

TIPS FOR PLANNING AN AUTHOR VISIT

Artist visits put an emphasis on literacy, provide support for writing programs, and help teachers, librarians, and caregivers increase their knowledge of children's literature. A successful event requires planning.

Decide on the artist: Start thinking early on -- six months to a year in advance -- about the author or illustrator you'd like to have visit. Ask in your community for recommendations or consult biographical resources. Do some brainstorming with publishers about up-and-coming talents.

Budget: Be realistic about funding. The host is responsible for the artist's honorarium and all expenses. Honoraria may range from \$200 to \$2,000; expenses include meals, lodging, and travel costs. Consider coordinating with other schools and libraries to share expenses.

Outline the event. Create a detailed outline/schedule of your needs and expectations for the visits. Some points to keep in mind:

- I. Day, date, time (and alternate dates)
- II. Location
- III. Program format
 - i. What is the purpose of the visit?
 - ii. With whom is the artist working? Educators? Students (what grade level)? Parents?
 - iii. How many presentations is the artist expected to make?
 - iv. How long will each presentation be?
 - v. How large do you expect the audience to be in each session?
 - vi. Will there be autographing sessions? If so, you are responsible for ordering books and handling sales.

Details: Prior to the visit, talk with the author/illustrator directly to discuss the event in detail. You should provide as much information as possible about the event and the audience, make travel and housing arrangements, arrange an escort, agree on payment procedures, and determine any audiovisual needs the artist may have. Note: This discussion is meant to be informational. Do not take this opportunity to make changes to the schedule previously agreed upon. Follow up with a letter to the author/illustrator outlining your phone conversation, and be sure to send a copy of your correspondence to the publisher.

NOTE: An author's/illustrator's personal information (home address, telephone number, Social Security number) should always be kept confidential.

To ENSURE A SUCCESSFUL VISIT

- Adhere to the schedule as originally outlined and discussed. Do not vary the artist's responsibilities or add presentations.
- Prepare the audience! Make sure the audience is familiar with the artist's work and supply biographical information.
- Arrange local publicity. The library or school district's public-relations person can offer guidance and assistance.
- If autographings are scheduled, be sure to order books at least six to eight weeks in advance of the appearance. The publisher or a local bookseller or wholesaler can assist you.

AFTER THE VISIT

- Do write a letter of thanks to the visiting artist.
- Do give the publisher an honest appraisal of the visit -- your evaluation will guide the publisher in future appearances.

Author and Illustrator Appearances Quick Reference Checklist

Six months to a year in advance

- Decide whom you want to invite
- Create your budget
- Outline the event
- Work through the publisher to confirm the artist's participation and follow up with your own contract or confirmation for the artist

Two to three months in advance

- Begin to prepare your audience for the visit
- Make all arrangements for travel, hotel, escort
- Agree on payment procedures
- Establish audiovisual needs
- Order books

One month in advance

- Send final itinerary to the artist
- Begin your publicity
- Make sure your book order has arrived

One day before the visit

- Review plans with all coordinators involved with the visit
- Double-check all reservations and go over the schedule with the escort

In the week following the visit

- Send a thank you to the artist
- Provide an evaluation to the publisher