

Kids' Book Fest at Your School

Why have your own Book Fest? To...

- **Celebrate children's books!**

showing how much your school values books and reading

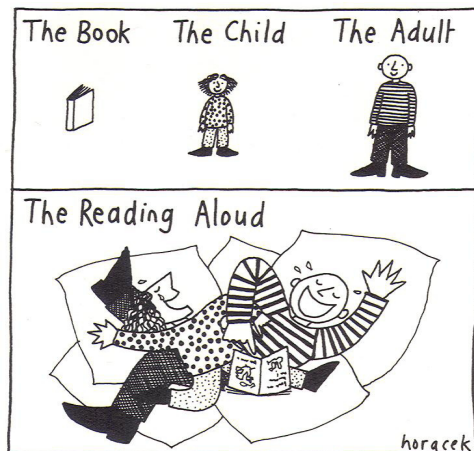
- **Engage and excite children and families around books**

so families will be motivated to read aloud at home

- **Create a shared experience around books**

to strengthen your school community

Show your families that children's books are exciting, introduce new ideas and words, give comfort, inspire, are beautiful... and they're FUN to read aloud!



How to start

1. Gather a small group of volunteers to decide on a theme, generate ideas and plan activities. (See themes and activity ideas that follow.)
2. Pick a date and time for the Fest, ideally after school hours so that adults can attend with children.
3. If possible, choose one or two books to feature and give to all students for free. This creates a common experience for children and gives them pride in ownership. A local business may be able to sponsor the book giveaway so that all students, regardless of income, can own the book to take home.

Ways to increase the value of the book given:

- **Build anticipation** by announcing when the children will be getting the book and that the book is a gift for them to keep.
 - **Create ownership** by putting a bookplate sticker in the front of each book and have each child write in his or her name. (This sticker could also have the name of the sponsor.)
 - **Read the book aloud** to the class after distributing the book. Children can follow along in their own copy of the book. You can also read aloud during lunch or an assembly.
 - **Include family** by sending a note home with the book to encourage parents and caregivers to read the book with the child at home. Send a list of recommended books that parents could find in the library to continue the read-aloud fun.
4. Start building excitement by getting children involved in planning and promoting, sending fliers home, announcing on PA.
 5. Encourage teachers to do projects and displays based on books and the theme.
 6. Plan activities and build a larger volunteer group that will set up, oversee and clean-up.

See back for Activity Ideas >>>

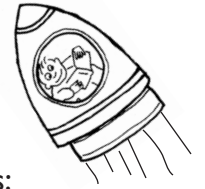
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Possible Kids' Book Fest Activities





AUTHOR READ-ALOUD

Invite a local author or your students to read their own writing.



BOOK-BASED ACTIVITIES

Displays and interactive activities can be created to go with any children's book. Some examples:

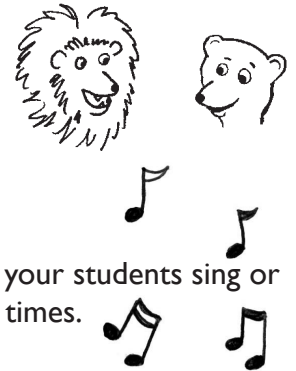
-  *Eating the Alphabet* by Lois Ehlert: display all the food, A to Z. You can also make a game of putting each food on the letter with which it starts.
-   *Caps for Sale* by Esphyr Slobodkina: read book aloud and put caps on your head to match story.
-  *Big Red Barn* by Margaret Wise Brown: Read book, pointing out the butterfly on most pages. Afterwards children can make paper butterflies and decorate.

BOOKMAKING

Have plenty of blank books available at a table for children to write and illustrate their own books. Simple blank books can be made from scraps of colored cardstock or wallpaper for the cover and a few paper pages folded in half and stapled together inside the cover. This type of book can also be cut into a fanciful shape, such as a house, bug, or spaceship to match the theme of your Fest. Another type of book: accordion fold a long piece of heavy paper for a book especially suited for a story with a sequence of events.

STORYBOOK DRAMA

Character costumes from books can be used to act out a story or for children to wear while a story is being read aloud. Puppet shows are also a great way to act out a story.



ENTERTAINMENT BASED ON BOOKS

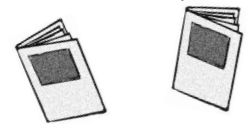
A children's singer or storyteller can be included at the Fest, or better yet, have some of your students sing or act out a book related skit. Teachers and/or the Principal can have scheduled read-aloud times.

LITERATURE PLAY

There are many places in every-day life where words are used as an integral part of the activity. Set up an area for children where they can see and play with words such as a play Post Office, Restaurant or Grocery Store. Encourage writing and reading by having postcards, letters, order pads, and grocery lists for the different stations. The pre-school or kindergarten at your school may have small tables, chairs and appropriate toys to use as props.

QUIET READ-ALOUD AREAS

Create some cozy spots and have volunteer readers waiting to read books aloud to any child that wants to listen. Use a futon, overstuffed chair, rocking chair, throw rugs, picnic blanket or pillows to make the spot comfortable and locate the area in a tucked-away corner (you can even section it off with large cardboard that has been decorated) so that the space is somewhat quiet.



OTHER things you may want to include at your Kids' Book Fest:

Food (snack or meal for sale), balloons, a photographer to document, a program that lists activities or has a map.

TIPS

1. Station volunteers at each activity to encourage children to participate and to oversee the activity.
2. Keep books as the focus of activities and have lots of books on display for people to read through.
3. Take notes or have families fill out a feedback form to learn ways to improve your Kids' Book Fest next time.