

Fall Family Fun Night

Arriba Flagler School District

Flagler, CO



COLORADO
Department of Education

Engaging families in students' academics is a critical way to support student learning at home and to foster partnerships. However, it is often beneficial to engage families in a fun, academic-free environment in order to strengthen partnerships. For the past ten years, the Arriba Flagler School District has been doing this through their Fall Family Fun Night.

The goal of this evening is to provide a chance for families, students, and school staff to share a positive experience, and to support the district goal of welcoming all families into the community. By doing this, a stronger sense of community and a family-friendly school atmosphere can be achieved. The event began in 2005, and was developed by the Parent Involvement Committee as a way to encourage interactions of school and family in a non-threatening environment.

Since the event was in the fall, the primary activity has been a pumpkin decorating contest. Each family receives a pumpkin and used their own supplies in order to create their masterpieces. Math learning was incorporated into the event through the use of 'estimation stations' where pumpkins' weights were guessed and the number of pieces of candy in a jar was guessed. The decorated pumpkins were awarded prizes at the end of the evening such as gift certificates to the library's book fair.

The implementation of this event is a true collaboration. While the Parent Involvement Committee was primarily responsible for the planning, the Superintendent acted as emcee, teachers ran activity stations, librarians judged the pumpkins, and elementary school classes made posters. Articles were also written and published in the local newspaper.

Hosting the Family Fun Night is an important way to help encourage partnerships. The attendance at past events speaks to its success, and surveys are used to gather feedback. This feedback is used to help improve the event. The Committee decided not to do pumpkin carving one year, but the survey results indicated that families missed this part of the event, so it was used again the next year.

The Fall Family Fun Night is a great time to celebrate school, community, and especially the kids! It also provides time where families and school staff can get to know each other and strengthen relationships.