Family movie night planning kit

A head start for your PTO or PTA board. Take what's useful and change the rest.

Timeline

6 weeks out

- [ ] Pick a date and check it against the school calendar
- [ ] Reserve the gym or field
  Ask about power, restrooms, and who will open and lock up.

4 to 5 weeks out

- [ ] Get a public screening license for the movie
  Showing a movie to a group usually needs a public performance license, even when it's free. Your school or district may already have one.
- [ ] Choose the movie with the school
  Pick a rating that suits every grade coming.
- [ ] Line up a projector, screen, and sound
- [ ] Plan concessions, like popcorn and drinks
- [ ] Share the volunteer signup link

2 to 3 weeks out

- [ ] Send the flyer home and post it online
- [ ] Decide on admission or concession prices
- [ ] Decide on a rain plan, if it's outdoors

The final week

- [ ] Test the projector and sound in the space
- [ ] Send a reminder to families
- [ ] Buy everything on the shopping list
- [ ] Get change and set up the cash box

Movie night

- [ ] Set up seating areas and the screen

After the movie night

- [ ] Thank volunteers and the school staff
- [ ] Record receipts and reimburse anyone who paid
- [ ] Write down what to change next time
  Which movie and which night worked best is worth writing down.

Volunteer spots

A sample to adapt. Add, cut, or rename spots to suit your school.

Spot	When	People
Setup Crew Set up the screen, tape down cords, and mark seating areas.	4:30 PM to 6:00 PM	4
Tech Helper Run the projector and sound.	5:00 PM to 8:30 PM	1
Welcome Table Greet families and take admission, if any.	5:45 PM to 6:30 PM	2
Concessions Pop popcorn and sell snacks and drinks.	5:45 PM to 8:00 PM	4
Floor Helpers Help families find a spot and keep the aisles clear.	6:00 PM to 8:30 PM	2
Cleanup Crew Pack up equipment, pick up trash, and leave the space clean.	8:15 PM to 9:00 PM	4

Sample budget

Placeholder amounts to help you get started, not real prices. Swap in your own numbers.

Item	Example	Our budget
Public screening license	$150	
Projector or screen rental	$100	
Popcorn and drinks	$80	
Paper goods	$20	
Flyers and signs	$20	
Total	**$370**	

Shopping list

Warehouse club

- [ ] Popcorn
- [ ] Drinks and water
- [ ] Candy
- [ ] Napkins

Party or dollar store

- [ ] Popcorn bags or cups
- [ ] Glow sticks

Hardware store

- [ ] Extension cords
- [ ] Gaffer or duct tape

Office supply store

- [ ] Cash box
- [ ] Signs
- [ ] Name tags for volunteers

Easy things to overlook

The screening license
Showing a movie to a group usually needs one, even when it’s free. It helps to sort it out before the flyer goes home.

Testing in the space
A gym echoes and a field is bright until sunset. A test run a week ahead avoids surprises.

Cords and walkways
Taping down cords keeps the aisles safe in the dark.

A rating for every grade
Little ones and older students come together, so a movie everyone can watch keeps it easy.

Blankets and chairs
Asking families to bring their own makes the night cozier, and saves on setup.

Want it all in one place?
PineBoard can hold your tasks, volunteers, shopping, and budget together, and copies the plan to next year. Try it free for 60 days at pineboard.app.