

## Fill Your Child's Basket with Learning Tools

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*Eastern Elementary School  
Hagerstown, Maryland*

Seeing a need for homework help, the staff at Eastern Elementary School put together an evening activity that had many positive results. “Fill Your Child’s Basket with Learning Tools” filled the school’s need to support student learning at home by motivating students and providing guidance to parents.

The evening began with dinner and included interactive activities that promoted a good homework environment and better study skills. Teachers gave parents tips for helping their children with homework. One teacher interpreted the evening’s presentation for Spanish-speaking families. At the end of the event, some families received door prizes. Each family went home with a basket of homework-related items, including math flash cards, playing cards, pencils, rulers, books, and educational games.

Responding to a request for help, the board of the local Memorial Recreation Center donated the use of its facility. The family and community partnership coordinator, guidance counselors, and teachers developed the program. Parents and community volunteers helped provide childcare during the event for students’ younger siblings. The school publicized the evening with fliers, reminder notes, and advertisements in its monthly newsletter. Teachers and staff also promoted the event to students during lunch.

The school covered its food costs with Title I funds, while local businesses and a church donated the items that filled the baskets. Local businesses and community organizations covered the cost of most of the required materi-

als; soliciting contributions from these groups was one of the most important challenges the school faced. Fortunately, the entire community was willing to pitch in to help make the event a success. In the end, the homework night cost the school only \$200.

The event had many positive effects. As a result of “Fill Your Child’s Basket with Learning Tools,” students now receive more support at home. The recreation center has seen an increase in community participation in its after-school activities. Teachers, guidance counselors, and staff at Eastern have learned to work better together. Best of all, parents are now armed with new strategies to help their children succeed in school.

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