



Kid's Fun Night Out!



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Kid's Fun Night Out started in my classroom after sitting with a parent after an IEP meeting and hearing her talk about how little she could get done and how tired she was.

After listening to her and hearing that she hardly could get anyone, family, friends, or even a respite service to consistently come to her home to help watch her son so she could get time to clean, buy



groceries or even just for her to get some well needed time with her other child, I decided to see what our school could do.



The Plan

Find a way that students in our classes with Autism could come back in the evening so that their parents and guardians could do what needed to be done at home, shop, or

reconnect with their other children.





Action

After speaking with other parents at our school and in the community I discovered that many families had this same dilemma .

I spoke with our school's Principal who agreed to let me help my families.

We held our first Kid's Night Out on January 30, 2004.



The First Kid's Night Out

We chose to do our Kid's Fun Night Out on Fridays from 6:00-9:30, so that it didn't interfere with the School routine. Students would come back to our classroom at 6pm and play games with each other until everyone arrived.

After everyone arrived we would sit down to cook dinner and dessert and eat a family style dinner.



After dinner the students would help clean up the table and wash dishes and prepare to watch a movie.



After the movies



Students ate desserts that they made with their friends and family member who have arrive to pick them up to go home.

The Second Year of KFNO



The second year we added theme nights.

- Aug- Welcome Back
- Sept- Fall Fun
- Oct- Fall Festival
- Nov- Decoration Night
- Dec- Christmas Fun
- Jan- Winter Fest
- Feb- Friendship
- March- Spring Fun
- April- Spring Fun

Other additions to KFNO

In addition to the students in the self contained classes for our Autistic students being invited to Kid's Fun Night Out, we also invited the students who were fully mainstreamed to join us.

We also began having student volunteers come and play with my students and help them during different activities.

UCF CARD sent students from UCF to come and volunteer. This helped many of them see what many of the techniques they were learning looked like in action.

Fall Festival



In October we held a Fall Festival so that our students could experience the games that their other peers play with during the school Fall Festival in hopes to encourage the parents to let them attend the next it next year.



The Third Year of KFNO

In addition to what we did last year we took the students to the school's fall festival

Family Night Dinners





- We also added Family Night dinners to our yearly schedule of events.
- This helped our families create a community of support and similarities.

Things to consider

When planning



- What is the school's attitude toward night time events?
- What time does the campus close for the night?
- Who could help stay?
- What will you do?
- What happens if the parents come back late?

What to do to get started

Once you decide that you want to do a KFNO

- ask your administration if you can hold one and what district criteria you may have to follow
- then enlist volunteers to help with that night
- send out permission slips to the families
- after evaluating students' food issues plan a meal that they all can eat. If you don't have a stove in the classroom many pizza places will give a discount for this type of event.






- plan games and simple craft activities that the students would be able to do with help
- pick a movie that the class would enjoy watching
- remind parents to rsvp so you know how many are coming and request an emergency number for that night.
- remind parents during drop off what time to pick up




A typical schedule for KFNO



6:00-6:30	Arrival, Play Games
6:30-7:00	Make Dinner
7:00-7:30	Eat Dinner
7:30-8:45	Movie/Crafts
8:45-9:15	Movie/Games
9:15-9:30	Eat Dessert/Depart

Observations

After the 3rd KFNO during the first year, we began to notice the following in our students who regularly attended:

- Increase eye contact
- Looking to interact
- Increase communication/attempts to communicate
- Empathy toward others

- A greater sense of self
- Helping peers
- Looking for peers in other classes to interact with
- Wanting to come and be apart



Things We Learned Along the Way

Through this program it became obvious that our children need to connect with others and have a special time to interact without the stress of school work being the main focus.



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