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Illinois Center for the Book

Family Reading Night

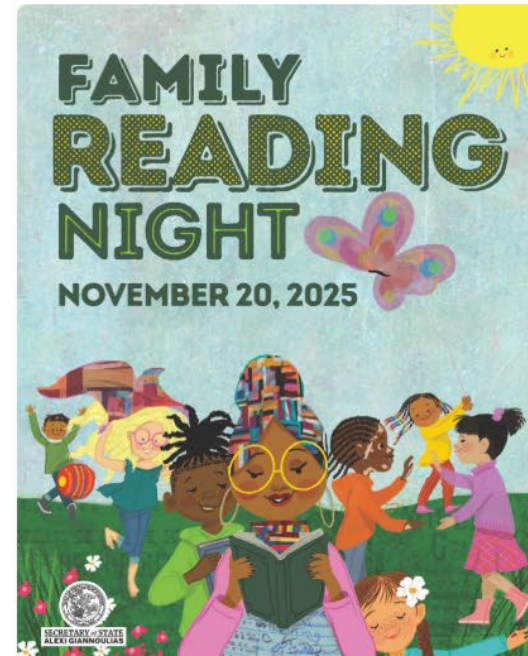
Sponsored by the Illinois Secretary of State and State Librarian and the Illinois State Library's Illinois Center for the Book, Family Reading Night is an annual statewide event held the third Thursday in November to encourage families to spend quality time reading together.

Each year, posters and bookmarks are made available for libraries, schools, youth and literacy organizations to promote their Family Reading Night programs. Both are available for download at the links provided below.

Posters and Bookmarks

- [Family Reading Night Bookmark](#)
- [Family Reading Night Bookmark](#) Spanish version
- [Family Reading Night Poster](#)

Family Reading Night is sponsored in cooperation with [iREAD](#), an initiative of the Illinois Library Association, and [Illinois Reads](#), a project of the Illinois Reading Council.



FAMILY READING NIGHT

NOVEMBER 20, 2025



NOCHE DE LECTURA FAMILIAR

5 manera para ser un gran lector:

1. Leer todos los días.
2. Lea sobre que le guste.
3. Lea todo lo que usted puede, como mapas, historietas, recetas, letreros, carteles, revistas y catálogos.
4. Llévase un libro donde usted vaya.
5. Utilice la biblioteca con frecuentemente.



FAMILY READING NIGHT

5 ways to become a great reader:

1. Read every day.
2. Read about things you like.
3. Read everything you can, like maps, comics, recipes, signs, posters, magazines and catalogs.
4. Take a book along wherever you go.
5. Use your library often.



FAMILY READING NIGHT



SECRETARY of STATE
ALEXI GIANNOULIAS



SINCE 1981
iREAD
BY LIBRARIANS FOR LIBRARIANS

Sponsored by: The Illinois Secretary of State, Illinois State Library, and the Illinois Center for the Book, in cooperation with iREAD, a program of the Illinois Library Association, and ILLINOIS READS, a project of the Illinois Reading Council.

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FAMILY READING NIGHT IDEAS

From past Family Reading Night participants.

Program Idea	Additional Explanation
Author Visits and/or Book Signings	Invite authors to read and/or speak at your Family Reading Night event. Some authors may be interested in signing books as well.
Bilingual Read A-louds	Favorite books are read page by page, first in English and then another language. Different stations can also be identified in English and another language.
Book Fair	Scholastic book fairs are very popular.
Book Walk	Similar to a cake walk but with books given as prizes.
Book-themed Events	Popular themes include: sports, Rebecca Caudill books, camping, spies and detectives, fairy tales, Thanksgiving, health and nutrition, fitness, knights, a Day at the Beach, a safari, mysteries, cowboys/western, multi-cultural, transportation.
* "Books Are Full of Characters" Theme	Students share their favorite books and dress as their favorite book characters. A character parade can also be held. Stations are decorated based on themes of favorite books.
* "How Does Your Garden Grow?" Theme	Read books about gardening. Read directions to plant seeds. Children leave the plants at school and learn to take care of them. Snacks using the same vegetables planted are provided on recipe cards. These are read and made together as a family.
* "Mystery Night" Theme	Read mystery books. Solve a special mystery by decoding secret messages at each station — words cut out of newspapers/magazines, invisible ink, reading small clues with magnifying glass, reading messages in a mirror, etc.
**"Treasure Hunt" Theme	Read a favorite book and have a treasure hunt based on the book theme. Leave picture or word clues for students to follow to reach a book-themed treasure.
Build-a-Book	Participants create individual books from a kit and other materials.
Co-sponsored and Partnership Events	Partner with larger organizations or corporations, colleges or universities, or other literacy groups, public libraries or school libraries. Examples: Literacy Coalitions, Publishers, RIF, First Book, etc.
Costumed Readers	Books are read by popular characters like: Frosty the Snowman, Mrs. Clause, Tooth Fairy, Mother Goose, Princess, Knight, Dorothy from the Wizard of Oz, Pirate, Witch, Juggler, Clifford, Elmo, Scooby Doo, Ms. Frizzle, Junie B. Jones, Emily Elizabeth, Fancy Nancy, Amelia Earhart, Paul Revere, Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, professional sports mascots and school mascots.
Create a Project	Read a book about the small project to be made that evening. Read directions for the project as a family. Work together to create the project.
Dinner Provided/ Potluck	Have book-themed dinner or group supper/potluck.
Family Reading Club	In early November, families pick up a bag with five books to read at home (based on ages of family members) along with juice boxes and microwave popcorn.

