

Agenda For “Night Of Dreams” Literacy Events

“Night of Dreams” Literacy And Learning Events are fun and educational evenings designed to bring families and books together. At events, volunteers demonstrate reading skills to children and parents for whom nightly reading is not an established part of family life.

When volunteer groups partner with schools, non-profit organizations or children’s centers to share event planning and logistics, the whole community benefits. Events provide the opportunity for learning new behaviors, practicing language skills, receiving new books, and building friendly connections among neighbors.



Event Agenda (approx. 1 hour)

Arrival Coloring Activity. Give coloring books and crayons to children as families arrive. Color until the event begins.

Welcome The Audience. Briefly introduce who you are and what you’ll do together – no speeches! Divide a large audience into small groups, invite children to sit in a circle around each reader, and jump right into a good book.



Book #1. Read a short book to children. Encourage audience participation appropriate to the book, make animal sounds or movements. (Screech like a monkey in *Too Many Animals on a Raft* or hop like a rabbit in *In the Desert/En el Desierto* by Bruce Larkin.)

Book #2 .Read a second book to children. Distribute additional copies of the book to children and parents. Invite them to follow along with the words and to turn the pages at the same time you do.



Singing And Movement Activity

Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes” or the “Hokey Pokey” works out children’s wiggles while reinforcing names of body parts, or vocabulary (“left” and “right,” “in” and “out.”)

Book #3. Use puppets or stuffed animal to demonstrate action and concepts in the third book. Speak with different voices or accents to represent different characters.

Book #4. As you read, ask questions about colors, vocabulary or math (counting) concepts. (For example, ask children “Where do you sleep?” after reading *Do You Sleep in a Tree*. Do the subtraction for *Where are the Cupcakes* or *Mouse Makes Cookies* by Larkin.)

Snack. Serve snacks such as fruit, cupcakes or cookies that reinforce the vocabulary in the books you just read. While you eat, ask children which book they liked the best. Talk to parents – find out their hopes for their children or what their kids need in order to learn to read. If the group is quiet, read another fun book!

Good-bye. Send home books, coloring books and other items that may be valuable to a family (T-shirts or school supplies such as pencils).



Tips for Success

- Work in pairs, one partner reads, the other leads audience participation. Enlist the help of teens... young children enjoy and look up to older kids, while teens receive appreciation, recognition and the opportunity to practice leadership skills.
- Hold concurrent reading groups. Ask readers, not families, to rotate.
- Provide translators if necessary. Include activities and books in English and Spanish.
- Model reading skills to parents, as well as children. You might be the first person to show families without books or traditions of daily reading—because of poverty, illiteracy or cultural differences—what to do.



- For more fun, invite children to wear pajamas. Ask readers to wear bathrobes and funny slippers to reinforce the fun and importance of nightly bedtime stories. The more fun and laughter you spark, the more likely families will try these activities at home.