60 Ideas for Open House

1. Make a PowerPoint of your class. Have each child make their own slide. They can use word art to put their name on the slide right in the middle. Then they can use text boxes to use adjectives to describe them. Also, have them take and insert a digital picture of themselves on the slide as well. Put all the slides together for your very first class power point. Put it on loop continuously and let it run as you visit with the parents.

2. Paper Students - Have the students work in pairs to complete this activity. Roll out some butcher paper and have the students trace each other. It is fun to have them bend their legs and arms. They should then draw and color clothes on the drawing of themselves. Take a digital picture of each child. Make the picture big, as big as a whole sheet of paper. Have the children cut out their faces and glue to the head of their body drawings. Put the body drawings in each child’s desk and the parents will then know where their children sit.

3. Read the book, A House For Hermit Crab. Have the students create "House Glyphs". Each part of the house should stand for something. For example, if the child is a boy he should make a blue house...girls make pink houses. If they are an only child they have no chimney....children with brothers/sisters have a chimney. The number of windows on the house is the number of letters in their name. The color of the door is their favorite subject (Assign each subject a different color) The number of trees in their yard is the month they were born...the number of flowers in the yard is the day they were born. Make a key and hang it up next to the house glyphs. Have the parents try to guess which house belongs to their child.

4. Body Paragraphs. Have the students write a paragraph about themselves. Tape the paper to a sheet of construction paper. Take a digital picture of each child. Enlarge it as big as the page. Cut out the faces and glue them to the top of the construction paper. Have the students make arms and legs out of construction paper. Display the Body Paragraphs in the hall for parents to read!

5. Bubble Maps - Have each student make a bubble map that describes them. Instead of writing their names in the middle of the bubble map they should place a digital picture of themselves. Instead of writing adjectives in each bubble around the picture they should use clipart to find pictures that describe them.

6. The teacher and students make a video of their day at school to show the parents a day in the life of a student.

7. Looping PowerPoint with the student’s picture and something he has learned so far or their
8. Classroom Scavenger Hunt--The parents find the students work throughout the classroom as well as their desk and their materials in it. The teacher checks to see that the sheet is complete. Really Cute!!!!!!

9. I usually have some type of brief activity that the student and the parent complete together. The student teaches the parent how to do it. The student is then proud that he is the teacher. The student gives rewards and praises to the parents.

10. Upon entering the classroom, the teacher greets the parents and hands them a map of the classroom made by their child. The parents have to use the map to find their child's desk. Really Cute!!!!!!!!

11. Pick your "orKID"- by Denise Grigas
The teacher has a big flower pot in the front of the room for displaying the "orKIDS". The kids create bubble maps shaped as flowers with words describing themselves around on the petals. These are mounted on straws, or pipe cleaners, or sticks. Open House night, the parents try and pick which "orKID" is theirs, and they put their child’s photo in the center of the flower.

12. I usually have the parents and their student do a scavenger search showing off specific things in the room, fish tank, cubbies, their seat....However, I read on here that one teacher has parents help their student fill in a response to graphs.... eye color, boy/girl, favorite color,... so this year I thought I would try some of those and add them to my regular stuff. Can be done on pocket charts or I will probably use chart paper with sticky notes. Good Luck! Posted by EM on 6/28/02

13. I have my students draw self portraits. We give each one a number, and the name is written on the back. We put them on a wall or bulletin board, and when the parents come they "take a quiz" and try to guess their child’s portrait. It is fun and amazing how many can pick out their child’s portrait. Hope this helps. Chris
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14. We have a hunt too for the students and parents, but we do it with the whole school, not just limit it to the classroom. Some items we use are things like find a band aid in the nurses office, find a straw in the kitchen, find a surprise in the gym, etc. I also read a story to the kids. I used to read *Love You Forever* by Robert Munsch, but I found one called *The Night Before Kindergarten* which is perfect since we do our parent night the night before school starts. The kids bring all their supplies and put them away that evening so they don’t have to worry about it the next day. It is a lot of fun! Elle

