
Open Library Night

Charles F. Kettering Elementary School

Ypsilanti, Michigan

"Open Library Nights" is a Type 4 Involvement activity used at Kettering Elementary School. The goal behind this weekly event is to encourage parents and family members to work with children on educational activities. Every Tuesday evening from 6:30-8:00, all families of Kettering students are invited to the Media Center to participate in different activities which promote student achievement. Fliers advertising events, announcements in classrooms, phone calls home, and personal invitations are used to notify families of the topic for the evening. "Open Library Night" represents the most common Tuesday evening activity; the event focuses on encouraging families to come to the school and read together or work on the computers with Internet access.

Organized by parent involvement coordinators, this regularly scheduled event provides the opportunity for other forms of involvement. For example, sometimes the event centers on a workshop like "Parenting with Love and Logic." This four-part workshop included topics such as making children accountable for their actions and increasing children's self-concept (Type 1: Basic Obligations of Families). To foster communication between home and school (Type 2: Communication), teachers often invited families to come to the Tuesday activities, and teachers frequently attended the event themselves. Finally, the student and parent volunteers as well as the parent involvement coordinators have support from the P.T.O (Type 5: Involvement in Committees, Governance, and Advocacy) and community businesses like McDonalds who provide generous donations of free food coupons and refreshments for the family events.

Those at Kettering report great success with the program thus far! Everyone is pleased that the school is open more often, and parents are glad to learn more about computers as computers skills are becoming more of a necessity in today's world. The event encourages the collaboration of students, teachers, and families, and the volunteers solicit feedback from all groups to keep the program effective.

*Jenna Merritt and John Harding,
Parent Involvement Coordinators
(734) 481-8288*