

EL Family Nights



English Learner (EL) Family Nights are a bi-weekly parent and family engagement event supported by Fargo Public Schools and North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services. The purpose of EL Family Night is to help build language through hands-on activities, guest speakers, and planned lessons, as well as to assist families in their areas of need when it comes to their child's education and navigating opportunities and obstacles within their new community of Fargo.

EL Family Nights are held at Agassiz from 5:00-7:30 p.m. Typically 80-90 EL family members attend. The EL Family Night Leadership Team includes Arati Heath, EL Administrative Assistant; Tamara Hofmann, Student Wellness and Family Facilitator; and Peggy Tri and Nirosk Skalsky, Elementary EL Teachers. They work with other FPS teachers and paraeducators and community agencies to make each EL Family Night a positive, engaging learning experience for staff members and EL families.

At the beginning of the evening, families interact in activities, which include board games, BINGO, craft activities, etc. Some of the popular group activities include Zumba, BINGO, and movie nights. After the initial family activities, students attend their grade level classroom led by teachers. In the classrooms, teachers design lesson plans based on the chosen topic or theme. They plan according to grade level abilities and incorporate listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities to help build language. Classes include infants up through 12th grade, taught by teachers in our district. For the adult classrooms, guest speakers are invited to introduce topics related to parenting, summer school and activities, community resources, winter safety, and any other topics that the parents have expressed interest in. Families work together to create healthy (and beautiful) snacks that go hand-in-hand with the theme of the evening, to enhance learning through multi-sensory experiences.



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The evening concludes with a meal and conversation shared by families and staff. Meals are sometimes prepared by staff and sometimes ordered in. Parents often use this time to connect with other parents, as they are sharing a unique experience navigating life in a new country. One of the highlights this year was the Thanksgiving meal cooked by staff members and shared with Adult Ed



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students who are also in the building at the same time. Staff members have also partnered with the Great Plains Food Bank to provide culturally appropriate food and produce for families to take home at the end of the night. Families had an opportunity to learn about the community gardens and to sign up to be part of the gardens as well if they had an interest. These opportunities for food resources have been very successful. Another highlight this year was the opportunity to give every child a new gift through donations given by the community.

EL Family Nights are making a positive impact with our EL students and their families!