15. I have our estimating jar out by the sign-in table. I ask the parents to estimate how many Hershey’s kisses there are in the jar. I tell them how the next day I will be teaching the children what estimation is and explain the activity. The next day with the kids, I take each of the parents’ estimates and put a sticky next to the number they guessed on our hundreds chart. Then the kids and I count the Kisses and find out which parent or parents guessed correctly. The child whose parent was right shares one Kiss with each student and then takes the leftover home to share with their family. The parents really like this and the kids really get into it because their parents were the participants. After this I begin to send the plastic Jar home with a letter to have them fill the jar with small goodies (plastic spoons, candy, little erasers, plastic rings, etc). A different child takes the jar home each week. We do estimation jar every week. We begin by counting the objects at first, and as they year progresses when we count we put the objects in sets of 10, 5. Talk about more, less, the learning is endless.

Posted on 6/28/02

16. A few ideas from a ring on Proteacher found at [http://www.proteacher.net/dcforum/third_grade/751.html](http://www.proteacher.net/dcforum/third_grade/751.html)

17. You might have the students write a letter describing their first few weeks of school for the parents to read. Also, provide paper on the student desks for the parents to write a note to their child about Open House to be read the next morning. You could have sign up sheets for parents interested in helping with planning parties or special projects.
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18. Another idea is to have a textbook out on the desk with a short, simple assignment similar to what their child might be doing this year, and the parents have to complete it. You could have a tape recorder set up for each parent to record a message for their child. Wendy

19. This will be my third year teaching third grade and back to school night always gives me the jitters. I have my students (using a template) draw their head with hair, eyes, a smile, etc. They draw themselves. Beneath the portrait the students ask their parents questions about them. For example what's my favorite food? What holidays do I like the best? Who is my best friend? The parents enjoy looking at their child's portrait and answering questions about them. I walk around and ask questions. Before that I read off my policies and procedures. Last year I video taped my class during lunch, library, computer, gym and showed it with background music about children, several parents got teary eyed. Good Luck
Debbie

20. Use the overhead projector to draw a silhouette of each child's profile. They'll take magazines to cut out pictures or words that represent themselves, and paste them inside their silhouette (no names). I'll have those propped up (taped) on each seat and the parents have to guess to find their child's desk (I'll have the nameplate covered). I'll also have their journal on the desk (turned over, so no name is showing) with an entry that the parent has to answer (What is the greatest thing about being a parent? What is the hardest thing about being a parent?). The child will have already written a similar entry that says about being a child. I'll have a table at the doorway with a list for parents to sign up to volunteer throughout the year. I'll also have their first newsletter to take home with them - that has my website address and general information. When the parent first shows up at my door, I'll hand them a paper that shows them different things to see/do in the classroom, to make sure they don't miss anything (find the child's desk, get a newsletter, read/write in the journal, visit the volunteer desk if they're interested, check out the bulletin boards, centers, cubbies, and poet-tree). I may or may not, on that same volunteer table, have some cookies, juice, and decaf. Coffee (in a carafe) I'll also have some mints attached to a thank-you card for them to take as they're leaving (It says, "Thanks for coming to our Open house - it "mint" a lot to us!) I think I covered everything - sorry that's so long, but I wanted to give you some ideas to throw around! - Susan/5th/MS
21. One thing I do with first grade (and is easily done with second) is to make a puzzle for the parents to put together. Across the top of the paper in large letters I put WELCOME (which acts as a guideline when the parents are putting them together). There are lines drawn on the paper, and the children draw a picture or write a message, disregarding the lines as they draw/write. Then they cut on those lines and place the pieces in an envelope. Fun and easy!

22. You can have the students write a note to their parents about school or whatever and then have the parents write their kids back. Just a thought.

23. I am a first grade teacher too. I have for my open house a PowerPoint slide show that I use to talk about first grade. I leave a heart on the child’s desk for the parent to write a note on. And I have a parent handbook that has all of my procedures for the year listed. If the open house is a few days or a week after school is started I share a slide show of the children in class. I am not sure if I can do that this year since our parent meeting is the night of the first day of school. To tie the evening together, I have a little cookie gift I give the parents as well. I have posted this before but thought I’d share it again. I make slice and bake sugar cookies and wrap two in a baggie with curling ribbon attached to it. I then attach this little poem. It is always a big hit.

