

# Summer Resource Fair O'Dea Elementary School Fort Collins, CO



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

The goal of the Summer Resource Fair was to connect Spanish speaking and low-income families to low cost and free enriching summer resources. One very important population that the Summer Resource Fair targeted was McKinney-Vento families – families who are unhoused or whose housing is insecure. Over the summer, without school in session, these families have significantly less access to resources.

In order to plan and implement the Summer Resource Fair, the school counselor and family liaison worked together to create a check list. This included developing a list of community agencies and families to invite; supplies needed; meeting with the principal to get the layout approved; and connecting with other family liaisons, school counselors, and McKinney-Vento contacts throughout Poudre School District. The tasks were divided up between one family liaison, two school counselors, and two district advocates. On the day of the event, families were welcomed into the library for light refreshments and mingling. The families then moved into the gym to visit the community agency booths. The booths were staffed by agencies, and they were each paired with a bilingual family liaison. The families were given a passport to receive a stamp at each station, and then at the end of the night, they turned it in to be entered into a raffle.

The program aimed to connect families directly to summer resources in a timely manner, before summer opportunities filled up. Additionally, several family liaisons provided feedback on specific resources that families previously requested and those agencies were prioritized. The agencies that attended included: Poudre Public Library, Rec Center, Food Bank, AlphaBEST, Boys and Girls Club, Early Childhood Education, ECCL, Reading Resources, and PSD Nutrition. Connecting parents to summer resources in early April gave parents the opportunity to start planning and connecting to resources that would provide an enriching and active summer for their students.

This event was evaluated by feedback from staff, families, and agencies. Agencies were quick to volunteer for more events like the resource fair and they relayed how excited and engaged families were. Before leaving, families stopped by their respective family liaisons to share the new information they learned and ask any final questions. Staff commented on the huge turnout from several different elementary schools and one middle school. Although overall the feedback was very positive, the biggest challenge was connecting and coordinating with agencies.

The biggest tool used in creating successful parent engagement was relying on the relationships parents already had with staff. Each family had been invited first by either their family liaison or school counselor two weeks before the event and then reminded of the invite the night before. Parents already had a preexisting relationship with staff, and this made the invitation more meaningful and individualized. Thus, enlisting staff that already have connections with families to invite them creates the highest turnout. Additionally, at the event, school counselors and family liaisons gave background information on agencies and caught up with families in person. The passport given out to families at the beginning of the night also allowed families to visit each booth without any embarrassment and provided structure and talking points to families who were unsure about what resources were available.

Standard 6 — Collaborating with the Community  
Essential Element 4 — Dedicate Necessary Resources