Program Idea	Additional Explanation
First Lines of Books Contest	The first lines of favorite children's books are read and the children guess the name of the book.
Free Books	Each child who attends receives a book to take home.
Games, Crafts, and Snacks	Coordinated activities including games, crafts and refreshments go with event themes.
Guest Readers/ Readers Theater	Invite local authors, community leaders, principals, librarians, veterinarians, military personnel, police officers, fire fighters, doctors, nurses, ballerinas, pilots, farmers, sports players/professional athletes, etc. to read favorite children's books. Readers in uniform are the most popular!
Pajama Party	Kids wear their pajamas, bring stuffed animals, eat snacks and read books with their families on a blanket.
Passport for Activities	Receive a free book after visiting and getting a stamp at each passport station.
Prizes and Raffles	Prizes are awarded or raffles held for returning signed reading forms. Prizes include books, book bags, pencils, bookmarks, stickers, books and gift certificates.
Puppet Shows or Theaters	Read a story. Make puppet characters out of small paper bags. Let the students put on the puppet show. A show can also be presented by older students, teachers or a professional production troupe.
Read a Recipe and Make the Snack	Favorite snack recipes and ingredients are made available for the children to read together with their family and select one (or two!) to make.
Read at Home with Your Family and Write About It	Students write a description of their evening of reading. Family members read or share favorite passages, books and magazines.
Reading Under the Stars	A camp setting with tents, glow-in-the-dark stars, sleeping bags, lanterns and camp chairs is created for reading bedtime stories.
Regional Theater Group Productions	Contact your local colleges, universities, high school and community drama clubs to present.
Sign Language Readers	A guest reader signs a book while it is read by an adult or the students. Simple sign language can also be taught.
Signed Commitments for New Books	Commitments are sent home with students asking families to "Turn off the TV and Turn on to Books." For every 15 commitments returned by students with family member signatures, the school dedicates a new book to the school library in honor of those students.
Speakers' Podium	Children pick out a short story or poem to read to the audience.
Story Tellers	Some will read stories, enact stories, use music and others will have children act out stories.
Teachers' Skits	The teachers perform a skit of a favorite book/story for the students.





The ABC's of Reading

SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUR FAMILY READING NIGHT EVENT

- A**rt and Books — Have students create book jackets depicting their favorite books.
- B**attle of the Books — Have students read the same book and host a “Battle of the Books” contest.
- C**ontests — Hold contests such as Read for Recess, Book Trivia, Bookmark-Making Contests and Book Bingo.
- D**raw Pictures — Ask children to draw a picture about a book you read aloud.
- E**xchange Books — Hold a book exchange where students can trade their gently-used books.
- F**ootball and Reading — Invite high school football players, cheerleaders and coaches to read to younger students. Have cheerleaders create an R-E-A-D cheer.
- G**uest Readers — Invite celebrity readers or senior citizens to read aloud to children.
- H**elp Younger Students — Encourage older students to read to younger students.
- I**nvoke Other Organizations — Invite the public library or school to collaborate on Family Reading Night activities.
- J**ournaling — Encourage families to write in journals. Writing encourages reading.
- K**ick-off Events — Feature a week of reading activities building up to Family Reading Night.
- L**ook up Authors — Look up contact information for authors at the library. Have students write letters to their favorite authors or illustrators and mail or e-mail the letters.
- M**ake a Display — Collect photos of students and families reading and display them in a prominent location.
- N**ewspaper Scavenger Hunt — Create a reading quiz using local newspapers.
- O**pen Mic Night — Sponsor a poetry slam or poetry reading for teens and young adults.
- P**ajama Party — Have families wear their pajamas, bring pillows and blankets, and read bedtime stories.
- Q**uiet Time — Provide quiet time for everyone to read silently.
- R**affles and Drawings — Offer raffles and drawings for books and other prizes.
- S**tations — Set up stations with reading-related parent and child activities.

- T**asty Treats — Have parents read a recipe to their children then cook it.
- U**nder the Stars — Host a camping-themed event. Build tents using blankets and folding chairs and read stories by flashlight under the tents.
- V**ideo Games — Encourage students to turn off the television and video games and read instead.
- W**ord Games — Play word games such as Scrabble or Boggle.
- E**xcited — Motivate and excite your students to read! Reward them with pizza parties and book-related prizes.
- Y**es — Say “Yes” to reading! Get involved in other reading programs such as Read for a Lifetime, Rebecca Caudill Young Readers’ Book Award, Monarch Children’s Choice Award and the Abraham Lincoln High School Book Award.
- Z**illions — Families across the state reading **Zillions** of books!

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