   A Message for you!

   As sugar and flour come together to make
   A wonderful cookie creation that you bake,
   Parents and teachers join as one
   To create an educated daughter or son.

   It takes lots of love, caring and understanding
   But an individual will emerge who is special notwithstanding.
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We will work together to help each child bloom
So they can grow and prosper as they learn in this room.

So I share this little confection with you as I say
I am committed to helping your child grow each and every day.
Yes, the road is long, but the journey’s begun
As we strive to educate your daughter or your son.

24. I always put out every text book and workbook that we will use during the year. I let the parents browse through them and make sure they know where the child should be reading now and will (hopefully) be at the end of the year by showing them these books. I try to make this a welcoming time and let the parents know that they can come for lunch, assist in the room, etc.

25. Last year we did a PowerPoint program with the students and had it running on our classroom computers. It took many hours, however, to create but showed the children taking part in different classroom activities (P.E., music, reading, math, etc.)

26. Avoid discussing individual students like the plague! Tell them that you are just getting to know their child and that you would love to schedule an appt. for a conference. If you give specific info on a child, another parent might hear. Then you will be guilty of a breach of confidentiality.

27. We call ours Back to School Night, but I’m assuming this is the same thing. In first I always told the parents was what the expectations were for their child when they left my class, based on the standards set by our district. I would show them a page of a book on the overhead based on what level they should be entering 1st grade at (our district that’s a 4) and then showed them the same of a book at the
level they MUST be reading at to leave 1st grade (again in our district a level 14). The parents really need to know what is expected of their kiddos because first grade is much different than kindergarten. I go over the curriculum in general and have a handbook that I pass out called the "ABC's of Second Grade" that has the things I need them to know alphabetized, in case they forget anything that I may have said. Good luck! Karen in CA

28. It is also nice to make up a communication book for each child. (Folder with prongs) May include your day’s agenda, special schedule (so they know when to have tennis shoes on their children for PE), a nice poem...

29. Most important, blank pages for communication. You MAY want to write a short note to each parent on the first page. ("I’m so excited to have Melissa in my class this year. She seems to be a lovely young lady!) During Open house, ask your parents to use this book rather than individual notes to communicate with you about anything. Whenever they have a question, thought or comment to share, they write it in the book. The book stays home unless it has an important message for you. It is much easier than a bunch of little notes, and actually makes a nice little keepsake for the parents to keep at the end of the year. Any note that comes in that you want to keep--just copy it! If you have a special basket for papers/notes from home, just remind your students where to put it (and tell the parents so they can remind their children at home) when they come in. You’ll know those folders need to be checked ASAP as they have a note from home.

30. Back to School Raffle-When a parent walks into my classroom, I hand them a ticket to write their child’s name. At the end of the night I raffle the prize off. I usually have the “Prize” on my desk during the school day. I tell the students if your parents come to Open House they can win this raffle for you! They get very excited!!

31. Raffle: I get a white plastic box (stamp it with large handprints) and fill it with some Candy (wrap it with labels that says, Welcome to our Class! & fun school supplies. (Glitter pens etc) I wrap it in clear cellophane and put a
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couple of balloons on top. Who ever wins it, leaves my room with this great noticeable prize and tours the rest of the school with it! Parents from all grades ask about it!
http://www.sacredheartschoolsuffern.com/Openhouse.html - Click here to see the tickets.

32. I put a colored sheet of paper faced down on the desk. (I even put a small piece of tape, so parents can’t peek) A pencil is placed on the side of the desk. Sometime during my speech, I ask the parents to fill out some information. I believe there are three questions. One is what do you believe is important for me to know about your child to help him or her succeed? I have a set of Questions. Parents usually write sooo much. They are happy to see that your really want to get to know their child on a personal level. If anyone wants this sheet, just email me and I’ll send it.

33. This year since I have second grade, I am going to trace the kids' bodies on white paper and let the kids design to look like them. I’ll have it sitting in their desk. (It’s a paper version of them!) I have a great picture of someone who did this. It’s adorable!! Again, email me if you want it!

