

# Math and Science Family Fun Night

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*Early Childhood Center #82  
Buffalo, New York*

College students played a big role in the Math and Science Family Fun Night at Buffalo's Early Childhood Center No. 82. They designed games and activities to show the youngsters that mathematics is enjoyable and that the math they learn in school is connected to the rest of their lives.

Five student teachers, two professors and more than a dozen other education students from nearby Buffalo State College collaborated on the math-made-fun activities for the night. The college crowd directed the activities and, no doubt, enjoyed themselves. This kind of cooperation results from the school's designation as a Professional Development School for the nearby college.

The Early Childhood Center, with 550 students in grades K-4, sponsors two Math and Science nights a year. The specific goal is to increase family involvement by having parents do these activities with their children. The school wanted to engage families so that students' math and science scores would improve. Inspired by a family math night suggested by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) Standards, the school decided to implement a similar event.

School staff and members of the Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) helped with the event's logistics. All parents and students who participated received a chance to win a free theme basket. In the gym, there were 17 stations, each with a different hands-on science or math activity. The families played hopscotch to test their knowledge of multiplication tables. They made rockets and did water-based math activities, among others. The classroom teachers worked with the college students to be sure that the projects reflected specific state math standards.

When students and parents completed an activity, they earned a ticket and went on to

the next challenge. Later, they turned in their tickets for prizes. Project FLIGHT, a non-profit organization devoted to promoting literacy skills of children and caregivers, donated books for the prizes and other educational materials also were awarded.

Parents and children were called in groups for dinner – free pizza, chicken wings, veggies with dip and beverages. The winners of the theme baskets were called at 7 p.m., just before the evening ended. About 200 students and parents and 15 teachers, administrators and other staff members joined the college students and two professors in the night of math and science fun and learning.

Survey responses indicated that everyone enjoyed the evening and found it beneficial. Parents said they liked spending time with their children on the activities. Students confirmed that they had fun with math and science, and showed off their prizes. Some wanted to come back the next night for more activities!

The college students and professors said they had a great time. The school's faculty and staff considered the evening well worth their time. The principal called the evening an overwhelming success – a winning combination of “food, folks and fun,” she said.

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