS

Kits are prepared for families to take home for a week at a time. Kits can contain read aloud books with games, activities, craft ideas and work sheets that compliment the books. Specific instructions will assist the parents in making good use of the kits.

HOME TOWN HEROS

Have students write to local "heros" asking about their favorite children's book. Showcase a photo of the "hero" with a photo of their book choice.

"I SPY" GAME

Parents give this clue: "I Spy something that begins with the sound of /b/". Children attempt to name everything they can see that has the /b/ beginning sound. This is a good game for waiting in the car or standing in line.

IF I WERE THE KING

Have children tell an oral story about what they would do for one day if they were an important or famous person (school principal, US president, singer, etc.) Record or write the story.

INITIAL CONSONANT TONGUE TWISTERS

Make up tongue twisters with the same initial consonant. "Pretty pigs pose with purple petunias", etc.

LEADERS OF READERS

Enlarged snap-shots of school administrative staff and teacher's reading a favorite children's book displayed on a bulletin board.

LETTER HUNT

Families search through their house during a given time period to find as many items as they can which all have the same beginning sound. IE: "Find something that begins with a /g/ sound." Once "the timer" goes off, everyone gathers to see who found the most objects. One way to "tag" the items (rather than carrying them) is to give everyone different colored post-it notes to place on their items. Once an item has been "posted", no one else can claim that item for their list.

LETTER SEARCH

Print one letter, small and centered, on a piece of card stock. Families used magazines to find, cut and glue as many styles of that letter they can find on the sheet.

LET'S TELL A STORY!

Gather actual household objects or cut interesting photos from magazines. Glue or tape each photo to a piece of card stock. Hand the objects or photos out, so each family member has one. The youngest child will begin a story based on their object or photo. Go around from youngest to oldest, continuing the story based on the object or photo each person is holding.

LIBRARY CARD SIGN-UP/DRIVE

A local librarian visits the literacy event or classroom with books and library sign-up information. Families have an opportunity to ask questions and to sign up for a library card.

LITERACY "QUILTS"

A collection of paper squares created by students or families who have all read the same piece of literature. Each square illustrates some theme or favorite part of the text. The squares are taped

together to form a “quilt” which reveals a group depiction of the text. These squares will highlight important characters and events and will creatively summarize the text. The quilt can be a celebration of a completed book. Materials:

- 5x5 inch squares with a 1/4-1/2 inch border
- The border should be kept white. A name, word or sentence relating to the image can be written in the border area
- 6x6 inch squares of colored paper for the completed “quilt” squares to be centered and glued.
- writing/drawing materials
- colored paper scraps
- glue & tape
- large wall space for display

MATCHBOX PARKING LOT

Use an assortment of match box cars. Make several “parking lots” on paster boards. The parking spaces have words written on them and the goal is to park the right car in the right space.

- Colors: Print the name of colors on the parking lot spaces. Drive the orange car to the parking space where the word ‘orange’ is printed. Etc.
- Sight Words: Call out a sight word. Students drive their cars to the parking lot where that word is written out.
- ABCs or Numbers, etc.

NUMBERS MATCHING GAME

Print and cut out large decimals from 1 to 10. Use dominoes for matching the decimals with the coinciding domino.

OPEN THE DOOR TO READING

Decorate a classroom or bedroom door as the cover of a book.

PARENT LITERACY FOLDERS

A parent’s packet that contains reading strategies, reading log, book marks and a check list of read-aloud classic books organized by age groups.

PARENT’S FAVORITE BOOK PARTY

Parents bring a favorite book from their childhood to the classroom. A few short readings are presented from these books. A book list is compiled during the gathering and photocopied for each family to take home. Parents and children

have time to read from the books in a comfortable setting and enjoy some snacks together.

PROGRESSIVE BOOK

Beginning with the kindergarten class, children collectively write one chapter for story. The story moves from class to class with each group writing the next paragraph to keep the story going. The completed story is read aloud at a Literacy Event.

PUPPET MAGIC

The teacher or literacy game leader uses a puppet who will instruct and direct during the activity.

RAINBOW LETTERS

Print large outlined letters. Students use markers or crayons to color a rainbow of four colors inside the letter.

RECIPE READING

Parents and children create a snack or part of a meal by reading and following the directions for a recipe. Children learn about measurements, time, temperatures and following directions. The snacks are shared in the classroom or brought to a family literacy event.

READ-A-THON

Have children sign-up for a 10 minute reading segment to fill up a specified time period: ie 5 straight hours of reading. Get sponsors who will donate in-kind or cash for books for your classroom.