34. I usually make my students a magnet for their refrigerator. I use the Ellison to cut out foam apples and write their name on it. I attach it to a spring clothespin and add a magnet to the back. I usually clip their work to the clothespin and lay it on their desk so their parents see what they’ve been doing. They’re a hit every year. Lisa

35. I do an estimation jar for open house night. I fill a glass jar that has been decorated with candy and have each family make an estimate of how many pieces of candy are in the jar. The closest estimate wins the jar. I send it home with the student the next day. It’s always a big hit. This year I am going to put a baggie with 2 cookies in it on the desk for the parents with the following poem:

As sugar and flour come together to make
A wonderful cookie creation that you bake,
Parents and teachers join as one
To create an educated daughter or son.
It takes lots of love, caring and understanding
But an individual will emerge who is special notwithstanding.
We will work together to help each child bloom
So they can grow and prosper as they learn in this room.

So I share this little confection with you as I say
I am committed to helping your child grow each and every day.
Yes, the road is long, but the journey’s begun
As we strive together to educate your daughter or your son.

In the past I have made magnets for the fridge. I also make a welcome mat for the floor and have all of the kids sign it. Have a great school year! Lisa

40. WELCOME MAT IDEA
This only works well if your Open House is after school is in session. We take a large piece of oak tag and decorate it to look like a welcome mat. I cut out "Welcome" and then decorate it with fall leaves. Then the students sign their names all around the mat. It’s just adorable and I love watching the parents gingerly step over the ‘art’! We also keep it our for our Religious Education students who we share our classroom with on Wednesday nights- Barb/2/NE

41. This year, I used an idea I got, I think from this web site. I made up a nursery rhyme scavenger hunt to put their supplies away. I tried to pick interesting areas in the room, like the computer table, science table, book area, etc... It went so well!!! Everyone was kept busy and not a single parent had time to monopolize my time!

42. These are the nursery rhymes that I made up for open house. I drew a simple map of my room and taped it to the top of my hunt. This was just an extra way to help the parents find the correct drop off locations.
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1. Walk, walk, walk, as fast as you can. Leave your watercolor paints on the gingerbread man. (I made one out of bulletin board paper).

2. One, two, buckle my shoe. Leave your plain wooden pencils by the spot marked (2).

3. Little Boy Blue put the cows in the stable. Then leave your Kleenex on the computer table.

4. Jack-Be-Nimble you know the fable. Leave your wipes on the Science table.

5. Jack and Jill went up the hill, or so that's what they say. Please put your glue by the barn under the hay.

6. There was an old lady who moved to a sandal, put your washable markers beside the candle. (I made one out of construction paper).

7. Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall. Put your crayons by the mirror - don't let them fall.


These items go directly into your locker: Book Bag, Resting rug, Gym shoes, Paint Shirt and Second Change of Clothes.

BY Barbie/IL

43. Last year someone on the list had a great poem to use for open house. It involved sweet tarts and some other candies. I put it on the board, had the kids sign their names and then had a basket for parents to pick some candy out of. It was a hit! I am at a complete loss as to how it went and what candies were used. Does anyone remember how this went? Thanks! Alana
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For all you give,
For all you do,
These sweet treats
Are just for you!

LifeSavers for your helpfulness!
Sweet tarts because you understand us!
Hershey’s Kisses for your hugs and kisses!
Butterfinger bars because you forgive our mistakes!
~Kris in AR

44. Party!
At the beginning of the new school year, I have a New Year’s Party. I buy theme napkins, etc. on clearance after January 1st and save them. We celebrate being in a new grade and our goals.
Arleen Lopez
Davenport, Iowa

45. Me In A Bag
At the beginning of the year, I introduce myself using ‘Me In A Bag.’ I put a few items that represent me in a large paper sack. In my sack, I put a paintbrush because I’m an artist, my favorite book, my favorite food, pictures of my family and my pets, my favorite CD and a cookbook. The children sit around me, and I explain the significance of each item as I pull it out of the bag. This discussion helps the kids get to know me as a person. Each child then has a turn to bring in his/her own ‘Me In A Bag,’ giving everyone in the class a chance to shine."
Jan Formisano
Falls Church, Virginia

