

Family Movie Night Program Information

This is a great program idea – a fabulous way for the entire family to participate in a fun event. If you are having a Family Movie Night, please take care to follow the Federal Copyright Act. Movies are copyrighted material, and you must have permission for a public showing. In a nutshell, this means that you must have a site license to show movies. Please refer to <http://www.movlic.com/k12/copyright.html> for more information about the Federal Copyright Act.

Many people are under the mistaken assumption that showing the movie at the school with a teacher present exempts them from the licensing requirement. This is not true. The Educational Exemption has several criteria that must be met, including that a teacher be present, the movie is shown in the classroom with only the enrolled students in attendance, the movie is used as an essential part of the current core curriculum being taught in the class, and the movie must be a legitimate copy. All of these criteria must be met to meet the exemption requirement. As you can see, Family Movie Night does not meet these criteria.

We encourage you to have Family Movie Nights throughout the year, and we also advise you to obtain the appropriate license so that you, your PTA and your school will be in compliance. Many PTAs find it worthwhile to purchase an annual public performance site license. This is purchased with the school listed as the site. An added benefit to this is that this would cover the school, PTA events at the school, your Rclub or YMCA or other aftercare program, the Girl Scout or Boy Scout troops that meet at your school, etc. You could also choose to purchase a one-time performance license to cover a specific movie on a specific date. Of course, you would need to determine which is better for your overall plans and budget. Please note that your movie license covers indoor showings only. Outdoor performances are not permitted.

In setting up your movie night, don't forget to make it family friendly. You may wish to do this event for free, or you may charge admission to recoup the cost of the license. You might want to have some type of refreshments – bottled water, popcorn, etc. Think about how you're going to decide on a movie. Maybe you could let the student council or safety patrol choose the movie. You might want to run two movies simultaneously in different rooms to accommodate different age ranges. Think about showing a short informational or educational piece prior to your feature movie. That's a great time to show one of the 8-10 minute DVDs on pedestrian and bicycle safety. Have everyone bring a beach chair, blanket and pillow and make it a cozy, fun family experience.

For more information on proper licensing of your event, please visit Movie Licensing USA at <http://www.movlic.com/k12/index.html>.