

# Newcomer Family Nights

## Edgewater Elementary School

### Edgewater, CO



Edgewater has always been recognized for its diversity and inclusiveness with its students and families. They make it a priority to provide each and every one of their students the care and support needed to excel to their greatest potential. This year, Edgewater Elementary School received approximately 60 newcomers from different countries. These families faced enormous challenges of all kinds. The goal of the practice was to provide the newcomer families with resources that included information about healthcare, food, housing, clothing drives, and more. Staff also helped families with registering their children in preschool, elementary, middle, and high school.

It took the help and effort of the whole team to implement and plan this practice. This ranges from the school's family liaison, principal, staff, volunteers, and the community members. In preparation for these events, the family liaison invited multiple community members to provide resources. Tables and chairs were set up in the gym for each resource provider. Resources included food banks, nutrition services, Jeffco police department, Jeffco public library, vaccinations, preschool coordinators, legal advice, job opportunities, recreation center, Jeffco homeless resources, Family Response Service Team, and more.

Clothing was a big need for many families. The team coordinated a large clothing and shoe drive, so families could choose the clothes they needed while at the event. They also received other donated necessities such as blankets, diapers, and personal hygiene items. Food was provided at the event and families could take home bags from the food bank. Teachers, staff, and PTA volunteers were invited to support the event.



These events improved the school climate because families were able to access the support they needed. They helped the school staff begin to connect with the new families and better understand the challenges they faced. Welcoming the newcomer families in this way helped integrate them into the Edgewater community. Learning about US culture, services, and opportunities laid the foundation for newcomers to lead full lives and contribute to society in positive ways.

This practice was evaluated by observing how many families were involved and how many were able to obtain resources. As this practice was carefully planned, it was very successful, and they did not face any challenges. Having lots of volunteers from the school community helped make all of this possible.

One of the most important aspects of an event like this is reaching out to the families in multiple ways so that they attend the event. In this case, Edgewater Elementary sent a flyer home to families, sent multiple robocalls, and made personal phone calls to each family. It was also critical to invite families in person before or after school, and to explain to them what the event was and why it was important that they attend. The families trust Edgewater's family liaison and felt comfortable attending the event.