

Author Visit Guide

Children's Author's Network!

Presenting
Quality Assemblies,
Programs, and Workshops
for Students, Teachers, and Parents

Connecting children and authors inspires lifelong readers and writers. This easy step-by-step guide will help you communicate with your visiting author and create a successful event. Planning is half the fun!

www.childrensauthorsnetwork.com

*Members of the Society of Children's Book
Writers and Illustrators*

Step-by-Step Guide You CAN! Do It

(Check off each item as completed.)

4-6 MONTHS AHEAD:

- Find an author by going to the CAN! website (www.childrensauthorsnetwork.com) or by asking for recommendations from your local children's bookseller, librarian, the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, or an author you have worked with, or by contacting publishers directly.
- Call or write the author to request a press kit and a book order form. Set a date for the event.

2 MONTHS AHEAD:

- Prepare an event schedule. Discuss it with the author and school staff. Make necessary adjustments. Schedule presentations for consecutive grades (K-2, 3-5, etc.). Allow time for a break between presentations, and for an Autograph Party. Provide written confirmation on all details discussed. Include a map with directions to your school and parking information.
- Recruit students and PTA volunteers. You will need: 1) an Author's Day Coordinator and committee 2) a Media Liaison to publicize the event, 3) an "Author's Angel" to escort your author during their day on campus.
- Call your local children's bookseller and order books. Include copies for the library. Pick up advance copies for teachers and the librarian.

1 MONTH AHEAD:

- Media Liaison announces the author's visit and availability of books for autographing in the school newspaper, PTA Bulletin, and other publications read by students, teachers, and parents.
- Complete, copy, and send home an Order Form for Autographed Books with each student. Your author or bookseller may already have a form. Ask.
- Plan an Autograph Party in the library. Ask the coordinator to arrange for punch and cookies to create a festive mood! Duties will include set-up, collecting last minute sales money, and distributing books.
- Copy and distribute author information to teachers to share with their classes. Students should read at least one of the author's books prior to the visit.

2 WEEKS AHEAD:

- Collect and count book order forms.
- Call your local children's bookseller to confirm that your initial book order has arrived. Order additional books if necessary. Arrange to pick up your order.

1 WEEK AHEAD:

Announce the author event over your school's public announcement system. Send students home with a written reminder.

Test all equipment requested by the author (projector, screen, microphone). Make sure that the room can be adequately darkened if slides will be used. Have a back-up projector and bulb.

1 DAY AHEAD:

If your school has a marquee, use it to welcome your author.

Brief the "Author's Angel" to escort the author, help unpack and pack, act as an aide (work lights, provide water), and assist the author at the Autograph Party.

Remind students about the author's visit and last minute book orders.

THE BIG DAY:

Set-up and retest all equipment.

Reserve a parking place for your author for convenient unloading of equipment.

Greet your author one-half hour prior to the first presentation. Introduce the principal, librarian, and Author Angel to your author. Students receive an important message when the principal and administrators attend the presentation.

Set-up the Autograph Party in the library. You will need two tables with two chairs each. One for the author and the Author Angel, the other for book sale assistants. Be sure to have change for last minute cash sales.

Have fun!

FOLLOW-UP:

Return unsold books to your children's bookseller.

Write a thank you note on school letterhead to the author. Be specific about what worked. Include news clippings, photos, student letters, and artwork.

Confirm that your author received payment.

Now, begin planning for your next author event. We look forward to meeting you and sharing our experiences with your students!

HELPFUL HINTS:

- Have students design a bookmark. Ask your author to autograph it. Copy and distribute. This significant souvenir will last longer than pieces of paper students may ask the author to sign.
- Grading papers during the presentation is distracting to your author. Please respect the author's efforts to create a memorable event for your students and staff.
- Authors enjoy hearing from students. Encourage authentic writing experiences. Have students express their reactions through letters to the author.

QUESTIONS to Ask Your AUTHOR

- When is the best time to call you?
A. M. _____ P. M. _____
- How long is each presentation? _____
- How many presentations are you comfortable doing? _____
- What is your maximum audience size? _____
- What equipment, set-up or special needs do you have?

- Would you like to eat lunch with students or teachers? _____
- Shall we discuss your fee on the telephone or do you prefer to mail the information?
(Payment is due on the event date. If other arrangements will be necessary discuss them with the author now.) _____

How Can You Fund Your Event?

Inquire about these funding resources at your next staff meeting

- PTA
- Adopt-a-School Sponsors
- Friends of the Library
- Title I
- Title VII
- School Improvement Plan (SIP)
- LAAMP
- Goals 200
- Grants
- Grandparents

How Can You Have a Great Author Visit?

- Follow your step-by-step Author Visit Guide
- Purchase copies of the author's books for each teacher's classroom library
- Buy a class set of 20 – 30 books, one per student, and pass the autographed set of your author's books from classroom to classroom for years to come.
- Ask your author for a Teacher's Guide or Idea Sheet to help incorporate his or her books into the existing curriculum
- Plan an Autograph Party to give students the opportunity for a one-on-one meeting with your author.

How Can Students Be Involved?

- Read the author's book(s) in advance
- Contribute to the planning
- Help decorate to welcome the author
- Prepare questions for the author
- Write letters following the author's visit

For more information visit

the Children's Author's Network!
at **www.childrensauthorsnetwork.com**