

Learning how to fish is fun, easy and free for youngsters and families throughout Illinois thanks to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Urban Fishing Program.

“Fishing is a great way for families to spend time together outdoors, and each summer our urban fishing clinics give thousands of children a chance to experience the fun of fishing,” said IDNR Director Marc Miller. “The clinic instructors provide basic instruction on how to fish, and with those lessons we expect a lot of kids will become hooked on fishing.”

“Parents and grandparents are urged to come along and attend any of our programs with their children,” said IDNR Central Illinois Urban Fishing Program Coordinator Herb Dreier. “Their experiences will create excitement that will provide many memorable family discussions.”

Fishing clinic instructors present information on fish and other aquatic life, rules and regulations for fishing, as well as basic instruction on baiting a hook, tying a knot, casting, important tactics on how to catch fish and how to handle and return fish to the water. As part of each clinic, participants are provided with rods, reels, bait and tackle for 90 minutes of catch-and-release fishing.

Why not consider hosting your own Family Fishing Night at your school?

PTA’s can host a “Family Fishing Night” by contacting the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to arrange the event. IDNR will assist in setting up the arrangements at a local lake, provide an urban fishing representative to speak and help with the event, and provide all the poles and bait for fishing—all FREE!!! This has been a successful program at many schools in Illinois already and one of the best kickoff events of the year or at the end of the year to celebrate a job well-done. This event is best hosted in warmer weather so it is enjoyable for everyone!

Steps to hosting a Family Fishing Night:

1. Contact IDNR to set a date (and rain date) and event location. Selecting a local lake is very important to success as many families won’t wish to drive a significant distance on a weekday evening. Find out more at www.ifishillinois.org or by phoning the IDNR Urban Fishing Program at 217/782-6424.
2. Select a coordinator to advertise the event within your school. A sample flier has been included for reference. Taking RSVP’s is optional, but is helpful so you know how much demand you have for the event for snack planning and to let IDNR know how many approximate participants will be attending. Several schools have hosted an event that had over 200 people attend!
3. PTA’s can provide some light snacks/drinks for the event—other schools that have hosted this event have purchased granola bars and individual packages of “goldfish”! It is important to provide a beverage as well especially if it is warmer weather.

Family Fishing Night

4. Contact local media to cover the event. It is important to show the community how children and adults can enjoy outdoor activities such as fishing as a family activity. This event at other Illinois schools has been one of the most successful and well-attended PTA family events and it is relatively inexpensive and easy to run!
5. Don't forget to bring a large pump bottle of hand sanitizer and paper towels for your participants!

Science and physical education teachers interested in starting a fishing program in their schools can also contact the IDNR Urban Fishing coordinator in their area to get more information.

The Illinois Urban Fishing Program was introduced in Chicago in 1985 to teach individuals of all ages to fish, to provide better local fishing opportunities and to give participants an understanding of and a greater appreciation for natural resources. Urban Fishing Program coordinators also hold non-fishing conservation education programs and visit schools during the fall, winter and spring.

SEE THE SAMPLE FLIER BELOW AS A REFERENCE and GOOD LUCK! HAPPY FISHING!



Kenwood Fishing and Water Safety Night

FREE EVENT!!!

*Hosted by Kenwood PTA and the
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Urban Fishing Program*

Tuesday, August 2nd from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
(Raindate is August 3rd at the same time and location)

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and the Kenwood PTA are sponsoring a **FREE** fishing and water safety night again this year! Fishing is an excellent outdoor activity that is fun for the entire family! Children will learn from Herb Dreier, Coordinator of the Central Illinois Urban Fishing Program about fishing and safety around bodies of water. They will also learn about fishing ethics, fish identification, how to tie the hook on the line, how to be more successful at catching fish (hook size, where in the water to fish, how to set the hook, etc.), and why learning how to fish can provide you with an outdoor hobby for a lifetime!

If you don't know how to fish or have a fishing pole, don't worry! Fishing poles will be provided for use that evening to those not having one. The event will be held at **Champaign Park District's Kaufmann Lake on Springfield Avenue** on August 2nd from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Light refreshments will be provided by Kenwood PTA. There will be a short educational talk and then open fishing for everyone! Advanced reservations are requested for this **FREE** event so we may plan for enough fishing poles and food for everyone. **Fishing licenses are not required!** Children must be accompanied by an adult for this event.

For more information or questions, please contact
Heather Miller at hsmiller1@bcglobal.net or at 217-369-7238

Fishing Night RSVP form—please return to your child's teacher or to the school main office so that we may plan for enough fishing poles and food for the event. Thank you!

Name of child: _____

Number of adults and children attending the event: _____

Teacher: _____