

How to make the most of your author visit, from Kathleen Leyba...

When kids get the chance to meet the author of a book they've read or are being introduced to, a special connection is made. They become energized, inspired and have a new appreciation for reading! I've personally learned a thing or two about having a successful author visit and would like to share this with you now.

Usually, it comes down to how excited the kids are for their author visit. When they're looking forward to it, it creates a nice buzz and a great atmosphere.

Here are some suggestions to get the kids pumped up...

*Tell them the author is coming to visit! Make sure that they know how excited I am to meet them at least a few weeks in advance. Put my books on display in the school library. Put a display of book covers up in the hallway.

*Have classes read my books and journal about it, or think up questions to ask me.

*Throw a contest (A coloring contest perhaps? I have custom coloring pages fresh out of my books that I can send in prior to our arrival.) Have the winners eat lunch with me. A pizza party is great fun for them, or we can all bring our own lunch.

*Have an art class make posters, banners, and bookmarks welcoming "the author".

*Get the book order forms out early so parents have enough time to send them back in. At the end of a visit every child wishes they had a signed book to take home.

*Since my books are designed to honor first responders and our real-life super heroes, make my visit into a theme day at school. Maybe the kids can use dress as their favorite first responder/superhero!

*Call the local newspapers. Maybe they'll send a photographer to cover the event. If they don't, take pictures yourself and submit them for a later feel-good post.

*Talk it up. The more excited you are, the more excited the kids will be. And when the kids are excited, any message an author gives them will really hit home.

I am looking forward to coming to your school!

Please feel free to contact me via the online form with any questions. I look forward to seeing you all!