

# Family Science Night

## Gold Camp Elementary School

### Colorado Springs, CO



COLORADO  
Department of Education

Three years ago, a group of staff and families at Gold Camp Elementary School wanted a new and engaging way to increase STEM interest within their school. The result was Family Science Night, now a beloved Gold Camp tradition. The goal of Family Science Night is to generate interest in STEM and build community and home relationships through a wide variety of learning formats for students, parents, and patrons of the district.

Family Science Night provides an opportunity for parents, community members, teachers, students, and anyone interested in science to share their knowledge with others and increase their own learning. Gold Camp gears the activities for the whole family, from preschool to adult. With a variety of learning formats, presentations, make and take stations, hands-on engagement stations, and take home investigations to continue learning, Family Science Night touches on numerous science standards and concepts. The activities include a balance of earth, physical, and life sciences.

Teachers at Gold Camp evaluate Family Science Night through presenter feedback, participant comments, and attendance. After the event, the planning committee meets to review all feedback and use that information to change or modify future events. With this being a “come-and-go” type of event, attendance is not exact, but the committee estimates about 500 students and parents participate each year!

One positive and somewhat unexpected benefit of this night was the number of fathers that attended. One Gold Camp teacher states: “It was a great opportunity for fathers to share their knowledge and excitement of science with the students.”

Another member of the planning committee offers this advice for replicating an engaging science event: “Someone looking to start a Science Family Night should start early and create as many contacts as possible. We start planning in September for our spring event, and we have bi-monthly meetings at first, and then weekly meetings as the day draws closer. By starting early and having several small meetings, we were able to keep everything in manageable portions and organized. In our desire to have a variety of activities, we create a contact list that includes past presenters and possible future presenters. We talk to anyone that will listen and are always open to suggestions and in making connections for years to come.”