46. Open House
One year we had our preschool children bring in an old pair of pants and a shirt that they no longer wore. The children stuffed these with newspaper. We attached the pants to the shirts and then added paper bag heads that the children had decorated with markers and yarn. The evening of open house each of the "stuffed children" were in a chair at the table. In front of them we placed the artwork of each of the corresponding children!
Carisa
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47. Open House Fun
When children arrive in my room with their parents for open house, they are handed a clue list with a circle next to each clue, challenging them to find items/places such as the bathroom, sink, paper towels, trashcan, classroom door, cubbies, etc. I hang a handprint and a card at each site telling the children and their parents what to do once they find it, such as 'Turn on the Water' and 'Wash Hands Using the Soap Dispenser.' I also wear a handprint to ensure that everyone gets a chance to talk to me. When the children find an item, they color the circle next to the clue on their paper. When all the spots are colored, they receive a sticker. The children that don't attend open house do this activity with a volunteer the first week of school. This saves an enormous amount of time teaching the children where things are in the classroom. We continue this theme the first week of school and find clues that lead us to the different parts of the building and introduce us to the people that work throughout the school.

Janet Shlegle
Lovelille, Maryland

48. Back to School Kits
Give each child the following in a zip lock bag with the listed items:
Tissue - to remind you to dry someone's tears (or perhaps your own, so you can see the tears of others)
Button - to remind you to "button your lips" to keep from saying mean things about others or talking when it's not appropriate
Toothpick - to remind you to "pick out" the good qualities of everyone including you
Band Aid - to remind you of healing hurt feelings, either yours or someone else's
Candy Kiss - to remind you that everyone needs a nice treat occasionally
Gold Thread - to remind you that friendship is the golden thread that ties together the hearts of everyone
Eraser - to remind you that everyone makes mistakes sometimes, and that's all right
Lifesaver Candy - to remind you to think of me as YOUR "lifesaver".
Whenever you need to talk, feel free to come see me!
Mint - To remind you that you are worth a MINT to me!

49. The Giving Tree
Hang a tree or similar on the wall. On pre-cut apples, write specific needs
your classroom has for the entire year, such as dry erase markers, film, $5, snacks, baby wipes, or anything you know you will eventually use. The parents come in at Open House and take an apple off the tree. There is a poem that you can hang with it, but it is in storage! I usually let the parents know that these things are not needed by the next day. Most are overwhelmed by school supplies, anyway. I try to think of things I will need at the end of the year, too.

Chris Gulotta
Tallahassee, FL

50. First Day of School
I take a picture of my kindergarteners on the very first day of school. I use one for a bulletin board before placing it in our "Friends" book (described in the Lesson Plan section under Books, Books, Books), and then I use the double print as a Christmas ornament that says, "My First Day of School".

Chris Gulotta
Tallahassee, FL

51. Name Games
I use this with kindergarteners during the first week of school. I write the child’s name on an index card. I cut the letters apart and put them in an envelope that has their name on the outside. They have to spell their name. They can look at the envelope for an example, if needed. I also do this again and cut their name into a puzzle. I start off with 3 pieces and when they can conquer this easily, I cut it into 6 pieces. The key to this is to use different colors, so that the kids at the same table don’t mix their pieces.

Chris Gulotta
Tallahassee, FL

52. There are computer programs that make word searches for you. I make them for many of the classes at my school with all the names of the students in the class. This way they get to learn the names of their classmates. I also make one for all of the teachers and administrators that the children will be in contact with (P.E., music, etc.).

SLCTA@aol.com
53. Survival Kit

Toothpick  Pencil  Mint  
Rubber band  Eraser  Candy Kiss  
Band aid  Chewing gum  Tea Bag

Here’s why:
Toothpick - to remind you to pick out the good qualities in others.
Rubber band - to remind you to be flexible, things might not always go the way you want, but it will work out.
Band Aid - to remind you to heal hurt feelings, yours or someone else’s.
Pencil - To remind you to list your blessings everyday.
Eraser - to remind you that everyone makes mistakes, and it’s okay.
Chewing gum - to remind you to stick with it and you can accomplish anything.
Mint - to remind you that you are worth a mint to your family and friends.
Candy Kiss - to remind you that everyone needs a kiss or a hug everyday.
Tea Bag - to remind you to relax daily and go over that list of your blessings.
This is my gift to you. May you be richly blessed. To the world, you may just be somebody...but to somebody, you may be the world.

