

2013 Thorp Science Night Executive Summary

Who and What: By the Numbers

The North Carolina Science Festival (NCSF) supported 70 Thorp Science Night (TSN) events hosted at elementary schools across the state. A total of 11,993 parents and children attended a TSN. A total of 71 teachers and 1,143 volunteers hosted these events.

Almost all TSN teachers (97%) completed a survey after their event. Data were collected from parents and children at 33 events.

What You Should Know (if you don't remember anything else)

1. The NCSF provides all necessary materials to host a TSN. Teacher rate the materials between very good and excellent overall.
2. TSNs included up to 12 hands-on science activities. Almost all children and the vast majority of parents did at least one of these activities during the event.
3. TSN was the highest rated NCSF event for the second year in a row.

Key Findings

For many families (68%), TSN was the first science event they had attended at the school.

99% of children and 90% of parents did a activity during the event

96% of children had fun at the TSN and 84% learned something new.

Parent and teachers agreed that TSNs make STEM learning fun, teach new science, and make connections to the science around us every day.

97% of teachers found TSN materials easy to use; 100% believed students benefited from the event.

TSN Build-a-Bubble Activity



Photo by Jim Kenny

Lessons Learned

1. TSNs continue to be an effective way to provide unique learning opportunities to families.
2. Teachers serve as a valuable resource in the continued development of the TSN program by providing feedback each year.
3. The success of the TSN model has now been replicated and can serve as an exemplar for the larger informal science learning and/or Festival community.
4. TSNs have the potential to become a recognized and popular annual family event at participating schools.

Visit the NCSF Web site to learn more about this and other Festival programs: <http://www.ncsciencefestival.org>. To access the complete findings, please contact Karen Peterman at karenpetermanphd@gmail.com.

