

Splash into Science

A Family Science Program can be a great family activity in which children and their parents can work together on simple, age-appropriate, inquiry-based science activities. All supplies and instructions are provided and families are encouraged to self-select activities and work at their own pace. There are no “experts” and the families are encouraged to better understand the scientific method and enjoy science, rather than memorize scientific concepts. The program uses readily available, low cost materials.

Family Science Programs have proven to be very successful at both involving the parents in their children’s education and in engaging both parents and students in the fun of science. Creating one for a Kick Off or Finale allows whole families to take part, each finding activities to fill their own needs.

What’s the best way to start?

- Expect to have a science fair in your library, either indoors, outside or both.
- Select appropriate activities for either.
- And, select activities that will be good for preschoolers as well as elementary aged children, you’ll get both and parents will appreciate having action for both.
- Select anywhere from 12 to 24 science activity stations – it all depends upon your space.
- Beg, borrow, buy supplies.
- Print instructions and place at each station.
- Have a few adult volunteers who can run interference!

Then:

- Set up a science book display
- Send news releases to your local media; contact them to come for photo ops!
- Have your digital camera ready to take pictures to put on your library web page/blog/flickr
- Locate some teen volunteers; have them be your stationmasters! And remember to send them a thank you note later on letterhead that they will be able to give to their guidance office at school for applications, recommendations.
- Recruit some adults and teens to help with set up and clean up, and have plenty of paper towels available that day!

Where to go for the Station Experiments:

Mohawk Valley Library System, Science in the Summer and Start With Science Resources

<http://www.mvls.info/scienceinsummer/sis-schedule.html>

<http://www.mvls.info/startwithscience/index.html>

Union College, Charles Scaife, Family Science Night Activities

http://www.union.edu/academic_depts/kids/index.php

Family Science Nights/Sandia National Laboratories, Lockheed Martin

<http://www.sandia.gov/ciim/ASK/downloads/Activities%2008-09.pdf>

<http://www.sandia.gov/ciim/ASK/downloads/Materials07.pdf>

Science Night for Grade Schoolers - GeekDad Wayback Machine

<http://www.wired.com/geekdad/2009/10/science-night-for-grade-schoolers-geekdad-wayback-machine/>