

Library Night for Spanish-Speaking Families

Poudre School District

Poudre, CO



COLORADO
Department of Education

During October parent/teacher conferences, many Poudre School District parents had to sign a READ plan for their child because their child was below grade level in reading. The READ plan had four strategies that parents should be using at home to support their child in improving their child's reading skills. These strategies included reading with their child daily, in English as well as in their home language, and listening to fluent reading through audiobooks. Most of the Spanish-speaking parents acknowledged they didn't know where to find books in their native language, as well as audiobooks. The family liaison identified this need and communicated with the local public library. The library has a bilingual librarian who agreed to have a collaborative event for families at the library to introduce them to the library card and all the services available.



Together with three other family liaisons, whose schools are near this library, they had an event where families came to the library for light refreshments, a presentation of services available, a tour of the library, and a family activity. After the presentation, the group was divided in half. The first group visited the library, guided by the bilingual staff member. The second group stayed and participated in the activity. The activity involved decorating reusable canvas bags for them to use when borrowing library books to take home. Participants of all ages were excited and proud to have painted their own book bags. There were small children, teens, and parents painting their own bags. Then the groups switched for the library visit and activity.

The event was successful, and parents received library cards. They were amazed at all the services the card included. They were especially grateful to learn about the study rooms that can be reserved and the photocopies that can be made for free. They expressed interest in the books that read out loud, resources in Spanish for children and adults, and those that come in a preloaded format, as well as in the themed backpack kits.

The library website has not been completely translated and there are some areas that are difficult to navigate for those who don't have English competency. This was a bit challenging. Additionally, registration was limited due to the size of the room, the size of the groups for the tour, and the materials available for the activity.

For those who would like to replicate this practice, have the parents download the apps for the audiobooks on the spot, so they can give them a try and see how they really work. Also, arrange for the young children to go to a separate location and have books read to them while the parents are at the presentation.

Introducing Spanish-speaking families to the services available at the public library is a way to create an inclusive culture because many of these families don't know that these services are free and available to them. Partnering with families in activities that build their capacity to help improve educational outcomes is a way to build trusting and positive relationships.

Standard 6 – Collaborate with Community

Essential Element 3 – Design Capacity-Building Opportunities