Rick Haro  
Miami, FL

54. Personalized License Plates

The first assignment I give is to have my students describe themselves in eight or less letters and/or numbers. I give them a license plate template and tell them that they need to create a personal plate that best describes an important aspect of their character. They decorate their plates and explain why their choice of letters or numbers fits them. I post the plates around the room so they get to see what their classmates say about themselves. The license plates are always a big hit at parent open house.

Sue Schmitt  
Antioch, Illinois

55. It’s A Kid’s World

Pairing high school students with elementary students has pay-offs for all involved. The first week of school I get a list of members of elementary
school class-usually second graders. I pair each elementary student with a high school student. I take a photo of each high school student and attach it to a "bio" letter the student has written about himself to the elementary student. Throughout the year we write on a regular basis back and forth. My journalism students even created a newspaper for the younger students! We also got to visit the elementary students twice during the year. This project focuses on character education as well as promoting literacy. The high school students serve as role models which improves their skills and demeanor as well as the younger students' desire to read and write better and to model positive behavior of a teenager!

Linda Evanchyk  
Ft. Walton Beach, FL

56. The Gingerbread Man  
On the first day of school, I read "The Gingerbread Man" to my students. When the story is over, we go try to catch him. We go all over the school, and that is my way of giving the "grand tour". We talk about the rules and purposes of each place we visit (ex. the library, the cafeteria, etc.). When we return to class, we all "catch" the gingerbread man in our classrooms. (Little Debbie gingerbread men cookies work great!)  
Dawn Pellegrin-Pre-Kindergarten teacher  
Houma, Louisiana

57. On the first day of school I get all my students and take them out side, but before they get to go outside we talk about the importance of each room. Then we always come in a different way to talk about that section of the school.  
Janet Hartley

58. Scavenger Hunt  
Each year I copy 3 maps of my school: one of the library, a floor plan of the whole school and an aerial plan of the schoolyard. Then I make up three scavenger hunts based on these maps. I am the librarian, so the scavenger hunt in the library is based on the level I am doing it with and reviews such things as finding a particular fiction novel, reference book, atlas, music CD etc. Classroom teachers could make one up within their classroom or use the one provided on this site. The hunt within the school reviews the location of the gym, the office, washrooms, library, custodian's office, Breakfast Club
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etc. as well as a few historical facts about the school which the children learn through examining plaques and trophies etc. on their journey throughout the school. They can also find out the names of various important people in the school if you tailor your questions to include an introduction to the secretary, custodian, Special Ed. teacher, principal etc. but be careful of overloading those people with constant interruptions during the busiest day of the year! The outdoor scavenger hunt not only gives the children a chance to stretch their legs, but it familiarizes them with the various areas of the schoolyard, the equipment available to each grade level, the school garden, parking area, sun shelter, nature path and dip-netting pond (that we are lucky enough to have). I always work in a few historical questions about the school, such as 'in which year was this school built?' which can be found out by examining the cornerstone at the front of the building. Scavenger hunts are an excellent way to keep those first few days interesting and appeal to attention spans shortened by the long, lazy days of summer.

Danielle Laporte- CA

59. I teach third grade. We have an open house where the students can visit their new classroom. I stand at the door and greet each child and shake their hand. I invite them in to find their desk and "discover" the room. I do not go into the classroom. I purposely do not so the parents cannot corner me with a private mini-conference, usually saying how smart their child is or any concerns they might have. If a parent does ask me at the door or starts a conversation I say, "I would love to talk with you. Please call me on my voice mail and we can set up a conference at a better time, so we can talk more thoroughly." It works like a charm. Good luck!

Connie Semler

60. Word Search
I do a word search with all the kids' names in my class on the first day.

http://www.eduhelper.com/wordfind.htm

Chris Minch ~ Stuart, FL