READER’S THEATRE #1

A prepared script or a book with dialogue broken into speaking parts sets the stage for this improvisational reading experience. Action, humor, drama and lively narration are essential, along with enough speaking parts for the number of participants. Parts are assigned and small group practice can follow. With little or no props, the cast will read the play for the “audience”.

READER’S THEATRE #2

Set up craft stations where children & parents make “sound effect” props (rains sticks, kazoos, drums, voices, clapping in time, feet stomping, etc). Choose a Read-A-Loud book with plenty of action. Have a “sound-man” direct the audience’s sound participation to compliment the reading.

READER'S THEATRE #3

Families act out a story while one family member reads the narrative.

READING CAFE'

Set up a cafe' where books and snacks are on the menu. Families or small groups order their snacks and a book to be read out loud at the table.

READING WEB

Use string to design a large spider web on a wall. Provide a book list about spiders and insects. Use paper spiders and insects to record the name of the book and student. When a book is completed, the student gets to add their spider or insect to the web.

READING STATION ATMOSPHERE

Set up family reading stations that are decorated to compliment the theme of the book or books in the reading station: jungle, automobile, farm, camping etc. Parents and children can snuggle and read aloud together while the decorations set the mood for the story.

Craft stations that compliment the theme would be a great follow-up activity.

SMALL GROUP STORY TELLING GAMES

- Count to five with feeling.
- Count to five, changing your voice to be come a different character.
- Imitate a sound: animals, the phone ringing, the wind, etc. Practice sound effects.
- Pantomime "The Something": There is an invisible box in the center of the group. Each person comes to the box and pantomimes opening the box. They take "something" out of the box and show it to the others. They show it in a way to give hints about what the "something" is. The other group members guess what the "something" is.

STICKY LETTERS

Write letters on 3x5 cards. Working on one sound at a time, parents help students identify objects in their home that begins with the sound of that letter. The card can be taped to the object for a few days as a reminder of the sound each time they see the card.

STORY CROSSWORD

Make a giant wall crossword puzzle for book trivia questions. This could be a family activity during a literacy event.

STORY TELLER NIGHT

Story Telling is an art form where the story teller has a good sense of timing and brings the characters of the story "to life" through facial expressions and voice inflections. Sometimes low light, candles, blankets and pillows can set the stage for listening to a good story teller.

STORY TRIVIA

Quiz children about a particular story book by designing a trivia game and having two or more teams competing.

STUFFED ANIMAL JOURNEY

Each student has a take-home reading bag with a blank page notebook, journal, writing utensils and a stuffed animal. Students draw and write about their "adventures" with the stuffed animal.

TEACHER'S FAVORITE BOOK PARTY

Students & parents gather in the classroom while the teacher does a reading from a favorite book. The teacher also displays and introduces other favorite books. Q&A with refreshments follow. Parents leave with a guide about reading to their children and a book list.

TEDDY BEAR DAY

Children bring their Teddy Bear to an event where stories about bears are featured and read aloud. A "Teddy Bear Snack" can feature bear food - berries, nuts & honey.

TRUE OR FALSE?

Parents write down three true and one false fact about the story they are going to read. Students guess which one is the false fact and their initials are written down next to their choice. After the story, discuss all the facts, true and false. The winner gets to choose the next book to be read.

WHAT YEAR IS IT?

Children keep track of their reading time in seconds or minutes to equal the same number in the digits of the year. ie: 2010 seconds or minutes.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

- Parents and students identify the letters in their names and work together to list words that begin with the same letter as their first names.
- Parents and students use their name as an acrostic for writing a silly sentence. ie: SUSAN - Salamanders, Under Socks Are Nasty.
- Parents and students use their name as an acrostic to list food items that begin with the same letters as those in their name.
- Prepare a variety of media for families to make a family poster with their names. Use alphabet pasta, play doh, craft foam letters, sand paper, chalk, markers, etc.

WHICH LETTER?

Print sheets with a row of letters. Parents will say one letter and students will circle the letter that was spoken.

WHO AM I?

List the characters of a book or story on small paper pieces and attach one name to the back of each family member or participant. Each participant has an opportunity to ask up to 10 "yes" or "no" questions about themselves until they are able to guess who they are. If someone doesn't guess who they are they go to the end of the line and get another opportunity to ask questions and guess.

WHO WROTE THE BOOK?

Give children a list of books. Have them research who the author is and list the name as well as one fact about the author.